

February 10th, 2017

The Honorable Governor Rauner, House Speaker Madigan, Senate President Cullerton, Senate Minority Leader Radogno, and House Minority Leader Durkin:

As students across the state of Illinois, today we request transparency for a better understanding of the roadblocks preventing the state from passing a budget. We want to thank you for putting partisan issues aside to partially and temporarily fund our education system in the Spring of 2016; however, it is only a matter of time until those funds run out.

There are thousands of college students who have been heavily affected by the budget impasse within our state. We need clarity on the state of the budget conflict so that we can inform the students, faculty, and families whom we represent, and who are deeply impacted by the decisions made in Springfield.

It is deeply unfortunate that Illinois has gained national scrutiny from our budget crisis as we have been unable to pass a balanced budget for several fiscal years, harming more than 100,000 college students, faculty, and staff within the state.

Our fiscal uncertainty has caused many of our valued professors to leave our colleges, while also forcing Illinois high school graduates to attend out-of-state schools in pursuit of a college degree.¹ We hope to fix these detrimental trends by working together to solve the problems facing our state.

We request that you help us understand the problems that have prevented Illinois from passing a complete budget and provide us with ways in which we can help ensure that students across the state receive the education they deserve.

We ask that you host a meeting open to all student body presidents across the state in which you explicitly lay out the problems we currently face and practical solutions we plan to implement for solving the budget crisis.

As student leaders who have been personally impacted by Illinois' budget crisis, we want to work directly with you to move past this impasse as swiftly as possible. Your responsibility as elected representatives is to serve the residents of Illinois, and our roles as student body presidents require us to advocate for quality education at our universities. Neither of us will be able to accomplish our respective goals if we do not work together.

We look forward to working with you all and hearing from your respective offices. Please contact Ronald Lewis at rtlewis2@illinois.edu for further conversation.

¹ Crain's Chicago Business, 30 July 2016, "[Why are so many professors moving out of Illinois?](#)"
Bloomberg, 15 April 2016, "[Illinois risks brain drain as university students look elsewhere](#)"

Ronald Lewis

Ronald Lewis

Student Body President at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Charles Bentley

Charles J. Bentley

Student Body President at Augustana College

Catie Witt

Catie Witt

Student Body President at Eastern Illinois University

Austin Mehmet

Austin M. Mehmet

Student Body President at the University of Illinois Springfield

Darren D. Martin

Darren D. Martin

Student Body President at Chicago State University

Nathanial Stoll

Nathanial Stoll

Student Body President at Roosevelt University

Kellie Steele

Kellie Steele

Student Body President at Greenville College

Carrie Darr

Carrie Darr

Student Body President at Lincoln Land Community College

Luke Jansen

Luke Jansen

Student Body President at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Giuseppe LaGioia

Giuseppe LaGioia

Student Body President at Northern Illinois University

Dovile Svirupskaite



Student Body President at Western Illinois University

Flordalia Rodriguez- Garcia



Undergraduate Student Government President of the University of Illinois at Chicago

Justin Smith

Justin Smith

Student Body President at Governors State University

Cristan Newton

Cristan Newton

Student Body President at Rockford University

Nicholas Martin



Student Body President at Northeastern Illinois University

Jared Stern

Jared Stern

Student Body President at Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Christina Cilento

Christina Cilento

Student Body President at Northwestern University

Eric Holmberg

Eric Holmberg

University of Chicago

Kaleb Miller

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Olivet Nazarene University

Kyle Walsh

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Walsh", written in a cursive style on a light-colored background.

Illinois State University