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ISU Graduate Workers Union Hold Silent Protest Against ISU Attempt to Deny Free Speech

Bloomington, IL – The Graduate Workers Union at ISU held a silent protest in front of Hovey Hall against ISU’s attempt to deny TA’s their first amendment right to free speech.

The workers have been negotiating their first contract since October 2019. During that time ISU has offered nothing to address the overwhelming poverty and debt TAs encounter by coming to work and study at the university. After two months of working with a federal mediator, ISU has made little to no movement.

Most recently, ISU has sought to subvert workers’ first amendment right to free speech by demanding the Union agree to language that would allow ISU to discipline (up to and including discharge) any TA who “encourages” another union to strike or pickets with that union while they are on strike.

“The right to strike is guaranteed under law. The right to free speech is guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States. Supporting fellow union workers is a fundamental principle within the labor movement. We will not bow down to ISU’s attempt to strip us of our fundamental rights,” said the Graduate Workers Union in a statement they provided to onlookers.

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SEIU Local 73 represents more than 29,000 workers, primarily in public service and publicly funded positions in school districts, municipalities, social service agencies, and

many other job classifications in Illinois and Indiana. We are dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families.