

# THE AMPLIFIER

YOUR UNION, YOUR VOICE

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## *A Message from our President, Anna Wilcoxon Excerpts from letter issued 11-17-2020*

You may have heard by now that the Illinois Department of Public Health has recommended all Illinois residents stay home as much as possible for the next few weeks (until the beginning of December).

We understand how hard it can be to spend the holidays alone. We understand how the difficulties of this year make that loneliness potentially even more painful. But we do urge you to heed the advice from medical experts and reconsider any plans you may have for in-person holiday gatherings with anyone from outside your home, or anywhere out of town. We understand the sacrifice this is, and many of us are making that sacrifice along with you. We hope that the good news of effective vaccines potentially becoming available in the spring can help us to stay strong through this winter, and make smart and safe choices for ourselves, our families, and our communities, both at home (wherever that may be for you) and here in Carbondale.

If you were planning on travelling for Thanksgiving but have since altered your plans to stay in Carbondale and are experiencing any food insecurity or psychological distress, please reach out to us so we can point you in the direction of services on campus that can help. As always, we are here for you, we've got your back, and we are working to do what is best for all of us. Please take care of yourself and others this holiday season.

## *Virtual Office Hours*

### *One More Chance to Come and Chat with us!*

Whether you have questions about timesheets, an issue with your job, membership benefits, or how you can help, members of the GAU Executive Committee are ready to provide you with the answers, or at least point you in the right direction!

Waiting rooms have been created and will be completely confidential. Just use the Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/97442540316>

Virtual Office Hours are available from 1pm-2pm on the following dates: **December 4<sup>th</sup>: Anna Wilcoxon and Alex Lockwood**

## *Urgent Reminder from IT Multi-factor Authentication*

GAU is reminding our members that SIUC students need to sign up for the multi-factor authentication before next semester to avoid being locked out of your email, D2L, and Salukinet. It may also leave you unable to register for classes, drop classes, and/or change vital information.

We want to make sure that no graduate student has issues when you return in the Spring.

We ask that you enroll in the multi-factor authentication, as soon as possible.

To make things easier, Information Technology has made a video, which can be found at: <https://youtu.be/IVpL5CC3Xqg>

Additionally, more detailed instructions can be found on the IT website at: <https://oit.siu.edu/credentials/mfa.php>



## Stewards Chosen for 2020-2021

*OJ Duncan, Steward Council  
Chair, on the lookout for  
more volunteers.*

GAU is happy to announce our brand-spanking new herd of volunteer Stewards for school year 2020-2021.

**Tao Zhang, Communication  
Studies**

**Adam Turl, Mass  
Communication and Media  
Arts**

**Logan Plummer, History**

**Wesley Caulkins, Music**

**Shawn Xia**

Stewards serve many important functions for GAU. They are there to hear about any of our member's concerns, they bring awareness to the issues that graduate assistants face, and they work with the VP of Membership to help recruit graduate students into becoming dues paying members.

If you are interested in becoming a Steward, contact OJ at:  
[gau.siu@gmail.com](mailto:gau.siu@gmail.com)

## Graduate Assistants United: On the Horizon

On Thursday, February 18th from 5pm-6pm, GAU will be hosting a Listening and Learning Session with Chancellor Lane via zoom (link below). This is a graduate assistant/student only session and is an opportunity for us to provide the Chancellor with our perspectives on what is and is not working at SIU, and what improvements can be made to better the experience of being a GA at SIU. Therefore, for each of our newsletters leading up to the Listening and Learning Session, we will inform you of an issue for your consideration, and that you may want to discuss at the session.

First, we want to let you know that in 2021, our Student Health Insurance cost will likely be increasing to over \$1000 a semester for the first time. Since 2016, SIUC Student Health Insurance Plan premiums have skyrocketed, largely driven by a reduction in student enrollment. In fact, this most recent proposed increase would mean a 162% increase since 2016 alone. While this is not an issue GAU can negotiate on, we understand that this is an issue that deeply affects our members. We are told that this is the best deal we can get, but we share your frustrations that the declines in enrollment continue to be shouldered by the student population, particularly the GA population, which has not seen any substantial or comparable increase in our pay. If these are also concerns you have, we want to hear from you, both via email and at our Listening and Learning Session in February. So, reach out and let us know your thoughts, and mark your calendars for February 18th at 5pm!

Listening and Learning zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/95582192301?pwd=QXRpTHpQRy9nOzVtSG1IRnlLcDI4Zz09>

## We Want To Hear From You!

Throughout the year, President Wilcoxon will be participating in National meetings with Presidents of other Graduate Assistant Unions to amplify our representation within the NEA.

Whether they are issues about austerity measures, or if you want the union to make an appeal for Graduate Student loans, contact Anna to bring them up in these meetings. Contact us with your concerns at: [gau.siu@gmail.com](mailto:gau.siu@gmail.com).

## Become A Member! Scan the QR Code

Please note when you fill this out, you MUST specify under "Membership Type" that you are "Higher Education – Quarter Time (Less than 10 hours)". Do not select a higher "Type", as this will result in paying more dues than is necessary. This has been confirmed with the IEA Office. Once the form is filled out, President Wilcoxon will be notified, and we will mail you your free GAU mask!



Sign up [here](#) to receive our emails and monthly newsletter