



To: President Kristi Mindrup and Members of the Board of Trustees

From: The Library Area Committee of the United Campus Workers-University of Virginia

Re: Termination of All Faculty Librarians at Western Illinois University

Dec. 20, 2024

Dear President Mindrup and Members of the Board of Trustees:

As librarians and union members, we write to express our strong concern and opposition to your decision to terminate all of the faculty librarians at Western Illinois University. Although we understand the budget concerns facing many universities, your decision to eliminate librarians from your campus is shortsighted and will have far-reaching negative implications for your university. As the American Association of University Professors stated in 2012: “The character and quality of an institution of higher learning are shaped in large measure by the nature and accessibility of its library resources as well as the expertise and availability of its librarians.” See <https://www.aaup.org/report/joint-statement-faculty-status-college-and-university-librarians>. Professional librarians have always been central to the educational mission and success of universities, and have done so throughout the constantly changing world of information access. Your assumption that your university can operate without librarians demonstrates a lack of knowledge of what librarians do on a daily basis and their essential value to all universities.

As librarians, we facilitate and operate the access to scholarship, information and knowledge essential to any university. We do so by maintaining and constantly updating your online library catalogs (which contain much more than just book locations) and the hundreds of scholarly databases necessary to any university. We provide easy access to all of these points of information and learning through reference consultations, research guides, and instruction. We maintain and organize the vast print materials that are still necessary to any university. We teach courses on research, a skill for which we are better trained than anyone else on campus. And we maintain central spaces on campus that are welcoming to everyone in your community and conducive to study and research. For many of your students, the library is their favorite place on campus.

We urge you to reconsider your decision to terminate the librarians on your campus. Your decision is not only a blow to the librarian profession in general, but will have long-term negative effects on your WIU as a whole. We write in solidarity with our librarian colleagues at WIU.

On behalf of the Library Area Committee of the United Campus Workers at the University of Virginia,

Signed,

Ben Doherty, Head of Library Instruction & Research Librarian, University of Virginia Law Library

Addie Patrick, Curatorial Specialist, University of Virginia Law Library

Nicholas Cummins, Research Librarian for Economics & Commerce, University of Virginia Library

Gregory Whitmore, Administrative Technologies Librarian, University of Virginia Law Library

Amanda Visconti, Director, Scholars' Lab, University of Virginia Library

Cecelia Parks, Undergraduate Student Success Librarian, University of Virginia Library

Jacquelyn Kim, Exhibitions Coordinator, University of Virginia Library

Shane Lin, Senior Developer, University of Virginia Library