Indiana University - Bloomington
Graduate & Professional Student Government

Resolution on Access to High-Speed VPN

Whereas, international students and scholars of Indiana University Bloomington must participate in long-distance online courses and/or programs outside the United States because of U.S. travel restrictions during the pandemic of COVID-19;

Whereas, IU online education relies, at least in part, on services provided by U.S. companies, such as Google, Instructure (Canvas), and Zoom;

Whereas, certain countries or regions[1] block Google services, and slow down the access speed of other U.S. services;

Whereas, almost 40% of IU international students are from the aforementioned countries or regions;

Whereas, IU's mission is "to provide broad access to undergraduate and graduate education for students throughout Indiana, the United States, and the world, as well as outstanding academic and cultural programs and student services;"

Whereas, a survey of Chinese students shows that they often have to purchase VPNs that can circumvent geo-blocking, costing students an average of $3-15 per month;

Whereas, a VPN is a necessary student service for those living physically in the aforementioned countries, as necessary as Wi-Fi for students at the campus.

Whereas, international students have consistently highlighted that their ability to study and engage in research is severely hindered without a VPN;
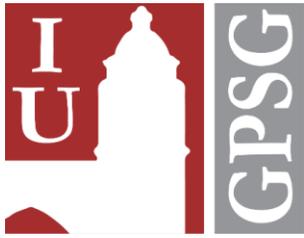
Whereas, IU VPN (Indiana University SSL VPN Service) is considered outdated and is too slow to provide students a true alternative to purchasing their own VPN;

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Therefore, be it resolved by the Graduate and Professional Student Government Assembly that:

GPSG advocates for IU international students' equal access to online education, research, and activities.

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[1] Such as China, Crimea, Cuba, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria

GPSG calls on the university to provide detailed guides to all students on how to obtain and use private, cost-effective VPN's.

GPSG advocates for the University to adopt an international solution to address the above VPN challenges, and the following actions are the General Assembly's current recommendations with the goal being to achieve a download speed of at least 25 Mbps across all times and locations tests:

a) The University will update the IU VPN and improve its speed to the commercial level. IU may configure VPN servers, such as Microsoft Azure or Amazon Web Services, to accelerate the speed of IU VPN in the aforementioned countries' networks. Thereby, its tested download speed should be at least 25 Mbps across all times and locations tested;

b) The University will purchase a commercial VPN for the University community and include it in IUware. Thereby, its download speed should be at least 25 Mbps across all times and locations tested;

c) The University will subsidize the expense of a VPN for international students, or American students, who are currently enrolled at IU while residing in one of the aforementioned countries. The amount of the subsidy per student should no less than $5 per month and shall be provided to a student each semester; or

d) The University shall discount the mandatory fees for international students, or American students, who are currently enrolled at IU while residing in one of the aforementioned countries. The amount of the discount per student should be no less than $5 per student, and the discount shall be applied each semester.

GPSG advocates that, in the event that the University establishes an updated VPN, subsidy, or discount, the university shall not charge or increase any fees (mandatory fees, international student fees, etc.) for the cost of the adopted action.

Respectfully submitted to and passed by the Graduate and Professional Student Government Assembly on this [insert day] day of [month], [year].

Dakota Coates
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GPSG President

11/6/2020
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Date