

# COGS

Campaign to Organize Graduate Students

## PAY IT BACK!

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### RALLY AGAINST STUDENT DEBT!

Wednesday, October 22, 12:00 Noon  
Pentacrest, Old Capitol Steps

#### FRIDAY HAPPY HOUR

Friday, October 24, 6:00 pm, Old Capitol Brew Works. First beer or soda is on the union.

#### COGS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, October 30, 5:00 pm, 107 EPB. VOTE on COGS contract proposals to the Board of Regents!

#### COGS NEGOTIATIONS

Union Proposal, Monday, November 3, 10:00 am Location TBA.

Regents Proposal, Monday, November 17, 12:00 pm, Location TBA.

#### UE LOCAL 896 COGS CAMPAIGN TO ORGANIZE GRADUATE STUDENTS

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## FEE Actions Around Campus

A delegation of seven Studio Arts graduate employees: Heidi Bartlett, Stephanie Brohman, Naoki Izumo, Corinne Teed, Kyle Peets, Alex Hanson, and Jessica Pleyel spoke to their department administrator about the impact of administrative fees on graduate students.

“Our graduate advisor is extremely supportive of the grad students in SA and it was important for the students that went to show their appreciation of her and to tell her about the fees that have been negatively affecting students across campus,” said COGS Blue Area Steward, Naoki Izumo.

Cinema graduate employees approached their DEO about fees. COGS VP Kelly Gallagher reports that, “We talked about how fees are hurting the graduate students, and asked for an email or call to Dean Keller. She said she will definitely be bringing this up with him and with other faculty in our department. She immediately went and spoke about the issue with the Director of Graduate Studies.”

After circulating a petition among Math graduate employees, Department Stewards, Colin Grove and Alejandro Samaniego convinced the Math faculty to unanimously approve the following statement: **"The Department of Mathematics supports the petition for the abolishment of student fees for TAs and RAs."**

Graduate employees in Sociology, Anthropology, Physics, History, American Studies, Journalism and others also approached faculty in their departments about the burden of administrative fees.

# Iowa grad students, colleges grapple with financial concerns

By Vanessa Miller, The Gazette

Published: October 3 2014

IOWA CITY — Eight months from now, Melissa Zimdars will get to add three hard-earned letters to the end of her name — Ph.D. But those letters didn't come cheap. Upon completing her education in communication and media studies — both undergraduate and graduate work — **the University of Iowa doctoral student will have racked up about \$60,000 in debt.**

“And I don't have kids,” Zimdars, 29, of Iowa City, said. “I don't know how people with children do it.”

**“Actually, I do. A lot of them go to the food pantry.”**



Zimdars, and many like her, said it's becoming increasingly difficult for graduate students to make ends meet. They said they are working harder for the universities, receiving low wages, paying higher out-of-pocket fees, and facing a more uncertain job market once they do graduate — often with significant debt.

**“What Iowa as a state needs to do is to go back to funding universities instead of passing off operating costs onto students through things like fees, which have gone up a crazy amount,”** Zimdars said. “It's in the state's interest and the citizens' interest to have high-quality and globally recognized universities, but if you're not willing to fund them, that puts the financial burden on the students.”

**The UI's Campaign to Organize Graduate Students, or COGS, is planning an anti-debt rally during the Oct. 22 and 23 Board of Regents meeting on the UI campus.** The idea, according to COGS leaders, is to unify students, faculty and adjunct professors who are affected by mounting debt and declining state support.

Jeannette Gabriel, a UI graduate student and president of the university's Campaign to Organize Graduate Students, said that as much as they'd like the university to increase graduate pay and assistance and decrease fees, the discussion needs to be focused on the state.

“There is this acceptance to fight over crumbs instead of taking on the larger issue, which is that the state has the money and is making the political choice to defund public education,” Gabriel said. **“It doesn't help us to scramble over the crumbs that are left behind. That only will destroy public education in Iowa.”**



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