

Shared Goals

There are **no disagreements** about the goals of improving the graduate student experience and SAA positions at IUB.

The Provost, Vice Provosts, Deans, BFC, and others have committed to improve SAA stipends; study and improve SAA workload concerns; provide better mental health services and career services for graduate and professional students; and to meet with graduate students and SAAs, etc.

The only disagreement lies in how to accomplish these goals. Our existing shared governance mechanisms are the best pathways to address these concerns.

Concerns About a Union

A union representing all SAAs would erode the existing relationship between individual students, their advisors, and their schools. Currently, schools and departments can directly address the concerns of individual SAAs because they are the primary channel of communication.

Unionization would remove SAA decisions from individual advisors, departments, and schools, and would require concerns to be addressed through an industrial labor union with little understanding of the academic environment at IU, or within a given school or department.

Recognizing an SAA union is a long-term commitment that prohibits future faculty and SAAs from exercising their own academic judgment on all SAA-related issues, not just wages and benefits. Once a union is recognized, it becomes the exclusive representative of a bargaining unit, and, barring decertification, it will typically remain indefinitely.

The union would represent all SAAs, even those who may choose not to pay dues to the union. The provisions agreed to would apply to all SAAs and govern faculty relations with SAAs. Individual SAAs will not be allowed to opt out of a union agreement/contract.

Some Concerning Proposals from IGWC-UE

IGWC and some faculty members are asking for “no retaliation” for SAAs participating in a work stoppage. “Retaliation” is the term used by IGWC to describe the consequences outlined and approved in existing faculty policy for non-completion of agreed upon duties by SAAs. ([SAA Guide](#))

The IGWC-UE wants a third-party authorship decision making process. “Clear Guidelines for Authorship: Require each department to meet with a graduate worker committee from each department to create standards for authorship

enforceable by the union grievance procedure.” ([IGWC-UE website](#))

- This encroaches on faculty academic freedom and the faculty-student relationship. It also has NOTHING TO DO WITH SAA positions. Rather, it is an attempt to interfere with traditional faculty governed academic processes. IUB has a faculty written and approved authorship policy (BL ACA I16) that includes a process for dispute resolution.

The IGWC-UE wants a third-party intellectual property negotiation. “Establish Rules for Intellectual Property: The Union will propose a process for establishing guidelines for crediting graduate workers for intellectual property.” ([IGWC-UE website](#))

- This encroaches on faculty academic freedom and the faculty-student relationship. It may be incompatible with federal rules for assigning IP already in IU faculty policy.

The IGWC-UE wants a grievance process, “that ends in third-party binding arbitration to settle disputes that cannot be settled at the department or at the college level. The Union will insist on an outside neutral arbitrator (not paid by IU). This changes the power dynamics in the department. Because disputes could be settled by an outside arbitrator, graduate workers will have more power inside the department to bring up problems and get them resolved without even filing a grievance.” ([IGWC-UE website](#))

They also want “a mechanism for contesting situations when time on the job, especially for work not directly related to academic progress, is more than the workload standards of the employment contract.” ([IGWC-UE website](#))

- These ideas will fundamentally change the relationship between SAAs and SAA supervisors. SAAs already have a robust grievance process, SAA Mediation Committee, SAA Board of Review, and detailed due process procedures in IU faculty policy. (See [SAA Guide](#), [ACA-D23](#), [ACA-D24](#), [ACA-D28](#), [ACA-D29](#)).

The IGWC-UE wants to end all student fees. “Indiana University has some of the highest fees in the Big Ten and graduate workers have no say in how these fees are increased and what they go to.” ([IGWC-UE website](#))

- All enrolled students pay mandatory fees. There are no fees for holding an SAA position at Indiana University. The GPSG president is co-chair of the Committee for Fee Review and appoints other graduate students to the fee

review committee. This student committee reviews and recommends fees every two years during tuition setting periods. This IGWC idea would deny all undergraduate and graduate students their consulting role in fee-setting and place that control in the union. ([CFR website](#))

The IGWC-UE sent a cease and desist email to faculty members and department chairs who held individual meetings with SAAs to discuss their failure to complete agreed upon obligations.

