

From: [John Wilkin](#)
To: libnews-l@lists.illinois.edu
Subject: Friday May 22nd message
Date: Friday, May 22, 2020 4:26:39 PM

Happy Friday!

If your experience is anything like mine, the days are a blur, filled with meetings and whatever the next pressing issue is. I have to admit that it's a bit monotonous and that it's hard to appreciate the sorts of calendar-driven and seasonal changes that are a normal part of our lives--things like the end of semester exams and graduation. But of course these things are happening at the University and in the community, and we should take a moment to appreciate them. Particularly with this long weekend coming up, I hope you'll try to take some time to get out and refresh.

My week ended with a retreat organized by the Chancellor and Provost on mental health issues. I found it reassuring to hear many of our experiences grounded in discussions by professionals about the effect of the pandemic on our lives. It was also good to be reminded *by students* at the retreat about the particular challenges they are facing. I'm proud that Illinois is paying attention to these issues and will be doing so as we plan for the return to on-site work and a residential experience for our students.

Speaking of which, in my May 13th message, I mentioned the work underway to prepare a Library "Return to On-Site Work" plan. We had a May 18th deadline and very quickly provided a detailed proposed plan to the Chancellor and Provost. While I hope to hear soon that the plan has been approved, I want to thank the individuals who assembled details that were responsive to the framework documents provided by the campus. Those people and their areas of responsibility they covered are:

1. Logistics of fulfillment (print and digital, circ and scanning): Mary Laskowski (with Jennifer Teper for materials handling)
2. Acquisition and processing of library materials (print and digital): MJ Han
3. Reference and research services, including instruction and public spaces: Sara Holder, Bill Mischo, David Ward and Sarah Williams
4. Archives: Bill Maher
5. RBML: Lynne Thomas
6. Communications: Heather Murphy
7. Facilities: Tim Newman

And, as always, it takes a team, or many teams, and I know that each of those individuals worked hard with colleagues to do their work.

Even in the midst of the pandemic, we've had a great deal of good news of late, from promotion and tenure decisions to campus awards to national recognition, and I want to share one more piece of good news with you today. This week the campus approved hiring for all 8 of the open positions prioritized by our AULs and EC. The directive to the campus was very clear: assume significant reductions to budgets and only put forward the positions most critical for ensuring we are able to conduct our work through the pandemic. As one might expect, there was some pushback, and many units were asked to strengthen their arguments. The University was pleased by the rigor of our process and appreciated the work we did to ensure

we have the funds needed to weather the storm *and* proceed with hiring. Those positions are:

- Grants and Contracts Specialist
- SCaRS Software Developer
- Web Application Developer
- Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Librarian
- Assistant Dean for Business and Human Resources
- Head, Scholarly Commons
- ACS Cataloging Coordinator
- ACS Electronic Resources Librarian

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has participated in scanning and delivery of print materials these last few weeks and will be doing that work going forward. Your work has helped us to identify challenges and to plan more carefully to ramp up services in the Fall. I know that our users have appreciated the efforts we've taken, and I've heard directly about how important these services are. Again, I know these are uncharted waters, and I'm grateful for your problem-solving, your effort, and your commitment.

With the shortened week and a busy schedule (including the semi-annual BTAA library directors meeting), I haven't planned a virtual hangout for next week, but stay tuned in case there are developments and we put one together at the last minute. Again, take care of yourselves and enjoy this long weekend. I hope the weather cooperates and we can all get outside for a change of scenery!

Yours,
John

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John P. Wilkin
Juanita J. and Robert E. Simpson Dean of Libraries and University Librarian
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
230 Library, MC-522
1408 W. Gregory Drive
Urbana, IL 61801

jpwilkin@illinois.edu

217-333-0790

Assistant: Lucretia Williams | lawillia@illinois.edu