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# AAUP IUB Chapter Newsletter

November 2025 (Issue 2)

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**November 7 Day of Action Press Conference** : L-R Joe Varga, Jessica Adams, Zach Harrison, and Chelsea Adye Villatoro.

## ***Dear members,***

We write with updates on the work our chapter has been engaged in this fall semester responding to campus and IU crises and upholding our commitment to top notch education. In this issue we celebrate victories towards this goal and analyze the ongoing crisis facing public higher education in Indiana. Most importantly, we offer a call to action to support this mission into 2026. The third section may be most important, identifying where your involvement can have the most impact.

# Victories

## *Membership*

**The size of the AAUP IUB chapter has more than doubled** since starting our membership campaign on the April 17 Day of Action. We now have our largest membership ever, and the largest in the state of Indiana. This also means that colleagues across the state have begun looking to us for leadership (see ***The Work Ahead*** below).

On October 3<sup>rd</sup> we held our first all-chapter meeting, with **over 80 in attendance**. Discussions about potential action of the existing and new working groups produced energized commitment to engage in further outreach, with working groups formed for membership, analysis of the university's financial well-being, and faculty satisfaction. If you would like to join any of these groups, please contact us at [iubaaup@iu.edu](mailto:iubaaup@iu.edu).

***First Campus Town Hall.*** We had our first Campus Town Hall on October 18<sup>th</sup>, both in-person and virtual, **attended by over 200 people**, including faculty, students, and staff. In addition to updates on post-tenure reviews, mergers and eliminations, and faculty and librarian terminations, AAUP members offered their [ideas](#) increasing involvement and needed actions moving forward (see ***The Work Ahead, below***).

## *Petitions and Resolutions*

AAUP member Nicolas Vallazza, (French and Italian Dept.), spearheaded a "Save the Languages" online petition that garnered **more than 1000 signatures**, accompanied by [testimonials](#) from students, alumni, parents, and faculty about the lifelong value of foreign languages. Professor Vallazza sent the report to Governor Mike Braun with a cover letter that highlights the many jobs in business and national security that our alumni have secured with help from their foreign language training.

The chapter **voted overwhelmingly** (99%) in favor of standing with colleagues at universities across the U.S. [against](#) signing the Trump administration's oath of loyalty. Solidarity is our superpower! On November 4th, the BFC passed a similar resolution with [overwhelming](#) support. You can find the text [here](#). The IU Student Government is now contemplating a similar resolution.

The Bloomington Faculty Council, now boasting many active AAUP members, continues to provide a space for discussing critical issues. A recent [resolution](#) recognizing the unique **contribution of emeriti faculty** passed unanimously. BFC members have called for revisions to the most troublesome recent Board of Trustee policies (especially BOT 24-26, see previous newsletter) and task forces to examine those policies and make recommendations are being formed.

## ***Freedoms Under Assault Documentary Released***

The October 12<sup>th</sup> premiere of ***Freedoms under Assault***, a documentary co-produced by AAUP-IUB member (and past president) Bob Arno with Jack Comforty and local journalist extraordinaire Jeremy Hogan, was a major Bloomington event. People had to be turned away after the Buskirk Chumley auditorium filled up with an enthusiastic audience. The film follows the tenure of President Pamela Whitten since her appointment by the Board of Trustees with zero faculty input, focusing on the damage done to the university's reputation over the past five years. Another free screening of the film will be at 2 pm on November 15<sup>th</sup> at the Buskirk-Chumley. The producers plan to present the documentary at film festivals around the country.

## The Crisis Continues

### ***HEA 1001: Eliminations and Mergers***

IUB upper administration has continued to **over-comply** with the merger, reorganization, and elimination process mandated by HEA 1001. Degrees are being rearticulated with no regard for disciplinary expertise and content. The terms of these mergers give little consideration to their effects, with no clarity about the potential costs to students' futures. Some units are being moved from one school to another (e.g., the Theater Department going from the College to the Jacobs) without a single vote by faculty. Where faculty have taken votes in opposition to the higher administration's designs, upper administration has forced the changes they wanted and brushed away criticism as insignificant.

### ***Attacks on Student Organizations***

Student organizations are being treated in a similar manner. The Palestinian Solidarity Committee was placed on [cease and desist](#) without any justification at the beginning of the semester. Since August, the administration has provided no further evidence to justify their abusive action. The only other student organizations to be placed on cease and desist by the upper administration are several fraternities that have engaged in demonstrable violent actions, such as [hazing](#).

In mid-October, the Dean of the Media School informed the *Indiana Daily Student* (IDS) that their print edition would be discontinued indefinitely, and that their faculty adviser, Jim Rodenbush, was fired. Rodenbush has since filed a lawsuit against the university for wrongful termination. The IDS editors called the cancellation of the print edition "unlawful [censorship](#)."

IU's rationale focused on the IDS's continued financial difficulties. After 2 weeks of national and even [international](#) attention from major news outlets, and alumni threats to pull over \$1 million in donations, IUB Administration [backed down](#). Chancellor David Reingold announced the reinstatement of the print edition in a [Letter](#) to the Editor in the IDS, offering no apologies other than "the campus has not handled recent decisions as well as we should have." While this is clearly a victory for

freedom of the press, students remain concerned about restoring trust with the upper administration. We concur.

### ***The Continued Weaponization of SEA 202 and Attacks on DEI***

Nearly six months after closing all campus DEI offices and scrubbing the words “diversity, equity and inclusion” from all Indiana University websites, upper administration has continued to refuse to reveal the extent of the firings or closures. The Provost continues to insist that IU’s DEI erasure is justified by state and federal law and guidance, despite the fact that no such guidance exists. Both the [AAUP](#) and the [Monroe County NAACP](#) have issued statements condemning IU’s attacks on DEI.

