

Indiana University Graduate & Professional Student Government Presidential Platform

*Kathleen Simunek – Voice Performance
Candidate for GPSG Presidency*

Introduction

Dear Graduate & Professional Student Government,

I am honored to present my platform as a candidate for President of the Graduate & Professional Student Government (GPSG) at Indiana University Bloomington. My vision for this position is: to be a stabilizing and reliable leader while upholding the duties of campus communication, empowering student advocacy initiatives, and encouraging a culture of collaboration within the graduate student body, across the university, and with leaders of other BIG10 Graduate Student Organizations.

During my time at Indiana University, I have watched the campus culture grow and change from the Covid-19 pandemic organization in the fall of 2020, to the impending state and federal threats that face graduate students of today. In a world that feel increasingly scrambled, it is important that leaders at all levels demonstrate a commitment to proactivity, strong organizational skills, and above all else integrity. This platform outlines my plans to achieve these goals and preserve the status of the Graduate and Professional Student Government as a vital organization at Indiana University.

1. A Stabilizing and Reliable Leader

1.1. Organizational Plan

- Pre-determine a reliable and organized system through which to facilitate General Assemblies (GA) and all voting processes.
- Follow the Robert's Rules of Order.
- Collaborate with the full Executive Committee to engrain a consistent and productive meeting time to communicate amongst ourselves for the betterment of GPSG.

- Condense resources for GPSG representatives to access all GPSG-related materials in one place.

1.2. Personal Accountability

- I will uphold the duties of President to the best of my ability, and work to restore the reputation of GPSG leadership on campus.
- I will view all members of the Executive Committee as equals and treat GPSG representatives with the utmost respect.
- I fully plan to support the efforts of the IGWC to improve the experience of graduate student workers by establishing a bargaining unit as a collaboration between the IGWC and GPSG. However, I am not a member of the Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition (IGWC) and therefore am free to speak critically of them if they are not upholding a strong ethical standard in their actions. Having a president who is not an IGWC member may increase the GPSG's integrity in the eyes of university administration.
- I plan to limit my "available" hours to 9am – 4pm, with the exception of emergencies, to ensure that I do not burn out early in my term.

2. Duties of Campus Communication

2.1. Transparent Communication with Representatives

- Respecting representatives' time by ensuring that the information distributed during GA is comprehensive and as complete as possible.
- Clearly communicating the schedule and materials for upcoming GA's via email to all representatives a week prior to meeting.

- Encourage productive and respectful debates and discussions within committees and at GA.

2.2. Thoughtful Communication with Executive Members

- Maintaining a healthy and supportive environment for Executive Committee members to discuss committee plans, as well as share concerns.
- Serve as a moderator for inter-Executive Committee disagreements.
- A no-tolerance policy for bullying, threatening, or otherwise hateful actions.

2.3. Communication with University Deans

- Establish biweekly/monthly meetings with the Deans of each of the 16 degree-granting colleges and schools at Indiana University.
- Weekly meetings with Dean Daleke of the Indiana University Graduate School.

2.4. Communication with the Indiana University Student Government (IUSG)

- Establish weekly/biweekly check-ins with the IUSG leadership to communicate and collaborate initiatives that will benefit graduate students.

2.5. Communication with the Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition

- As needed, meet with leadership and members of the IGWC to collaborate on mutually beneficial goals.
- Support the goals of the IGWC through a close partnership to provide a voice of support to university administration on graduate workers behalf.
- Listen to the concerns of graduate workers who speak out against disparities in the IGWC.
- As needed, compromise with the IGWC to take action to support graduate workers who feel they are not being fairly represented in the IGWC.

3. Student Advocacy Initiatives

3.1. Empower Committee Chairs to Support Representative Initiatives

- Maintain clear and honest communication about campus happenings and provide the information necessary to organize and successfully run each committee by ensuring all GPSG documents are in an easily accessible and organized location for committee chairs to access.
- Have an open conversation among GPSG members to consider the merits of committee chairs as co-authors of resolutions and adapting the GPSG bylaws to enable this action.

3.2. Responsibly Report Results of GPSG Actions and Resolutions

- GPSG members and the community at large are best empowered to advocate for change when they can observe the subsequent results of their actions.
- Resolutions, letters, and other initiatives of the GPSG will have their progress and outcome thoroughly tracked and communicated on a public platform.

4. Collaboration

4.1. Collaborate within the BIG10 to Accomplish Goals

- Establish a line of communication with graduate organization Presidents at each BIG10 University to collaborate initiatives and support our community of graduate students.
- Working in conjunction with other BIG10 organizations serves to increase bargaining efforts across multiple universities.

4.2. Collaborate with On-Campus Organizations

- Continue collaboration with the valuable campus Culture Centers to maintain their value amongst the student body and vicariously demonstrate student support for their efforts.
- Collaboration with colleges and schools on campus in efforts to benefit the graduate student experience.

4.3. Collaboration with the Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition

- Collaborate with the IGWC to achieve mutually beneficial goals, contingent upon their actions remaining in good standing with GPSG by following through on mutual agreements of action and demonstrating an effort to eliminate negative bias/treatment of marginalized IGWC members.
- Uplift and respond to the voices of workers who do not feel heard or considered in prior IGWC actions and assemblies.

5. GPSG Retention Plan

- I believe the best way to maintain and grow engagement within any organization is to ensure that participants feel they have a voice. By enabling GPSG representatives to communicate effectively amongst themselves and with their electorates, they will have a more rewarding and positive experience.
- I will support the creation of a comprehensive system for the use of GPSG representatives to access information regarding:
 - Expectations of GPSG membership
 - Representative names, contact information, and electorate
 - Committee members

- Attendance tracking, including the amount of missed absences allowed/used for each member

Conclusion

I am committed to serving and advocating for the Indiana University graduate and professional student community. As president, I will act as a leader who uplifts the decisions and goals of GPSG and the community we represent. I will work diligently with our representatives and all graduate students to highlight and advocate for their own needs, rather than my own political positions. In this time of uncertainty, we can join our respective areas of strength to make our voices heard to ensure continued momentum down a path of support, inclusivity, and compassion at Indiana University Bloomington and across BIG10 universities.

Sincerely,

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