

**Name:** Sam Schleich

**Area of Study:** Physics

**Email:** [samjschl@iu.edu](mailto:samjschl@iu.edu)

**Phone Number:** (605) 999-2780

My name is Sam, and I am a second year PhD student in Physics, studying neutrinoless double beta decay and excited state decays. Before coming to Indiana University, I received my B.S. in Physics from the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology.

With the blatant attacks on higher education, it is certainly clear that graduate students face waning agency and rising uncertainties in their futures. GPSG, in conjunction with the IGWC, still stands as effective tools to combat these attacks if utilized strategically—which they must. We must continue to speak critically of any University or State policies or decisions that negatively impact us or higher education. We must continue to provide safe platforms for students to voice their grievances. We must continue to advocate for graduate student rights as many face greater and greater uncertainties in funding, jobs, or even their right to be here.

I currently serve as the Physics Department's representative to GPSG as well as the President of the Physics Department's graduate student government. I am also a Department Organizer within the IGWC for Physics. During my undergraduate studies, I served as the Vice President of the SDSMT student government as well as the Vice President of the South Dakota Student Federation—the body that oversees all six public universities in South Dakota. I leveraged these positions to lobby and work with state legislators to pass legislation at the state level, securing additional funding for mental health resources for students across the state. I also advocated for higher education and research needs. Serving in these positions has taught me valuable lessons in how to effectively communicate with University and State administrations, which I believe to be necessary to continue to make GPSG an effective governing body.

I would like to explore and advocate for an easy, free pathway for graduate students to attain teaching licensing during their tenure here at IU, creating an emphasis on teaching and career preparation, as many graduate students desire to teach later in their careers. This would create opportunities to gain experience through local schools—namely as substitute teachers—and serve as a means to generate additional income while still enrolled. This dually addresses the growing teacher shortage nationwide and provides graduate students with additional career pathways.

I appreciate you taking your time to read this and thank you for your consideration.