

# Discriminatory Fees Hurt Int'l Students

By Julia Shalakwa

International graduate workers' expenses are way higher than those of their American colleagues, especially in our first semester. In addition to the standard fees, we are asked to pay for international student orientation, health screenings (for example, a TB test), the mandatory English Proficiency Exam (EPE), as well as the International Student Fee (ISF). While many are one-time charges, the ISF is not; it costs us \$125 per semester.



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The international student fee has been in place since 2000-01 and according to the International Student and Scholar Services "is used exclusively by International Student and Scholar Services

to cover the cost of staffing, fees, and licenses required to provide immigration services and support for those on an international student visa [F1]. It is also used to provide ISSS programs and workshops to promote inter-

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cultural learning, adjustment, and internationalization for students, staff, and faculty" (University Website).

In my opinion, the problem with this fee is not about how the money is spent or even why it has increased considerably, over \$50 in the last couple of years. ISSS explains it very clearly and so far I haven't met any international grad-

uate worker concerned about transparency. What many of us don't understand, and don't agree with, is as graduate workers receiving a fee scholarship for 50% of the mandatory fees for fall and spring semesters, then why are we required to pay the ISF in full. Why do we have to pay \$250 more than our American colleagues to work here?

Just like the "Records and Documents" fee, the ISF is not classified as "mandatory fee," and therefore cannot be covered by the COGS fee scholarship—even though every international graduate worker is required to pay it. COGS is currently working with other student organizations, such as the Graduate Student Employment Committee, to both clarify fee language at the university-wide level and to achieve the goal of 100% fee coverage. No one should have to pay to work. Until the Board of Regents and the University agrees to fully cover all fees, they will always have a mechanism to extract more money from graduate workers whenever they see fit. Support the COGS campaign for 100% fee coverage for graduate workers at UI. No Fees for Employees! ●

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