

The Direction pretends that your problems have been resolved ! Really ?

Hello! As we are approaching the end of the semester we have some updates about ADAs and SIT representatives' work over the past months. We have some (cautiously) positive, some negative, and some concerning news to share with you.

Petition parliamentary update:

As we have shared before, given the absence of constructive proposals from the Institute to improve the working conditions of teaching assistants, we have been reaching out to parties other than the Direction and foundation board this year.

Notably, we have been in contact with the Geneva Department of Public Instruction (DIP), newspapers, and of course submitted a petition with 917 signatures to the Grand Conseil of Geneva.

After two years of mobilizations, besides partial victories such as the workload and transparency of working conditions, we may finally be seeing some fruits of our labour on the contractual front.

The Commission des Petitions, part of the Geneva Grand Conseil (the cantonal parliament) in charge of assessing petitions, **voted in favour of sending our petition to the Grand Conseil plenary, where this decision needed to be validated.** You can find in the attachment the document SIT an AdA submitted to the Commission, as well as [excerpts](#) from their audition with AdA and with the Direction and Foundation board.

The discussion at the 31 May Grand Conseil plenary on our Petition has been a shock. Unbeknownst to us, **the institute (represented by Charles Beer) seems to have told the members of parliament that constructive discussions have recently taken place between AdA and the direction and that the issue has since been resolved.** Furthermore, it was said that we agree that the issue should no longer be a priority. This was picked up by Ms. Meissner (LC) stating that it was an issue, but it no longer is. From this the members of the Grand Conseil concluded that Teaching Assistants no longer wish any intervention from the Conseil d'Etat. Finally, a party that supported us in the commission changed its vote, swaying the petition. This was of course a disappointment.

We wholly reject the Institute's statements, and if this was truly said by the Institute, we are shocked by the misrepresentation. We will request clarity on this question from the Conseil de Fondation. On the positive side, even if this specific petition will not lead to a response from the Conseil d'Etat to our questions, it appears that the issue has now caught the attention of a number of political parties and of the Geneva higher education sector.

Do not hesitate to reach out to ada.president@graduateinstitute.ch or cbarrelet@sit-syndicat.ch for any questions or doubts!

Recent media coverage:

Additionally, recently two articles based on testimony of IHEID teaching assistants were published in the regional press. These articles notably included the sharing of an excerpt from a 2020 working paper in which the Directrice, the Director of Studies and the Head of Research stated clearly that the division of TA salary into a salary and bourse “**is the product of the reform undertaken in 2015 to avoid paying social charges for them.**” This motivation is different from the purported desire to create a PhD following the Anglo-American model.¹

Now, for a little bit more positive news: Both journalists, working for the *Tribune de Genève* and *Le Courrier*, reached out to the DIP for a response on the issue. **The DIP has in these cases responded that the issue of TA precarity will be a subject in the 2025-2029 Convention d’Objectifs**, which sets out the conditions for the funding received by the Institute from the Canton. We do not know the exact phrasing of the clause, but we are looking forward to finding out and are cautiously optimistic.

The articles can be found [here](#) and [here](#).² A third article, restating the previous two, can be found [here](#). Additionally, an article appeared in the [Graduate Press](#) about the reality of living with the PhD funding Package.

A concerning email from the directrice:

On the the 9th of May (the holiday of Ascension), AdA received an email from the directrice containing a number of accusations and demands. **It was stated that AdA has been systematically declining to meet with the direction, that AdA has never communicated the current board members’ names, and that we are in violation of the *règlement d’organisation***, amongst others, regarding a statute change in 2022. The directrice stated that she declared the current AdA statutes invalid and required information on the current board’s election as well as other candidates and voting numbers. A response was demanded within 4 working days.

In response, we have informed the directrice that the names of the board members had been shared with her and other members of the direction at the time of election. Furthermore, we clarified that we are **in fact awaiting a response from her regarding a meeting request sent by AdA on the 29th of March**. Lastly, the amendment of **ADA statutes is wholly in line with what is required** by the *règlement* as well as common practice in ADA and GISA for many years. We also stated our confusion as to why the directrice wanted to repeal an amendment which made voting procedures more robust. Lastly, we voiced our concern at the perceived attack on ADA legitimacy and functioning. We placed the Conseil de Fondation in copy given the serious nature of these allegations.

One day later a reply arrived. While excluding the text of the first email and our reply, **the directrice added the full direction in CC**. In the body, the directrice reiterated part of her claims while abandoning others. Given that no new claims were made, we reiterated our

¹ For members of AdA: you can find the working paper under the title ‘PhD reform December 2020.pdf’ on the AdA Drive.

² For members of AdA: the articles can also be found on the AdA drive.

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stance, and attached the original message and our reply for the other members of the direction. No response has been received since. This email exchange can be found on the ADA drive in the folder 'meeting and exchanges spring 2024'.

Letter to DIP correcting institute's narrative and figures:

Beyond these events, the direction has on the 20th of November 2023 shared with AdA a letter sent to DIP in August of 2023. This letter, defending the Institute's policy on TAs, contained a number of misleading statements as well as factual inaccuracies. AdA and SIT has sent a follow-up letter to the DIP addressing these and providing further information on the situation inside the Institute.³ A rather nondescript reply was received in return, underlining the responsibility of the Conseil de Fondation in the matter.

Formerly secret IHEID salary scales now public information:

A little longer ago and independent from the petition, on the 13th of December Matthieu Jotterand, a deputy in the Grand Conseil, asked a number of questions about the remuneration policy of IHEID and UNIGE. Notably, a question focussed on what the differences between TAs and IHEID and UNIGE are, as well as the differences between different types of Assistants at IHEID. He further inquired about the salary of professors at the two institutions. In response to this, the Conseil d'État has asked the Institute and UNIGE to provide information on these questions. The response includes information the Institute has not been willing to share publicly before. An overview of the salarial differences between the two institutions has now been made public and can be found [here](#). Interesting given the purported difficult financial state of the institute, full and associate professors at the institute receive a notably higher salary.

Working group reminder – open to all!

To reiterate an oft-mentioned point: the biweekly working group, where a number of colleagues meet biweekly to discuss assistant's working conditions, remains active and is open to anyone interested in working on this topic, including PhDs who are not yet TAs. Any participation and input is most appreciated! Come share your concerns or ideas even if you have never come before!

³ This letter can be found on the AdA drive under the title 'Letter to the DIP March 2024'.