

**Name:** Andrew Guenther

**Area of Study:** JD - Maurer School of Law | MPA - O'Neill School

**Email:** ajguenth@iu.edu

**Phone Number:** 812-837-7420

**Introduction/Experience:**

Hello, everyone! My name is Andrew Guenther, and I am running for President of GPSG for the 2023-2024 academic year. Before sharing my platform with you, I would like to share a bit of information about myself and why I believe I am qualified to serve you all as President this upcoming year.

I am currently entering the final year of my four-year joint degree program. I am seeking my Juris Doctor at the Maurer School of Law and my Master of Public Affairs at the O'Neill School of Public & Environmental Affairs. I also have my Master of Environmental Sustainability and my Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs from the O'Neill School. I originally moved to Bloomington from Valparaiso, Indiana, in 2013, fell in love, and never left.

I served GPSG previously as Sustainability Officer, shepherding a number of resolutions through the General Assembly and making the necessary contacts to get those resolutions moving toward final enactment. Previously I served as the M.E.S. Program Representative and JD Program Representative to the General Assembly and a member of the Awards Committee. I also have served IU students as a member of the IU Student Government Congress, both as an undergraduate and as a graduate student, and as Director of Social Advocacy for the IU Residence Hall Association. I have also served on over 20 campus and community boards/committees. During my extended time at Indiana University, I have proposed several well-accepted policies, prominently the IU Preferred Name Policy, which enabled all students to use a preferred name on their student ID/registration materials instead of their legal name. This was a landmark policy change for transgender and gender-binary non-conforming students at Indiana University. Other policy proposals focused on sustainability, mental health, student safety, and diversity/equity/inclusion initiatives.

I believe my history of service to my fellow Indiana University students makes me exceptionally qualified to serve as President of GPSG. I will use this experience to lead my administration in making substantial, positive changes to the Indiana University community. I propose the following 6 platform planks to the membership of GPSG, which will guide my administration over the upcoming academic year, to improve Indiana University for all graduate students:

### **Platform Point #1: Supporting the Graduate Workers Coalition**

Like my predecessors, I will carry on GPSG's recent tradition of vigorously supporting the GWC at every possible turn. Not only must we continue to fight for union recognition at all levels of university governance, but we must make the GWC's goals the goals of GPSG as well. I will support the continued representation of the GWC within GPSG and will champion proposals brought forth by their membership for our members to consider. We must work together to achieve our shared goals.

### **Platform Point #2: Sustainability**

As our world economy and climate change present us with new challenges, we must adapt and grow to meet the needs of our current times. As Indiana University plans new projects, builds new buildings, and considers renovations to current infrastructure, GPSG should be at the forefront of leading the charge for positive change, ranging from increased infrastructure for non-automobile transportation, climate change mitigation, renewable and clean energy investment/production, and so much more. I fought for these interests as Sustainability Officer and will continue to fight for them as GPSG President.

### **Platform Point #3: Cost of Living**

In order to adequately protect the rights of all graduate students, GPSG should push the university to factor in the increased cost of living, as well as inflation, when evaluating graduate student salaries, stipends, and other monetary benefits for potential increases. No graduate students should be priced out of their program because the cost of living has increased to a point where they can no longer pay the bills. The university owes graduate students a duty to support those under its charge to the best of its ability - allowing inflation to eat away at the savings or already-slim income streams of students is not fulfilling that duty. I will always push the Administration to provide better benefits to graduate students and workers.

### **Platform Point #4: Mental Health**

I value the mental health of myself and my fellow graduate students with the utmost care and concern. Graduate students are under immense pressure from a variety of sources and should be supported from a mental health standpoint. The university should expand existing mental healthcare services and, in larger departments, provide in-house mental healthcare resources as well.

### **Platform Point #5: Protecting Graduate Students from Outside Challenges**

As governments and courts seek to roll back the rights of certain groups of people (i.e. women, LGBT+ community members, etc.) GPSG must demand that Indiana University pledge to protect, preserve, and provide these rights or benefits to impacted communities. For example, efforts to roll back medical care for LGBT+ individuals or women must be combated by lending legal aid to impacted individuals, providing medical plans and benefits that include those services when possible, and programs designed to preserve the medical care access and rights of marginalized communities at Indiana University.

**Platform Point #6: Procedural Changes for GPSG**

I believe that any organization or government functions best when it is able to function efficiently, clearly, and easily. I believe GPSG could benefit from some limited, but important changes to how it operates. With the advice and consent of an ad hoc committee of executive committee officers and General Assembly members, I will propose some limited structural and procedural changes to how GPSG operates to the next General Assembly. The goals of these changes will be primarily to improve the creation and flow of ideas through the GPSG to the university administration. Of course, I will also entertain proposals from members of the ad hoc committee, as well as the General Assembly as a whole, on how to improve GPSG.

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