

Elimination of Library faculty at WIU

December 6, 2024

To Interim President Dr. Kristi Mindrup and The Western Illinois University Board of Trustees:

The Health Science Librarians of Illinois (HSLI) would like to express our deep concerns over the decision to eliminate **all** of Western Illinois University's faculty librarian positions. Although we understand the university's need to be fiscally responsible and dramatically reduce costs, we urge you to consider the long-term impacts that eliminating the library faculty completely will have on your institution.

We understand that the current plan is to move the work of library faculty to library staff. We discourage you from this transfer of work to staff that are typically lower paid and with less job security. Overburdening staff with unmanageable workloads will lead to burnout and higher turnover rates.

Academic librarians have earned faculty status because they are an integral part of the education of your undergraduate and graduate students and collaborators with your faculty in other departments. Faculty librarians conduct research and publish their scholarly work to enhance and innovate library services. Faculty status ensures their academic freedoms and their meaningful engagement in institutional governance. In this age of disinformation, it is critical that universities acknowledge the importance of qualified, professional information specialists.

Additionally, we would like to express concerns for the future accreditation of your multiple health science programs within the Department of Kinesiology and the School of Nursing. Librarians are typically involved in the process because accreditation organizations want to know about the resources and supports your institution provides. Faculty librarians ensure that WIU students and faculty are provided academic support so that they are able to identify and access the best health science research, and also critically appraise that evidence for validity and clinical usefulness for future patients and clients.

We ask that you reconsider eliminating Library faculty at Western Illinois University.

Regards,

The Health Science Librarians of Illinois (HSLI) Board

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