



For Immediate Release

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Northwestern University Library Workers Announce Union, Deliver Demands to Top University Leadership

Evanston, IL – Northwestern Library Workers have officially filed their intent to unionize with the National Labor Relations Board. On October 12, library workers and their allies gathered by the Rock on Northwestern's Quad for a noon march to the Provost office to deliver their demands to Provost Kathleen Haggerty for recognition of their union.

"In 2020, Northwestern had enough money to support all workers during the pandemic. We were furloughed, had retirement benefits cut, and in some cases, laid off. Our union will give us the power to require transparency and have a voice in hiring and transfer practices and reorganizations," said Jill Waycie, Library Assistant.

Workers are unionizing due to increased workloads after furloughs and the pandemic creating a demand for essential services. Library staff also report pay issues, including cost-of-living raises being tied to a merit-based performance evaluation system. Workers say a union will give them a voice in these decisions.

"Northwestern declared furloughs and layoffs without giving us a chance to support each other with donated leave or similar measures that other institutions offered, then discovered a surplus but didn't hire back those laid off. I want to be able to negotiate a contract with fairer terms for workers if another crisis happens," said Michael Babinec, Library Worker

Dozens gathered on campus for a spirited march chanting for union rights and recognition. Once the crowd arrived at the Provost Office, a small delegation delivered a letter to Provost Kathleen Haggerty declaring their intent to organize. The group also asked the University to voluntarily recognize the union or remain neutral in their right to form a union.

"After the furloughs, my department of 25 went down to six coworkers. We were expected to provide essential services and create new services, too. It was exhausting being asked to do more and more for no recognition or hazard pay during a pandemic. The University praised our sacrifices, but I didn't want to be a sacrifice—I wanted respect and pay for work performed. But the thanks we got was only at my department's effort—a finger puppet and snacks." said Drew Clower, Library Assistant.

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SEIU Local 73 represents more than 31,000 workers, primarily in public service and publicly funded positions in school districts, municipalities, social service agencies, and many other job classifications in Illinois and Indiana. We are dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families.