



For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Eric Bailey, ebailey@seiu73.org

Northwestern Library Workers Overwhelmingly Vote to Unionize

CHICAGO, IL – Northwestern Library Workers have officially voted to form a union with SEIU Local 73 to represent hundreds of workers in the university library system. On October 12, workers filed their intent to unionize with the National Labor Relations Board. The campaign ended with workers sending a clear mandate to the university by overwhelmingly voting to formally recognize the union and remain in one bargaining unit.

“It’s clear something is amiss when one of the wealthiest educational institutions in the country uses a once-in-a-lifetime global pandemic as an opportunity to enact wage freezes, cuts to retirement benefits, layoffs, and furloughs, and then subsequently boasts of a budget surplus. Collective bargaining is a natural response to this sort of mismanagement,” said Nick Munagian, Library Assistant at McCormick Library.

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.

“I support forming a union because all workers deserve protection. The furloughs showed me that work is not viewed or respected equally. My hope is that a union will help to repair the devaluation of many staff positions,” said Yvonne Spura, Library Assistant at McCormick Library.

“SEIU Local 73 is excited to welcome Northwestern library workers into our growing union,” said Stacia Scott, Executive Vice President. “These workers clearly recognize the power in having a union and the difference it will make in their lives to improve their wages and working conditions.”

#

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.