Resolution on Strike Contingency Planning and SAA Supervision

Whereas the newly released Individual Contract for Student Academic Appointee (SAA) is designed as a response to the spring 2022 graduate employee strike;

Whereas the provost asserts in a June 30 letter to Bloomington faculty, staff, and SAAs that the contract “is a direct result of student and faculty guidance, which highlighted concerns about the scope of some SAA workloads and a lack of documentation about workload expectations;”

Whereas student guidance was indicated by over two-thirds of SAAs signing union cards;

Whereas faculty guidance was indicated by over 1900 faculty members who voted by overwhelming majority to assert the centrality of departments and programs in supervising and appointing SAAs;

Whereas the language of the contract, including threats to withhold pay from SAAs who “willfully decline to perform their work responsibilities,” is not addressed at an issue identified by faculty or graduate employees but targeted specifically at the strike;

Whereas provisions about recording and storing AI course grades according to new school supervisory plans are likewise not based on an issue identified by faculty, but respond to the strike with a focus on surveillance and control rather than trust and professionalism;

Whereas experienced graduate student instructors deemed sufficiently capable to function independently in the classroom, without direct supervision by a faculty member, should have authority to assign grades and to formulate class policies in consonance with established curricular guidelines according to current VPFAA policy BL-ACA-C6;

Whereas the contract, through the school supervisory plans explicitly tied to it, mandates the use of Canvas for all graduate students instructors contrary to BL-ACA-C6 and to AAUP norms which accord individual instructors the authority to determine the extent, form, and manner in which learning management technologies should be used;

Whereas the AAUP notes in Academic Freedom and Electronic Communications that “surreptitious recording of classroom speech and activity may exert a chilling effect on the academic freedom of both professors and students” and pervasive use of information technology has occasioned distinct threats to academic freedom from administrators able to monitor social media and surveil course communications;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the IUB-AAUP calls on

1) department chairs and program directors not to make contingency plans that would include replacing the work of striking SAAs;

2) the administration to a) recognize that faculty and graduate students cannot be mandated by the administration to use any specific learning management system including Canvas; and b) to honor the guidance of faculty in support of the unionization of graduate employees.