
AAUP IUB Chapter Newsletter

May 2026



Speakers at the recent Spring IUB AAUP Town Hall

Dear members,

As we transition from the academic year 2025-26 to summer plans, we wanted to touch base one last time to share our victories this year, our continuing struggles into next year, and a couple of action items we ask you to do before the next academic year begins.

Victories

We nearly tripled the number of members this year. The membership committee worked hard for the chapter and you responded.

We elected a new BFC [President](#) and slate of AAUP members to serve on the BFC, so next year a majority of BFC representatives will be AAUP members. As allies in our struggle, they will defend academic freedom and the integrity of our academic mission. You helped secure this alliance that promises to enhance our leverage with the upper administration.

The newly elected [leaders](#) of the IU Student Government participated in the latest AAUP Townhall with a strong statement about their commitment to the same goals and to standing with us in our struggles. We have gained a great ally for 2026-27!

The newly elected leader of the Indianapolis Faculty Council, [Kathleen Marrs](#), is active in the Indianapolis AAUP chapter and will be a great advocate for faculty interests in the University Faculty Council together with the BFC President. Faculty representation on behalf of AAUP has just become significantly stronger, because individual faculty made their voices heard.

The [Bunsis Report](#) had a large audience at the live webinar and has seen coverage both locally and statewide. We encourage everyone to study the [full report](#) and our [press release](#), watch the [webinar](#), and read the reporting [here](#), [here](#), and other [analyses](#). The Bunsis Report provides a factual, public data-driven foundation for understanding where the priorities of IU are now and into the future (spoiler alert: they do not include a focus on supporting students or instruction). It also calls into question the lack of transparency on the part of the upper administration in failing to provide a detailed public budget, something we hope the BFC will make a demand in their work in the fall.

Because so many of you wrote back on policy revisions, upper administration has had no option but to pay attention to our concerns. After receiving more than **400** responses to the BOT-11 (tenure) policy review, the UFC made significant improvements to the policy. After receiving almost **100** responses to the BOT-24 (post tenure review) policy review, UFC responded by making the policy less punitive and overcompliant with the law. After receiving **176** comments to the BOT-15 (faculty misconduct) policy review, the UFC reigned in some of the most egregious forms of overcompliance, especially relying on anonymous evidence. These are all significant improvements that we pushed; the policy difference we made means we still have some form of shared governance.

Volume matters. That means that numbers, our numbers, also matter very much. The more of us respond to these policy reviews and flood the system with our responses, the more the upper administration must reflect on the policies they

initiate. This is why we need to continue to grow our chapter. We are growing our leverage and it is already having results.

Continuing Struggles

The word of the academic year is “**overcompliance**.” Many new policies have done that, and we need to continue pushing back.

SEA-202 has no requirement to have an anonymous complaint online platform, but IU upper administration chose to allow for such a format, refusing to put it behind a secure log-in wall. Such an alternative measure, fully in compliance with the law, would ensure that any complaint would have to come from someone inside the university, with credentials to sign in, as the law requires, and not from anyone who cannot be verified as student or staff. This is a major harmful form of overcompliance that we need to fight to remove, hopefully with the support of our UFC allies.

Our colleagues in the sciences continue to be harmed by the overzealous compliance of the IU upper administration with directives from the FBI and USDA. In March 2025 [Xiaofeng Wang](#), distinguished professor in the Luddy School, and [Nianli Ma](#), science librarian, were fired without cause after the FBI raided their home. The FBI never alleged any wrongdoing by either colleague. In December the FBI [raided](#) Roger Innes' [lab](#), followed by a USDA audit of that space. No wrongdoing was alleged, and none was found. Yet after Innes went [public](#) to defend several Chinese nationals working as post-docs at the University of Michigan and in his own IU lab, the upper administration decided to again [lock down](#) Innes' lab on Thursday, May 7, 2026, to supposedly comply with an order from the USDA. But the USDA denies ordering the closure of the lab. We are again faced with the upper administration lying about compliance. Whatever their reasons are for censoring his work, they have nothing to do with Innes' actual research. A day later more workspaces in Myers Hall were locked down, preventing 40-50 people who work at IU (faculty, students, staff) from doing any of their work. It took a week of intense negotiation with the upper administration to get some of the spaces in Myers Hall reopened. This [massive lockout](#) is again overcompliance with no justification offered.

