

Hello, my name is William Stodden and I come to you as a member of Graduate Assistants United. I am here on behalf of the presidents of the Association of Civil Service Employees, Faculty Association, Graduate Assistants United, and the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Association to present their letter to you. On their behalf I will read the text of the joint letter.

Dear Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University,

We, the presidents of four Illinois Education Association unions on the SIUC campus, are writing to you because we are concerned about the state of the university. Together these four unions represent 3400 members who have been working 379 days without a contract. The majority of those 3400 members have also been working under imposed terms and conditions. All four unions have concerns about job security, about health care, and about the future of the employee voice and collective bargaining at SIUC. We have all filed notices of intent to strike, putting us in the middle of a "strike watch," and the forecast shows more clouds at the four bargaining tables in the future. Every news article that is published about labor relations at SIUC in the past year has been negative. Faculty, staff, and graduate assistant morale is low due to the fact that in the bargaining process the SIUC administration has confronted us with impasse, imposed terms and vetoes of our legitimate needs.

We want our university to be a place where collective bargaining rights -- the very ability of employees to have a voice in their workplace -- are honored. Our university should be a place where there is partnership and respect that create a positive atmosphere where faculty, staff, and graduate assistants feel valued and students are able to learn. We want our university to be a place which recruits and retains quality people dedicated to education. Our university should put people, both employees and students, first. Our SIUC should be a place we can be proud of, that attracts people to the Southern Illinois region, and is nationally recognized for all the positive work we do. We have been and will continue to fight for these goals because we believe all of those things are possible.

We have come here to ask for your help and to ask you to work with us, not against us, to achieve those goals. The first step to getting there is to encourage the administrative bargaining teams to come to the tables with a true desire to compromise and work with us to negotiate fair, mutually acceptable contracts. SIUC has a history of successful collective bargaining without strikes or lockouts that has improved the quality of the campus. We respect that tradition. We care about that history. We want you to care about that history too. Show us you respect us as valuable university members, show us you respect that tradition of successful negotiation, and urge the Board teams to work with us to settle these open contracts.

Our four unions stand ready to find a mutually acceptable agreement ratified by our members and you, the Board of Trustees. Together we are committed to creating a better SIUC.

Sincerely,

*Cindi Kessler-Criswell
Association of Civil Service Employees*

*Jim Podesva
Graduate Assistants United*

Randy Hughes
Faculty Association

Anita Stoner
Non-Tenure Track Faculty Association