

Library Council

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

9:00 AM, 311G and Zoom

Library Council Present: Chad Buckley, Colby Cilento, Carrie Forbes, Ellie Harman, Logan Janicki, Jayna Leipart Guttilla, Jennifer Sharkey, Lindsey Skaggs, Chris Worland

Agenda

I. Call to Order

Chair Lindsey Skaggs called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

II. Approval of Minutes from 4/22/26 Library Council Meeting

Library Council approved the 4/22/26 meeting minutes.

III. Public Comments

Chair Skaggs stated that Eric Willey, Head of Technical Services, had signed up to speak.

Eric Willey explained that he had requested that Library Council (LC) discuss the effects of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) strike and university administration's response to it, back when the strike was still in effect. Even though the strike has ended, there are still lingering effects of university administration (ISU admin)'s response to it that are worth raising. He stated that ISU representatives were already negotiating contracts to hire scabs and strike breakers while still at the bargaining table, and then hired and deployed those resources across campus, including in Milner Library. Even though Milner admin was not involved in those negotiations, they were allowed into the building. This raises the question of whether Dean Forbes would do the same if Milner workers went on strike.

Willey stated this had lowered trust and demonstrated what incentivizes ISU admin to negotiate: lawsuits, unfair labor practice filings, and their actions being exposed in the press and to state politicians. He does not feel those tactics are ultimately good for the institution, but you have to use the tool that works. There is an incentive now to note anything that might form the basis of a future lawsuit or unfair labor practice, so you would have it handy if needed. He noted efforts to improve the climate at Milner, such as webinars on slow librarianship and inviting speakers on burnout, but that those efforts are undercut by ISU admin sending campus wide emails and telling reporters that ISU employees are liars, attacking them with specious at best data, replacing them with outside workers at a higher cost, and telling them that their reasonable demands will destroy the university. That drowns out any effort to try and make the people who work here feel valued or recognized for their work.

Willey summarized his three big takeaways as lingering effects of ISU admin's response to the AFSCME strike as follows: a lowering of trust, an incentive to keep legal and unfair labor practice complaints in mind and ready, and a large roadblock to making people feel valued and that their contributions are meaningful. He also wanted to offer some ways forward, which he acknowledged may work better for some than others. He encouraged showing up for open forums for ISU admin positions when they are held. Not many people attended those. He

encouraged googling the candidate's name to see what news articles they appear in from their former institutions. He encouraged asking questions about how they have worked with employees before. Make it uncomfortable, weird, and provide feedback. These positions work closely with the provost and president. While we cannot control the hiring decision, we can start nudging the candidate pools towards people who don't view this as a zero-sum game and value positive working relationships to make meaningful change.

Willey encouraged adding your union affiliation to your work activities through putting it on your webpage, your ORCID iD, or in addition or instead of ISU when a conference or publication asks for your institutional affiliation. He noted that was a more faculty centric recommendation, but for others, you could mention it in addition to your name and job title on search committees, add it to your email signature, or wear a button. The point is to start reminding everyone what they will lose if, or probably when, there is another strike.

Willey explained he was making these comments at LC because Milner admin needed to hear it. He regrets not doing so while the strike was still ongoing. He didn't give Dean Forbes an opportunity to explain or maybe even course correct. He recommends going forward that this be a deliberate tactical choice we make. He explained that the Associate Deans could not go to Dean Forbes and say their unit is upset over this if we aren't telling them that. Similarly, Dean Forbes couldn't go to the provost and say Milner is upset if they are silent. He knows this could be awkward, but as librarians, they like information. He noted he did not know what they may do with that information, given the complicated political math, but it gives them the option to address it, and Milner admin having the option to advocate for us to ISU admin is a good thing. He hopes others have ideas and will share them as well.

Chair Skaggs thanked Willey for sharing. She noted there was a discussion item later on the agenda about this.

IV. Information Items

A. Strategic Planning Update (Forbes)

Dean Carrie Forbes explained she had received some questions about where we were in the strategic planning process. Members of the working group collected feedback from departments in the library. The collated feedback was sent to the consultant, and she identified theme areas for the group to discuss. The working group is currently at the point where they are just beginning to discuss goals. Once they have concrete recommendations, it will go to the rest of the library for feedback. She expects this to occur during the summer so they can go into fall with a strategic plan and broad goals, which they can then work to make more specifically action oriented.

