

June 3, 2026

Pamela Whitten
President, Indiana University
iupres@iu.edu

David Tolchinsky
Dean, The Media School
mschdean@iu.edu

David A. Reingold
Chancellor, Indiana University Bloomington
blchance@iu.edu

Michael Arnold
Executive Director, Integrated Public Media
mikearno@iu.edu

John Giorciari
Interim Provost and Executive Vice
Chancellor, Indiana University Bloomington
provost@iu.edu

Sent via Email

Re: Task Force on Editorial Independence and Sustainability of Student Media

Dear President Whitten, Chancellor Reingold, Interim Provost Giorciari, Dean Tolchinsky and Executive Director Arnold:

We, the undersigned 14 national organizations that advocate for journalists and press freedom, write to you to underscore key points of the Task Force on Editorial Independence and Sustainability's report and to urge you to move forward with measures that respect and enhance student media's editorial independence.

Our organizations remain deeply concerned by Indiana University's actions last fall, which significantly undermined the independence of the Indiana Daily Student and the reputation of The Media School. The IDS is more than a student newspaper — it is a nationally respected training ground for budding journalists, a critical source of community information, and a living example of democratic values in action. Weakening its independence erodes all these functions.

We are encouraged, however, by the Task Force's roadmap for the future of student media at IU, and particularly by the optimism it brought to the IDS student leaders who participated in its creation. The credibility of this process now depends on whether IU follows through.

Now is the time for IU to demonstrate its stated commitment to robust student media by putting that roadmap into action. Specifically, we urge IU to publicly commit to a clear implementation timeline for the Task Force's recommendations, including enforceable protections for editorial independence, meaningful student representation in student media governance and a sustainable funding structure that cannot be used to influence or punish editorial coverage.

First and foremost, as the Task Force makes clear, editorial independence is a defining feature of the IDS, WIUX, IU Student Television and their success, and it should be your North Star in any decisions moving forward. We couldn't have said it better: "A strong, independent Student Media ecosystem improves student learning and success, public trust, recruitment and alumni engagement, and strengthens the university's legal position." To help ensure these lessons are not easily forgotten, we encourage each of you to engage in regular conversations with the professional and student staff of student media. Those conversations should focus on governance, resources, challenges and long-term sustainability — not editorial review, approval or influence over coverage.

We also applaud the inclusion of student leaders in the Task Force, and we urge The Media School to make that permanent. The Task Force's work reflects the strength of the ideas, shared values and common purpose that can be brought forward when decisions about the future of student media include those most affected — and most steeped in how those ideas can be accomplished. The proposed Student Media Advisory Board should include the student leaders of each student media outlet.

The Task Force has identified several promising opportunities to bolster student media's finances and secure long-term viability. Ultimately, though, success here will depend on whether The Media School and the university provide the outlets with meaningful investment, flexibility and support to pursue those opportunities.

As [Mia Hilkwitz and Andrew Miller wrote](#), "The IDS has made good-faith efforts to find a solution with the university. Now, the ball is in its court."

Just as we were last fall, the nation's press freedom community is paying close attention to what IU does next. How you respond in this moment will shape IU's national reputation as a place that either protects or undermines student press freedom. We are eager to see bold leadership that secures strong, independent student media at IU for decades to come, and we stand ready to help as needed.

Respectfully,

Student Press Law Center
Associated Collegiate Press
College Media Association
Foundation for Individual Rights and
Expression
Freedom of the Press Foundation
Journalism & Women Symposium (JAWS)
Journalism Education Association

The Media and Democracy Project
National Scholastic Press Association
PEN America
Quill & Scroll
Radio Television Digital News Association
Reporters Committee for Freedom of the
Press
Society of Professional Journalists