

Board of Trustees, Indiana University
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Dear Trustees,

The IU Indianapolis chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) writes to express concern regarding the recent directive from the Media School to the *Indiana Daily Student* (IDS), the subsequent termination of Student Media Director Jim Rodenbush, and the cancellation of the print version of the IDS.

[According to the IDS](#), the university sought to halt news coverage entirely in an upcoming “Homecoming” issue. When Mr. Rodenbush declined to enforce that order, consistent with both the [IDS Student Media Charter](#) and First Amendment law, his employment was terminated.

On Wednesday October 15, [IU announced](#), just hours before the next issue was to publish, they will permanently shut down all IDS print editions, claiming a “shift to digital.” IDS editors say this is not about print media, but about retaliation of independent student journalism and undermining financial and editorial freedom.

These actions raise serious concerns about IU’s commitment to academic freedom, shared governance, and freedom of the press, which are all central to IU’s public mission and reputation. These actions follow recent news that IU was recently rated the [lowest public university in the nation for free speech](#) by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), an organization the AAUP and many faculty strongly support.

Available information suggests budgetary constraints were not the primary factor behind this decision; that rationale, however, was put forth after the censorship directive was issued. Such timing gives the appearance that a financial justification was used to defend a decision made on other grounds.

As several members of the IU Board of Trustees have experience as attorneys, broadcasters, and advocates for free speech, we believe this board is uniquely positioned to help reaffirm that IU’s commitment to freedom of speech includes independent student journalism and faculty discretion in upholding those principles. We note, in particular, Trustee Bopp’s distinguished career as a First Amendment litigator, defending free speech rights and political expression.

We urge you to help ensure IU reasserts its dedication to those same values on campus. Accordingly, we respectfully ask that you:

1. Initiate an independent review surrounding the directive and Mr. Rodenbush’s dismissal.
2. Request a public reaffirmation of IU’s protection of student editorial independence, freedom of the press, and academic freedom; First Amendment Rights.
3. Ensure future decisions involving student media are guided by shared governance and transparency rather than administrative expedience.

Indiana University’s long-standing reputation as a leader in journalism and higher education depends on academic freedom, freedom of the press, and the active support and endorsement of these values by the IU administration .

Thank you for your attention.

Respectfully,

IU Indianapolis AAUP Executive Committee

Submitted by the Executive Committee of the IU AAUP chapter, with approval from a majority of its members. We write as IU faculty and AAUP members, not as representatives of Indiana University, and we are not using university resources or email systems for this communication.

cc: IU Indianapolis Faculty Council, INAAUP (Indiana), and AAUP National