In neither spring 2025 nor spring 2026 have IU upper administrators provided public criticism of abusive federal agency actions, which are not warranted by any action of our faculty. Other universities, like [MIT](#), have stood up to such abuse. We need to continue pressuring our Chancellor and university leadership, especially [Russell Mumper](#), the Vice President for Research, who enforces these actions, to challenge unreasonable federal edicts. Mumper has provided no support for the faculty in Biology affected by the most recent lockout, apparently keeping both elected BFC leadership and College administrators (e.g., the Executive Dean of the College) in the dark. In December, when Innes contacted the Chancellor regarding his lack of access to any computers that he needed for teaching and research, David Reingold stated

he was not aware of the situation. On the current lock-out, the BFC President stated he had no knowledge of it.

Our incoming BFC leadership is working to put pressure on the upper administration for transparency, accountability, and protection so that faculty and staff can access their workspace and conduct the research that IU and external granting agencies fund. We will continue to [monitor](#) this situation and will keep you updated in the fall. Some of the reporting on the recent actions in the Biology Department can be found here:

- [After USDA request, Indiana plant biologist locked out of lab by school | Science](#)
- [IU locks down lab of distinguished professor of biology](#)
- [Federal authorities close access to Indiana University biology labs and offices](#)
- [Some IU biology labs shut down by USDA following year of federal scrutiny - Indiana Daily Student](#)

What you need to do by August 2026

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP [here](#). If you did not opt for an automatic renewal, you will be receiving an email (or several) from AAUP national and/or the chapter secretary to renew your membership. **Do not ignore it.** Better yet, get ahead of the game and renew it now, making it *automatic*. That way you'll never have to see those emails again.

RECRUIT A COLLEAGUE into AAUP membership. The victories we have scored this year, the hope that our new BFC leadership brings, and the continuing struggles we are facing all mean that our growing numbers increases our power in the struggle for academic freedom and integrity. When each of us has a conversation with a non-member colleague about these issues, we have our best chance to grow and to be able to better pressure the upper administration to listen to our concerns. So be part of that solution!

Looking forward to next year

AAUP national elections are also coming up and our own Russ Skiba has put his name up as a [candidate](#) for the Midwest region ([region 3](#) on the ballot). The vote will be held at the [AAUP Biennial Meeting](#) in June; given the size of our chapter, we qualify for two delegates to the meeting!

Finally, we thank everyone who voted for the change in our by-laws that now require the presence of at least 2 NTT faculty on the Executive Committee. In the fall you will become better acquainted with the AAUP leaders you helped elect, but here is the full slate:

Officers

- [Diane Henshel](#), President
- [Sandy Washburn](#), Vice-President
- [Chris Sapp](#), Secretary
- [nicholae.cline](#), Treasurer

EC Members

- [David McDonald](#), ex officio
- [John Carini](#), ex officio
- [Andy Bruno](#)
- [Alison Calhoun](#)
- [Roger Innes](#)
- [Trish Kerlé](#)
- [Sonia Lee](#)
- [Joe Varga](#)

It has been a great ride to write this content and help lead our struggle this academic year. I want to thank all my mates on the EC and especially the Communications Committee for all their work and support. Have a great summer everyone!

Maria Bucur, outgoing AAUP-IUB Vice-President

Stay connected / get involved

- Website: iubaaup.org
- Join or renew: iubaaup.org/join
- Contact: iubaaup@iu.edu
- Socials: @iubaaup
- Committees & working groups:
iubaaup.org/get-involved/committees-working-groups/