

Interim President Winthrop  
Board of Trustees Chair Stutz  
Western Illinois University  
1 University Circle  
Macomb, IL 61455

January 14, 2025

Dear Interim President Winthrop and Members of the WIU Board of Trustees,

We, the undersigned faculty librarians at Governors State University, write today to express our strong support for the recently laid off librarians at Western Illinois University. We are deeply troubled by these cuts, and the stated notion that a small number of non-librarians led by a dean can replace the work of nine long-serving faculty librarians at one of the state's vanguard regional universities.

Research demonstrates that faculty librarians and their work are vital for student success, student retention, and faculty and institutional support.<sup>1</sup> In addition to being generalists, faculty librarians have extensive content and disciplinary knowledge in their academic fields. An investment in faculty librarians demonstrates an institution's commitment to all its constituencies—but, most directly, to its students whom faculty librarians work with closely each and every day. Divestment demonstrates otherwise.

We unreservedly affirm the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) Statement on the Important of Librarians in Academic Libraries from September 2024 in support of the faculty librarians at WIU.<sup>2</sup> And we ask that you please reconsider and reverse this harmful decision for the sake of your students, faculty, and health of the institution.

Sincerely,

Josh Sopiartz, Faculty Librarian  
Michel Nguessan, Faculty Librarian  
Cari Didion, Faculty Librarian  
Lily Morgan, Faculty Librarian

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<sup>1</sup> O'Kelly, Mary, Jeffryes, Jon, Hobscheid, Maya, and Passarelli, Rachael. "Correlation Between Library Instruction and Student Retention: Methods and Implications" *College & Research Libraries* [Online], Volume 84 Number 1 (9 January 2023).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/sites/files/files/Importance-of-Librarians-in-Academic-Libraries-240930.pdf>