- These meetings are responsible supervision, responsible implementation of existing faculty policies, and responsible stewardship of public funds to only pay and re-employ those employees who complete their duties.

Joining the UE will commit our graduate students to various policy positions with which they may not agree.

- See for example, this UE Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) resolution which, "Endorses the BDS movement and urges the union at all levels to become engaged in BDS and the movement for peace, justice and equality between the Palestinians and Israelis; Opposes all efforts to outlaw BDS and otherwise punish non-violent critics of Israeli policies..." (www.ueunion.org)

Existing Shared Governance Mechanisms

As academic appointees, the BFC has legislative and consultative authority over many matters relating to SAAs. The GPSG appoints 3 voting members to the BFC. The BFC Executive Committee has reconstituted the SAA Affairs Committee. The BFC SAA Mediation Committee and SAA Board of Review oversee robust grievance policies for SAAs.

The Graduate Faculty Council, GPSG, Mental Health Task Force, Student Health Center Working Group, Future of Graduate Education Task Force, Committee for Fee Review, school and department committees, and many other committees consider SAA agenda items.

Past and Recent Actions Taken

Between 2016 and 2022, 10 schools removed unremittable fees for SAAs. The 2019 College Task Force on Graduate Student Funding recommended this action for the College, Media, Eskenazi, and Hamilton Lugar Schools which increased take-home pay by more than \$1,100.

Schools have increased stipends. In 2020, one-third of SAA stipends were below an \$18,000 rate for .50FTE 10-month positions. By fall 2022, 100% of SAA stipends will be at or above \$18,000 rate for .50FTE 10-month positions.

IU improved SAA health insurance while lowering SAA costs. In 2015, the SAA deductible was lowered from \$500 to \$0. SAAs have the same health insurance as full-time faculty and staff but pay no premium and no deductible.

Since Provost Shrivastav's arrival at IUB in mid-February, the following actions have been taken:

- 15+ listening sessions with grad students
- 5% stipend increase for SAAs (7/1/22)
- \$18k minimum rate for .50FTE, 10-month SAAs (7/1/22)
- Tuition waiver flexibility for approved courses (7/1/22)
- Establishment of Grad Ed Task Force
- BFC Executive Committee reconstitutes SAA Committee

IU Meetings with SAAs and Graduate Students

Since 2020, the College dean's office and the vice provost for graduate education have met with IGWC (pre-affiliation with UE). IU leaders regularly meet with GPSG, the elected governing body for graduate students. GPSG leadership did not show up for the provost's luncheon meeting.

15 Grad Student Listening Sessions (2022) w/various combinations of Provost, Dean of the University Graduate School, Vice Provost for Graduate Education, and school leaders

11 GPSG Scheduled Meetings (2022) w/VP Daleke

19 GPSG Scheduled Meetings (2021) w/VP Daleke

29 GPSG Scheduled Meetings (2020) w/VP Daleke

SAA Headcounts

10,912 graduate and professional students (IUB, fall 2021). 2,550 Student Academic Appointees = 23% of all graduate students (IUB, spring 2022). 1,525 Associate Instructors (59.8% of SAAs), 576 Graduate Assistants (22.6%), 449 Research Assistants (17.6%).

SAA Stipends

Minimum: \$18,000 rate for .50FTE, 10-month appointment (effective July 1, 2022). Average (before new minimum): \$20,291 for .50FTE, 10-month appointment. Range (before new minimum): \$15,400-\$24,170 for .50FTE, 10-month appointment

FAQs about SAAs

High Level Summary Points:

1. Progress HAS happened and more will happen in the future
2. IU Values and UE Values are Not Aligned
3. Govern or Be Governed