

My name is Michael McCarthy, I'm a graduate student in the Department of Political Science here at IU and I'm also the Financial Officer of the Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition-United Electrical Workers. The IGWC-UE is the representative of a majority of Student Academic Appointees on this campus. I'm here today to tell you that the new Board of Trustees policy to restrict freedom of speech is also nakedly an attempt to silence organized labor at IU. And trying that is a mistake.

As public sector employees in the State of Indiana and furthermore as employees who are also students, our legal rights to organize and collectively bargain are already nearly nonexistent. Despite our union maintaining large majorities since our initial card drive in 2021, the University is under no legal obligation to recognize us and has, to date, never tried. Despite these obstacles, we have executed two recognition strikes. We have shut this campus down twice already. And we did so using our freedoms of speech and assembly on the campus of this great public university.

We have reason to believe that some of the tactics we deployed in our most recent strike, in April of this year, were specifically prohibited by the policy in order to curtail our efforts to organize our workplace. The right to organize a labor union and collectively bargain is a human right. The attempt to limit our ability to picket, hand out leaflets, post flyers, or even speak with our coworkers on campus is thus a violation of our human rights. We will not let that violation go quietly. The policy is intended to shut us up and shut down our effort to seek union recognition.

But every time the Board and the administration of this university have tried to shut us down, they have failed. Let me be very clear now: it is we who will shut you down. You can try to intimidate us, silence us, arrest us, but we run this university: not you. Your policy is illegal, and your authority has no basis in shared governance. Against your administrators, we have 1500 graduate workers; against your Board, we have a massive coalition of faculty, staff, and students; against your attempts to silence and disperse our union we have the strength of organized labor not only on this campus, but at IU-Indianapolis and Purdue, and in graduate programs and other workplaces across this nation. You cannot get away with this; we will stop you.

Michael McCarthy

Financial Officer – Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition-United Electrical Workers

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