



125 Tower Drive  
Burr Ridge, IL 60527  
630.734.5000  
railslibraries.org

Document 6.2

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**TO:** RAILS Advocacy Committee  
**FROM:** Monica Harris, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** 6.2 Advocacy for Academic Libraries

Many of you may be aware of a recent situation at Western Illinois University that involved a layoff of 89 employees, including all of nine (9) of their professional librarians. When current contracts expire in May 2025, Western Illinois University will no longer employ any professional academic librarians. We've included the text of an editorial article from the Chicago Tribune (August 20, 2024) for more information.

We've been in contact with our library partners at CARLI, ILA, IHLS, and AISLE to discuss potential action. CARLI is working on a statement that will be shared with their Governance Board next week, and then other partner agencies (including RAILS) will be asked if we would like to sign on to show support. We believe that the best way to show strength on the importance of academic libraries is to show unity on this issue.

While I don't have a sample statement to show you yet, I'll share any updates that I have at our September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. I'll also ask the Advocacy committee to consider a motion to bring the final statement to the RAILS Board at the September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

I look forward to discussing more at our committee meeting.