B. Elections Update (Worland)

Chris Worland stated that emails went out to the respective caucuses about LC elections. If you would like your name removed from the ballot, please let him know by the end of the day. Electronic survey ballots will be distributed next week and available for a full week. After that, they will be counted and verified. Hopefully by late May or early June, the new representatives will be announced. He also is in contact with the IDEA Committee to confirm the number of individuals cycling off it. There will be a call sent in early June for volunteers, and LC will seat them in a subsequent meeting.

Worland shared that he did put his name forward as the Milner representative for the university's Academic Freedom, Ethics and Grievance Committee, which is comprised of negotiated and non-negotiated non-tenure track faculty (NTT) members. A name needs to be put forth each year. The remainder of elections are run by tenure-track (TT) caucus, and there are no other committees under LC purview. He noted it would be nice to get a student representative on LC, but students won't know their schedules until closer to the semester.

Chair Skaggs summarized the elections for LC representatives as follows:

- TT caucus is electing two seats, as Chad Buckley and Jennifer Sharkey (completing Angela Yon's term while she is on sabbatical) will be rolling off
- NTT is electing one seat, as Chris Worland will be rolling off
- Civil Service (CS) is electing two seats, as Colby Cilento and Jayna Leipart Guttilla (completing Maddi Loiselle's term) are rolling off

V. Discussion Items

A. Library Council Caucus Representation - Survey for Civil Service Employees

Chair Skaggs stated that a survey would be sent out to Milner CS employees to get their opinion on how or if the caucus should be split. She shared her draft survey with LC. She summarized the previous discussions on this issue, noting it was brought up that because CS caucus is so large, it's impossible to meet so it may make more sense to split into smaller groups. Since LC was formed, it's always been a barrier to participation that CS caucus doesn't meet.

Library Council agreed with proceeding with the survey Skaggs drafted.

Chair Skaggs noted one of the options for splitting had been supervisory vs non-supervisory CS employees or exempt vs non-exempt CS. In some of the discussions she has had with individuals, there is no neat distinction there because there are some hourly supervisors and some individuals that don't supervise but have substantially similar positions to those that do.

Jayna Leipart Guttilla believes there needs to be a specific caucus for non-faculty librarians. She noted that group would be larger than NTTs, who have their own caucus, and she does not think their specific needs are being heard at the level which they deserve. She suggested that caucus grouping be comprised of CS positions which require a master's degree in library science (MLS). She explained she needed the same credentials as any other librarian and thinks those positions should be represented on the council.

Chair Skaggs suggested possibly having CS librarians and NTTs caucus together but with two representatives, one from each classification; whereby, Leipart Guttilla noted that could be represented as an option on the survey.

Chair Skaggs noted the utility of potentially having respondents identify themselves for purposes of knowing which positions/classifications were in favor of a potential split. For example, if all the CS MLS positions say they want their own caucus.

Cilento, Buckley, and Forbes suggested having a field where you could optionally identify yourself or identify yourself just by position type or classification.

Chair Skaggs noted that if changes were made to the caucuses, LC bylaws would need to be updated, approved by the library, and sent to Academic Senate for their approval. She will send the survey to CS employees.

B. Effects of the AFSCME Local 1110 Strike

Chair Skaggs has heard concerns expressed about the lingering effects of the strike, as Willey explained, including whether this is what admin will do in the future. AFSCME also represents library employees and that contract goes up for negotiation next year. The faculty contract will go up in a few years as well. There is concern that these groups will also be forced into a strike and how the library may handle that. For those in bargaining units, they have a little more leverage to not do the labor of the striking unit. For example, if the AFSCME group goes on strike and she was asked to work at the service desk, she could say no as that was not her normal duty, but there are individuals in and out of unions that work at that service point. Can you be asked to do additional duties because that is something you already do, or do you have the leverage to say no? She noted that Willey raised the question of how library admin will handle this. She explained she did not ask Dean Forbes about this prior to the meeting and did not want to put them on the spot, but thoughts from Milner admin were welcome.

Dean Forbes shared that her initial thought is we would have to close, but she honestly did not know if she would be allowed to make that decision. She would not ask anyone to cross a picket line but did not know if she would be allowed to close the building or if ISU admin would call in others to keep the library open. She explained they came close to closing at a former institution because their CS equivalent union was very close to a strike, and her provost there supported that decision.

