

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING WIU FACULTY/LIBRARIANS

Sponsored by Chair Todd Bruns, EIU Faculty Senate 2024-2025

Approved by EIU Faculty Senate unanimous vote on December 3, 2024

Preamble

In the fall of 2024, the administration and Board of Regents of Western Illinois University, a fellow regional public university in our state, have opted to respond to a projected \$20 million budget shortfall with widespread layoffs of faculty, including tenured faculty, and notably the laying off of all faculty librarians.

This course has been met with widespread concern and condemnation across the state, including describing the plan as “fiscal insanity,”¹ and decrying the impact of such draconian measures on existing WIU students’ educations, the future ability of WIU to recruit new students and faculty, and the local regional economy. The Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) issued its own statement in September 2024² specifically addressing the WIU plan to layoff all faculty librarians, noting the many essential functions that faculty librarians perform as co-educators and key navigators for guiding students and faculty through the modern information overload digital environment.

In response to these events, the EIU Faculty Senate issues the following resolution, consistent with a resolution passed by the SIU-Carbondale faculty senate³ and endorsed by the Council of Illinois University Senates.⁴

Resolution

WHEREAS, as faculty of a public university in Illinois and residents of this state, we are highly concerned with the Western Illinois University’s Board of Regents approval of widespread faculty layoffs, including of all faculty librarians, and;

WHEREAS, there is consistent evidence that such a budgetary “hatchet approach” as proposed at WIU will have significant negative impacts on current WIU students, the local economy, future student and faculty recruitment and retention, and WIU as an institution, and;

WHEREAS, the core of a university is the expertise and dedication of its faculty body, and by attempting to solve years of budgetary issues via decimating cuts focused on its faculty, WIU as an institution is risking significant self-inflicted damage, and;

WHEREAS, the state of Illinois already faces major challenges with out-migration, a problem potentially exacerbated by the severe weakening of one of its public regional higher education institutions, therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of Eastern Illinois University stands in support of Western Illinois University faculty and faculty librarians, and urges the WIU Board of Regents and administration to reconsider and reverse course from what is a detrimental, harmful, or injurious plan.

¹ WGEM news report, Dylan Smith, August 6, 2024

² “Statement on the Importance of Librarians in Academic Libraries,” issued September 2024 by CARLI

³ “Resolution on Support for the WIU Faculty,” sponsored by SIU-Carbondale Faculty Senator Walter Ray, presented at the October 15, 2024 meeting

⁴ CIUS support for SIU-Carbondale resolution passed unanimously at meeting on October 18, 2024 at the ISU campus