

« Back to News





WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

The Philosophy of What Makes a University

Western Illinois U says low enrollments justify eliminating four liberal arts majors, but faculty leaders say maintaining fields of study is about more than metrics.

June 14, 2016

By [Rick Seltzer](#)

When Western Illinois University's Board of Trustees on Friday approved cutting four degree programs as majors and modifying four more, it looked like another chapter of belt tightening at a cash-strapped public institution suffering collateral damage amid state budget difficulties.

But administrators didn't come out and blame finances. The programs arrived on the chopping block because they exhibited declining or low enrollment, Western Illinois leaders said -- not because the university needed to find millions of dollars in savings to make up for an expected plunge in state



funding.

Some at the university are skeptical cost cutting wasn't an ultimate driver at an institution planning to slash \$24.7 million (10 percent) from its budget in 2017. And they're openly questioning the process the university used to identify programs to be eliminated or changed. Coming after months of struggles over previously announced layoffs, the program changes reflect to faculty members a significant de-emphasis on the liberal arts.

Major degree programs to be cut are African-American studies, philosophy, religious studies and women's studies. Plans are to phase out the majors so that currently enrolled students can complete their degrees. The university also plans to allow students to continue to minor in those areas, and it plans to still offer some classes in the topics for curriculum diversity.

Major degree programs spared the ax are bilingual/bicultural education, public health, geography and musical theater. They will be modified or reorganized, however, after an Academic Program Elimination Review Committee **recommended reviewing them in two years** to see if they can improve metrics like costs, enrollment and graduation rates.

Some faculty members worry the eliminations reflect a university more focused on meeting a metric favored by state officials and less about creating well-rounded students. Prominent among critics is Christopher Pynes, a professor of philosophy and chair of the Faculty Senate. The programs were reviewed because they were flagged under a state reporting requirement for programs with low enrollments, he said. But Western Illinois did not have to eliminate them.

"What's happened is the administration sees this legal reporting requirement as a mandate for how we have to run the university," he said. "It's not a mandate. It's a legal reporting standard. We just have to report."

Departments spent months putting together proposals on how to reorganize and what to do to boost enrollment, Pynes said. Philosophy went from about 16 majors to 26 in two semesters this year, he said.

Pynes also questioned the way majors are counted, pointing out that students listing it as their second major don't tally as philosophy majors. That means the philosophy department's reach goes beyond the number of students counted, he said. Also, the Western Illinois College of Education and Human Services, College of Business and Technology, Centennial Honors College, and College of Arts and Sciences all have majors requiring philosophy courses.

Cutting the philosophy major cuts at the heart of the university, Pynes said. He argued that universities are more than a training ground for workers.

"We're not making tires," Pynes said. "We're providing students an educational experience at a university, and they need to have access to the things that universities have, like philosophy departments."

That gets at tension over the direction of Western Illinois. A strategic plan supplement trustees approved Friday could be seen as pointing the university more toward applied education. A [description of the plan in board documents](#) says it will position the university for the long-term by stabilizing enrollment, decreasing reliance on state funding and increasing business acumen, among other things.

"We will continue to provide, from day one of the student's experience, high-impact, applied learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom, leading to student employment and/or graduate school placement upon graduation," it said.

But Western Illinois has always been a regional state university that can keep its foundation in liberal arts while attracting students to majors with clear career pathways, said Kathleen Neumann, interim provost and academic vice president. In that light, the university could be seen less as changing its direction and more as playing toward its strengths.

The university is fighting an enrollment decline driven in large part by demographics and a falling number of high school graduates, Neumann said. The decline was roughly 11 percent over five years, to 11,094 as of the fall of 2015, she said. But enrollment has been dropping much more slowly in some majors with obvious career pathways, like law enforcement, which has dropped just 2 percent in the same time frame,

to just over 1,600.

Those numbers dwarf majors in the degree programs being cut. African-American studies had 13 declared majors in 2015-16, Neumann said. Philosophy had 17, religious studies had five and women's studies had seven.

