

## **Joint Statement Regarding the Re-Opening of Illinois Higher Education**

As the unionized faculty and employees of Illinois institutions of Higher Education, and members of the communities they serve, we call on all higher education leadership to commit to remote teaching, learning, and working this fall, with few exceptions, for the health and safety of our students, colleagues, and communities.

The novel coronavirus and global pandemic have created hardships for students, faculty, and staff and continues to financially harm our institutions. Many of our university and college administrators are wringing their hands, creating elaborate plans to open campuses this fall; however, we know the safest option is to limit direct and sustained face-to-face contact. Further, faculty and employees alone should decide whether they are able to teach or work remotely without interference from the institution. As soon as institutions accept this reality, faculty and students can focus on preparing for a remote fall experience through meaningful remote class connections.

As we prepare, we must be pragmatic. We cannot control human error or poor decision-making. To bring large numbers of people from various locations into a single area increases risk, and hoping that no one will accidentally or imprudently expose others to serious illness is folly. We must stop pretending that it is possible to have education-as-usual without putting many in danger.

Additionally, plans that utilize hybrid teaching strategies prioritize presence over safety. While we have concerns about online learning, a well-designed remote course will be more welcoming, inclusive, challenging, and interactive for students than a “socially distanced” and masked lecture that puts all at risk of spreading Covid-19.

The only exceptions to this should be course content or skills that simply cannot be learned from a distance. If courses must run in person, they can only do so if all possible safety measures in place. Safety measures, based in science, must include testing, tracing, and containment. PPE must be provided following a clear and detailed risk assessment. Proper air filtration/ventilation and cleaning must be in place prior to the start of the course.

Faculty, staff, shared governance structures, labor, and other stakeholders must be involved in all decisions. Further, if any worker is let go because they cannot safely work at their campus, unemployment protections should be immediately offered including to all part-time and adjunct instructors.

Recognizing that these decisions have serious implications for our international students, we affirm the decision by the Trump administration to withdraw its discriminatory policy against our international students and allow them to continue working remotely toward their degrees. Colleges and universities should not be forced to risk the lives of students, employees, and communities simply to accommodate the President’s misguided policy.

Remote teaching and learning – at this time –will fully protect our students, employees, and the communities in which we live and work. It is the wisest course of action for the health of all.

<b>John Miller, President,</b>	<b>Diana Vallera, President</b>	<b>Janet Smith, President</b>
--------------------------------	---------------------------------	-------------------------------

University Professionals of Illinois (UPI) Local 4100	CFAC, Columbia Faculty Union Local 6602, Columbia College Chicago	University of Illinois Chicago United Faculty
<b>Tony Johnston, President,</b> Cook County College Teachers Union, Local 6100	<b>Steve Frankel, Chair</b> Higher Education Constituency Council, Illinois Federation of Teachers	<b>Vivian Zimmerman, Chair</b> Higher Education Council Illinois Education Association
<b>Leo Welch, President Elect</b> American Association of University Professionals of Illinois	<b>Delores Withers, President</b> Federation of College Clerical and Personnel City Colleges of Chicago	<b>Audrey Butler, President,</b> Federation of College Clerical and Technical Personnel Local 1708
<b>Randall Miller, President</b> City Colleges Contingent Labor Organizing Committee	<b>Debbie Lynch, President</b> Chicago State University Chapter UPI Local 4100	<b>Erik Solomon, Officer</b> Support Staff and Adjunct Union, College of Lake County
<b>Jeannie Ludlow, President,</b> Eastern Illinois University Chapter UPI Local 4100	<b>Kimberly Tarver, President</b> Elgin Community College Faculty Association	<b>Jason Grunebaum, U of Chicago Faculty Forward Lecturers Union Steering Committee</b>
<b>Robert Allare, President,</b> Harper College Adjunct Faculty Association	<b>Susan Hurley, Executive Director,</b> Jobs with Justice Chicago	<b>Emma Feeney, Full Time Co-Chair,</b> Loyola Faculty Forward
<b>Alyson Paige Warren, Part-Time Co-Chair,</b> Loyola Faculty Forward	<b>Clair Lockard &amp; Alec Stubbs, Co-Chairs,</b> Loyola Graduate Workers' Union	<b>Ben Johnson, President</b> Loyola University Chicago American Association of University Professors Chapter
<b>Marilyn Craig, President</b> Morton College Adjunct Faculty Association	<b>Michele Mohr, Chapter Chair,</b> Morton College Faculty	<b>Dr. Robert C. Jones, Jr., Pastor,</b> Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church
<b>Nancy Matthews, President</b> Northeastern Illinois University Chapter UPI Local 4100	<b>Wendell Johnson, President</b> United Faculty (UPI Local 4100) of Northern Illinois University	<b>Keith Nyquist, President,</b> Northern Illinois University Instructors Chapter UPI Local 4100
<b>Jen Wilson, President</b> Roosevelt Adjunct Faculty Organization	<b>Michael O'Keefe, Co-Chair</b> St. Xavier University Faculty Affairs Committee	<b>Amanda Wilcoxon, President,</b> Graduate Student Assistants United, SIU Carbondale
<b>Dave Johnson, President</b> Southern Illinois University Carbondale Faculty Association	<b>Anne Scheetz, Chair,</b> Solidarity Committee, Jobs with Justice	<b>Scott Houldieson, Founding Member &amp; Steering Committee Member,</b> Unite All Workers for Democracy
<b>Ann Davis, President</b> University of Illinois Springfield Support Staff Chapter, UPI Local 4100	<b>Kristi Barnwell, President</b> United Faculty (UPI Local 4100) of University of Illinois Springfield	<b>Michael Odom, President,</b> Non-Tenure Faculty Coalition Local 6546, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
<b>Bill Thompson, President</b> Western Illinois University Chapter UPI Local 4100	<b>Rinda West, Chair,</b> Workers Rights Board, Chicago Jobs with Justice	<b>Marsha Katz, Vice President,</b> University Professionals of Illinois Local 4100