

I am a member of IU administrative staff, and a community engagement professional. In the last few weeks, I have spoken with dozens of other staff members and community partners outside the university. Based on this perspective, I believe IU's proposed Expressive Activities policy will be a disaster for the entire community.

IU Administration's actions over the past several years have significantly degraded conditions for workers. Administration's strategic plan places significant pressure on staff. We are pinched between a strategic plan that demands staff take on higher workloads, and a budget that cuts crucial staff, defunds important programs, and adfads. Staff is also asked to implement Administration's decisions in day-to-day operations, with those of us in the frontline forced making up for poor communication and taking the heat for poor decision-making. The Expressive Activities policy is the tip of the iceberg of ways staff has been pushed to brink by this Administration's approach to higher education, where staff is treated as nothing more than a budget line.

Staff members are already in a precarious position. We have almost no protections against arbitrary disciplining and firing. Staff see problems adding up and also have a deep stake in making the University more fair, just and equitable. But, I have spoken to dozens of staff members who all feel alone, isolated, and fear retaliation if they speak up. The New Expressive activities policy adds to an already severe culture of fear on campus. This policy creates a new minefield for workers who want to express themselves and advocate, but don't fall in line with IU Administration's hard-line positions. The policy even threatens our ability to participate in legally protected labor activities like organizing for better working conditions if those activities ever involve space on campus.

Furthermore, as a community engagement professional, I am deeply familiar with the impacts of IU Administration's policies on community partners who make immeasurable contributions to students' education. IU's strategic plan calls for increased community engagement and experiential learning opportunities for students, with no regard on the burden it's already placing on its local community. Our community doesn't have the luxury of being apolitical. Our community partners are facing structural equality head on, and advocacy is a core pillar of their work. IU's suppression of protests on campus and extreme Expressive Activities policy are already damaging trust between campus and community. Partners no longer know if they will be safe to do their routine work on campus.

When we are honest about the true intentions of the policy, it is clearly punitive retaliation for the protests by the Pro-Palestine protestors and the graduate workers, both of whom have revealed the hypocrisy in the Administration's claim that students are their priority. But the Administration's single-minded pursuit of that punishment seriously threatens freedom of expression for the entire community. The policy is so broad and extreme that to rigorously apply it would lock out staff and community partners completely, and to selectively apply it would be an injustice that unreparably severs trust from the IU community.