



January 16th, 2024

Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition
www.indianagradworkers.org

Dear President Pamela Whitten:

With this letter, the Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition (IGWC) wishes to inform you that the majority of graduate workers (Associate Instructors, Research Assistants, Graduate Assistants, and Faculty Assistants) at Indiana University Bloomington have asked to be represented by our union. Attached are the names of over 1,300 graduate employees who have signed union cards, indicating their wish to be represented in collective bargaining. The goal of our union is to establish a productive and respectful bargaining relationship with Indiana University Bloomington.

The union card reads:

I hereby request that:

- *Wages for graduate employees at Indiana University meet the Living Wage minimum based on the MIT Living Wage Calculator for Bloomington, IN (currently \$27,973 for 10-month SAAs and \$33,568 for 12-month SAAs) and that those increases be funded through the Central Administration budget.*
- *The IU Administration bargains collectively with an elected committee of the Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition over all wages, benefits, and working conditions for SAA positions and recognizes the IGWC as the exclusive bargaining representative of graduate employees at IU.*

In Spring 2022, Indiana University's faculty voted overwhelmingly to endorse a pathway to union recognition for SAAs by a vote of 1,404 to 509. In the name of shared governance, we ask that you respect the will of the vast majority of the faculty and engage in a process of recognizing our rights as employees of Indiana University.

With this letter, we would like to initiate a union election process allowing graduate employees at Indiana University to freely choose their bargaining representative in a democratic election, taking the model of the National Labor Relations Board as a framework. Consequently, if graduate employees choose through this democratic election to be represented by IGWC, we expect that Indiana University will engage in a process of collective bargaining to conclude with a written contract describing graduate employee wages, benefits, and working conditions.

We request that our wages be increased to match the MIT Living Wage Calculator per our petition. We believe that this would greatly facilitate our future bargaining relationship.

We request a meeting with you or your representatives to begin planning an election to occur during the current semester of Spring 2024.

We expect that Indiana University Administration, its managers and agents, will refrain from any actions that would violate the rights of graduate workers to form a union organization. The [Indiana University Policy on Academic Freedom](#), which covers “All academic appointees with teaching, research, or librarianship responsibilities, including visiting, adjunct, acting and part-time faculty,” reads:

Academic freedom includes the freedom to express views on matters having to do with the university and its policies, and on issues of public interest generally. When faculty write or speak as citizens, they should avoid appearing to be speaking for the university. They should recognize that a professional position in the community involves the obligation to be accurate, to exercise appropriate restraint, and to show respect for the right of others to express their views.

We assume all graduate workers at Indiana University have the right to support a union, engage in union activity, or select a union to represent them. We assume that under this policy, all of the following by university employees who manage the work of graduate employees would be prohibited, including, but not limited to:

- Discriminating or taking adverse action against employees because of their support for the union;
- Threatening employees with adverse consequences, such as re-assigning or reducing research or teaching opportunities, loss of benefits, or more onerous working conditions, because of their union support;
- Prohibiting employees from wearing and/or displaying union buttons, t-shirts, and other union insignia;
- Investigating or questioning employees on whether they support the union.

We formally request that you instruct all administrators, managers, and others who direct and assign the work of graduate workers to remain utterly neutral regarding the outcome of the election process we are initiating here.

We request a meeting with representatives of your office to begin this process. Please contact us before January 29th, 2024, regarding this meeting at indianagradworkers@gmail.com.

Again, we look forward to a lasting and productive bargaining relationship with you.

Sincerely,

The Coordinating Committee
Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition

Sabina Ali
Zara Anwarzai
Elijah Beaton
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Adri Cruz
Louis van der Elst
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Sam Smucker
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