

May 10, 2017 Statement to SIU Board of Trustees

SIUE Campus

David Johnson

President, SIUC Faculty Association

My name is David Johnson; I am President of the SIUC Faculty Association.

We in Carbondale and Edwardsville are, whether we like it or not, part of one system. That's why the announcement of a new chancellor for Carbondale has been scheduled to take place in Edwardsville. The SIUC campus provides input, and from what I've heard the Board should have heard an earful of input about the candidates for our position. But the SIU Board makes the final decision, as it does for all major campus decisions. Ultimate accountability for the well-being of all campuses in the SIU system lies with the Board, and this includes accountability for the responsible sharing of resources between campuses.

I keep hearing that SIUC is not cutting enough. But SIUC will be cutting \$51 million from our state budget, a cut of about 25% from our 2015 total. SIUE will cut a total of \$16 million, about 11% of your 2015 state budget. Your chancellor has promised that there will be no layoffs or furloughs at SIUE; we have already had layoffs, and there will be dozens if not hundreds of layoffs this summer. So, yes, we are cutting.

Enrollment has been going up at SIUE while it has been declining at SIUC. But this is not largely due to mismanagement on the Carbondale campus. Public regional universities are in trouble nationwide, losing enrollment and state funding; most of the exceptions are campuses in growing urban areas like the Metro East. And our deadbeat state government has basically stopped funding higher education. At least five Illinois campuses are in junk bond status, most are seeing steep declines in enrollment, and all are suffering. Are all of these campuses being mismanaged? The true cause of our crisis lies elsewhere.

There are powerful people in our society who want to end public higher education or are at least indifferent to its fate. They propose huge cuts to our funding, and are happy to hold all higher education hostage to negotiate about other things. Whenever we say that one campus is poorly run, or disposable, or redundant, we play into their hands. And, yes, when we argue that a sister campus must shed its identity as a research university and find a new "niche", we are playing into their hands. We are all together in a fight for the very survival of accessible, quality public higher education in the State of Illinois. The loan proposal before the Board today is an act of solidarity in

the face of the greatest crisis for higher education in our lifetimes, and I urge the board to support that proposal.