On November 7th, the AAUP chapter held a press conference publicly announcing our chapter’s solidarity with all US institutions of higher education that have rejected the Trump Administration loyalty compact. Graduate and undergraduate students representing several groups and serving on the IU Student Government joined us in solidarity.

The press conference also focused on bringing attention to Dean of School for Social Work [Kalea Benner](#)’s handling of the anonymous SEA 202 complaint against Jessica Adams, a professor teaching in the MA program for Social Work. Professor Adams [detailed](#) the lack of transparency and due process in her case, in which Benner became complainant, investigator, and enforcer, denying professor Adams basic information that would assist her in understanding the charge and responding to it appropriately. Most egregiously, she was banned from teaching the course where the SEA 202 complaint was lodged before standing had been determined and before any investigation was undertaken. At the press conference, Professor Adams was joined by two students enrolled in the class. Both offered highly critical [perspectives](#) on the unfolding of this process. They highlighted the lack of transparency from the Dean, the highly disruptive and pedagogically damning way in which the upper administration chose to continue the class, damaging both the intellectual and professional content of the class, as well as their trust in the university to protect their interests. You can find professor Adams’ public statement about her SEA 202 case [here](#). This issue continues to garner [local](#) and [national](#) attention.

### **The Work Ahead: Call to Action**

IU’s ongoing assaults on academic freedom, faculty governance, and civil rights are energizing a growing number of faculty, alumni, students, staff, and community allies. Both the continuing crises on campus, as well as our growing membership and public presence, have made our university a point of interest for the AAUP national leadership. We are working with the AAUP Indiana conference, which includes colleagues from other Indiana campuses, to develop a strategy to reclaim our academic freedom and the ability of IU’s faculty and staff to deliver the kind of higher education our students and fellow Hoosiers deserve: affordable, accessible,

and with all the choices that our extraordinary faculty expertise offers. Our workload is growing, but our ability to act to support our long term goals is also becoming greater. We need you to participate in this work.

### **Membership**

If you are not a member, we encourage you to [join us](#)! If you are a member, talk to your colleagues and recruit one new member by the end of the semester. Even as we grow, we need more faculty to become active in advocating and recruiting more chapter members. Our chapter offers informal training and membership sessions, and the national AAUP's training sessions are also free to any member and an excellent way to network with colleagues from around the country. Any IU faculty member can do this work: find a friend, a colleague, someone you work out or are in a writing or research group with and tell them about what AAUP is doing on campus, why you joined, and ask them to join you in these critical efforts.

### **Outreach: Connect AAUP-IUB with one alum; participate in one event organized by our community allies**

Alumni were essential in pushing the higher administration towards restoring the full editorial independence of the IDS. They are essential to demonstrating the value of an IU degree and in reaching out to Indiana citizens and legislators to advocate for our degrees and academic freedom. If we want to restore our ability to design and implement degrees without political and ideological interference, alumni will be essential in that effort. [Reach out](#) to our outreach committee if you want to get further involved.

We are beginning to forge closer relations with other AAUP chapters in Indiana, especially other IU campuses. If you are someone familiar with these communities, we need your input to communicate with them and start working more closely.

### **Public Statements: Write an op-ed; Write a letter to an Indiana elected official; distribute the AAUP-IUB social media content to your networks**

We need to better communicate how changes at IU affect the wider citizenry in Indiana. Talking to your neighbors, friends, and social circles about these issues is one way to do it. Making public statements about these changes through interviews, opinion pieces, open letters, or social media posts is another way to sustain our message about the threats we are facing. And if all you do is share our media content to your social media circles, you are already helping a lot. We are @iubaaup on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter/X](#), and [Bluesky](#).

As an example, we share a letter that a reader of the [New York Times](#) sent to the Dean of the School of Social Work in response to removing Jessica Adams from the classroom:

"Dear Dean Benner,

Pardon me for intruding on what might seem to be a matter internal to Indiana University, but I am indulging my outrage over IU's suspension of Ms. Adams from teaching a course because she discussed the white supremacy inherent in the MAGA slogan, as reported in the New York Times today. Isn't it obvious that to suspend her in the name of protecting diversity of viewpoint is simply Orwellian double-speak? Is any viewpoint that challenges notions that are popular among some powerful people considered an attack on diversity of viewpoints? Absurd on the face of it!"

You can read the full letter [here](#).

***BFC Elections: Nominate an AAUP member as rep for your unit***

The Bloomington Faculty Council will begin soliciting nominations for BFC President in the near future. The AAUP has a strong ally in the President-Elect Heather Akou, and the current President, Bill Ramos, is also an AAUP member. We urge you to consider nominating an AAUP member as BFC representative for the next round of elections. We are working to develop a slate of AAUP members for all elected positions. Get in touch with us if you would like to serve and want more information about the responsibilities. We will arrange an information forum for those interested soon and we will again host a town hall for the nominees next spring before elections take place. We will also include a discussion about this at our all faculty meeting on December 5th.

***AAUP Elections: Consider running for a position; participate in the process as voting member***

AAUP will also have our own elections in the late spring and welcome nominations and self-nominations from members who would like to run for any elected officer position. A healthy organization that upholds democratic values depends on the active participation of its members in all capacities, including standing up for service. We are glad to offer information about the various responsibilities of the elected officers and members of the Executive Committee and will return in the spring with more details on this matter.

***Attend the AAUP all member meeting on December 5, 4 p.m.,  
in Woodburn 101.***