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The Whitten administration's proposed policy on Expressive Activity can only be understood as part of a bigger set of steps to control faculty and students and to take away our agency.

Pamela Whitten was hired through an irregular process by the Board of Trustees three years ago precisely to accomplish this mission. She still serves as President after a humiliating vote of no confidence simply because one person, the current Board of Trustees Chair Quinn Buckner, who served on the board when she was hired, still wants her to accomplish this mission so he can be reappointed by the governor of the state.

President Whitten was hired to do at IU precisely what she did in Georgia:

1. effectively end tenure, limit the autonomy of faculty, and end shared governance
2. destroy DEI programs,
3. undermine any activity in support of minorities and of marginalized populations,
4. shrink the liberal arts and social science to a minimum and turn IU into a university that churns out workers that do not think for themselves, and to
5. generally promote an agenda that pleases politicians in Indianapolis, such as weakening the Kinsey Institute

To accomplish her mission, this administration has been relying on mechanisms and strategies that were hardly ever used by past administrations:

1. The weaponization of the IUGC and its use to protect administration members
2. The securitization of campus life
3. Disregard and misrepresentation of IU and IUB policies while paying lip service to them
4. Appropriation of powers that are not clearly delineated
5. The use of sanctions and punishment to limit free speech and academic freedom
6. Threats of expulsion and severance to restrict labor rights
7. Overwhelming the IU community with changes to make it harder to resist them
8. Emasculating faculty shared governance institutions

Notice that these are some of the same policies used by dictatorial rulers who want to subvert democracy. We are literally witnessing a dictatorship being established at IU.

The proposed expressive activity policy helps the Whitten administration accomplish this mission:

1. By attempting to pass it during the summer when most faculty and students are away subverts participation. By asking the BoT to make it a policy, they are subverting the role of the Bloomington Faculty Council and of the University Faculty Council.
2. By further limiting the ability of faculty and students to dissent against an increasingly dictatorial administrative regime that is dismembering their institutional capacity to participate in shared governance
3. By making it practically impossible to plan protests that address urgent developments or administrative abuse with the “10-day” notice rule, distance rules, and the requirement that all signs must be approved by the university.
4. The suggested policy is clearly meant to allow the destruction of this camp, a thorn in the side of a university president who wants to demonstrate that no pro-Palestinian discourse exists on her campus
5. By banning activities that “prevents the transaction of the business of a lawful meeting, gathering, or procession,” the administration is ending the rare way for faculty and students to communicate with the trustees: anyone who would silently hold a sign at a public meeting such as those of the BoT can be arrested and possibly terminated. The more the administration isolates the trustees, the more they can influence them.
6. The proposed policy includes very harsh sanctions. This is an administration that pushes its own policies to the limit to clamp on dissent and they are giving themselves one more way to terminate students and fire staff and faculty.
7. The use of the language of “safety” and “security” gives the administration complete discretion to end free speech and protests without giving justification for its actions.

This proposed policy is a disaster. It is dangerous.

It is not meant to protect community safety; it is custom made to protect this authoritarian administration from dissent.

It will muzzle our students and faculty.

We must stop it.