Willey explained that during covid-19, decisions about whether the building was open or not were made by the provost, according to the former dean.

Dean Forbes noted it could be that the building was open, but services were not staffed. She could certainly ask about this.

Chair Skaggs noted another effect of the strike was that it created a lot of ill will towards ISU admin. It's hard to have pride in an institution that treats their employees that way, especially those among the lowest paid. It makes it harder to feel committed to the university's goals. During a TT caucus meeting, the point was made that we all have the shared goals of student and faculty success, but materials and messaging from ISU admin really focus on the financial aspects of those things. Even if the end goal is the same, having the messaging be quite corporate and emphasizing running an efficient business, it causes a disconnect that really lowers morale. She is not sure how to impress that upon ISU admin or if they would be concerned about it.

Dean Forbes noted she had personally spoken to President Aondover Tarhule and Vice President for Finance and Planning Glen Nelson at events, since she rarely has an opportunity to be in meetings with them, about what Skaggs mentioned about the morale and climate on campus and how to repair those relationships and value our workers. There is something in the strategic plan about the well-being of employees and students, so she has offered feedback in that regard.

Chair Skaggs noted that being more active in open forums, as Willey suggested, can be uncomfortable as you may be afraid of being labeled a problem or become known to admin for asking questions. We talk about shared governance in our organization, but it can be hard in practice to feel like your voice is being heard. She explained in Milner we have discussions about burnout and slow librarianship but that can hit up against the expectations from higher admin. She is not sure what the solution is, but this is something we should be mindful of when thinking about our strategic plans and goals moving forward and how employees are evaluated.

Willey stated that if you were uncomfortable asking a question, speak to him about it and he may be willing to ask it.

Worland reiterated that the library AFSCME union employees' current contract is through June 2027, so they could very well be negotiating next year. Milner NTTs are not part of a union or bargaining agreement. It behooves us to consider now what leverage and power we may have, individually and as a library, ahead of potential contract negotiation issues.

Chair Skaggs noted that others on campus, such as academic advisors, also had contracts in or going up for negotiation. She noted hearing concerns about AI in relation to positions as well.

Jennifer Sharkey shared that concern. Because we are information centric, she is concerned that upper admin may step in and suggest AI take over some library functions, like cataloging and providing reference. She is concerned that the human work in Milner could be viewed as replaceable.

Logan Janicki stated he was paid a wage, and it was his responsibility to put good faith effort towards fulfilling his job description. When it appears that ISU admin may have a different understanding of what good faith means; it makes him reconsider what he does here day to day. It encourages giving less to ISU and taking what you can while you can. This is what has personally been done to his morale, and he imagines he is not the only one who feels that way.

Chad Buckley noted they allowed the most vulnerable employees to go on strike. When faculty was potentially going on strike before, it was close to graduation, so they didn't allow it because of how it would impact that.

Chair Skaggs noted this has had a lot of influence on how everyone feels about their work and how the institution does or does not value it. She thanked Willey for raising this with LC and being willing to speak about it.

VI. Celebratory Items

AFSCME contract

Worland stated the result of the strike was a new agreement with the AFSCME union workers. He hoped they were pleased with it.

Dean Forbes noted that the union president said they were happy with the final contract but also spoke to a lot of the things that Willey and others mentioned about the impact on morale and encouraged the Board of Trustees to talk to Tarhule and Nelson about how the process played out to avoid similar future situations.

Queer Coalition Reading Challenge

Chair Skaggs shared that ISU Queer Coalition is sponsoring a queer reading challenge this summer. The challenge starts with a Read the Rainbow pop-up on the main floor of the library. If you'd like to participate, pick up a reading passport at the service desk.

Article publication

Buckley congratulated Skaggs, Cilento, and former colleague Rachel Scott on their recently published article in College & Research Libraries.

VII. Announcements/Other

June meetings

Chair Skaggs announced that LC will be cancelling the June 10 meeting, in keeping with tradition for Milner's June meetings moratorium. LC will still meet on June 24, as they are required to meet once a month. She will not be at that meeting, so Vice Chair Worland will preside.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Skaggs at 9:53 a.m.

Submitted by C. Cilento

5 June 2026