The planned changes will allow the university to keep educating students in disciplines like philosophy, she said.

"We are not eliminating minors," Neumann said. "We are not eliminating the courses or those content areas being offered in general education. It's just that in these particular majors, we have very low student enrollment."

Talk about Western Illinois programs go back years, Neumann said.

"We have repeatedly been having these conversations about how we can no longer be all things to all people," she said. "We're going to have to be very mindful of not only our fiscal resources but our human resources going forward."

Neumann acknowledged that the review process flagging the degree programs does not require any to be cut. But the university is charged with being a good steward of its resources, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education put the review process in place.

"IBHE will not tell us we have to close the programs," she said. "But on the other hand, they report to our legislative body, to which we are responsible to report to."

Asked about savings from the program cuts, Neumann said it would be premature to give any estimates. Contracts prohibit affected faculty members from being laid off in the upcoming year, she said.

Yet it is clear that Western Illinois is under financial pressure. Its [preliminary spending plan](#) for 2017 calls for a \$221.3 million operating budget that anticipates a 20 percent cut in state higher education funding from 2015 levels. That reflected a February proposal from Governor Bruce Rauner, which budget

documents indicate was the best-known estimate available for the state as its prolonged budget stalemate continues.

The \$221.3 million total operating budget would be down from \$248 million in the 2015 fiscal year. It anticipates state appropriations falling from \$52.6 million to \$41.2 million. In 2014, total state appropriations were \$52.8 million.

Western Illinois has clearly been in cost-cutting mode, announcing rounds of **faculty and staff cuts**, including **110 noninstructional staff layoffs** made public in April.

But the argument can be made that the degree programs approved to be cut Friday were generating surpluses, said William Thompson, president of Local 4100 of the University Professionals of Illinois at Western Illinois. Factoring in total credit hour production and using conservative revenue estimates, he calculated the women's studies program as having a profit of about \$240,000 in the 2015 fiscal year. Philosophy and religious studies -- which would have been combined under a proposal -- would have generated a surplus of more than \$350,000, and African-American studies would have posted a small surplus of roughly \$6,600.

The argument can, however, be made that eliminating the majors could allow for staff reductions or reassignments, further lowering costs and improving the bottom line, Thompson acknowledged. While the union contract says faculty will get a year of employment after the program cuts, money that had been going to faculty members could in theory be routed somewhere else after that year.

"That would free up salary," Thompson said. "They're going to reinvest in other areas that they think have a future or are presently growing."

Thompson listed other objections to the changes, saying an enormous amount of time was dedicated to creating plans for the majors' future, only to have those plans nixed before they were given time to work. And the union takes issue with the way the administration has used provisions in its collective bargaining agreement, Thompson said. The parties are going to arbitration over the issue.

“It doesn’t allow you to make surgical cuts,” Thompson said. “You can’t just reach in and carve out a so-called program from a department.”

The impact of the majors being cut can go beyond the balance sheet, Thompson said. He worries the administration does not see things that way.

“They’re only looking at the programs in a very narrow way,” Thompson said. “Which they’ve been told to do by their bureaucratic masters.”



Get the Daily News Update by email every weekday »



[59 Comments](#)

[Inside Higher Ed](#)





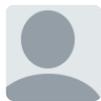
Join the discussion...



Onesense · 2 days ago

Eliminating liberal arts programs, and their faculty, only to replace them with pools of adjuncts covering just e of a liberal arts core to satisfy general education requirements, is sadly a cost-cutting trend, and it's the reasc tenure track position in philosophy these days, as difficult as it is to find amidst all the national ads for adjunct positions, can routinely attract upwards of 700 applicants. Truly, there is something so illiberal about propping liberal arts on the backs of an exploited labor class of adjunct professors earning poverty-level wages.

9 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CPO_C_Ryback → Onesense · 2 days ago

More sad, the written plea: "will think for food."

Illinois, the home state of BHO, is a fiscal wreck -- too many promises to too many. Another Detroit?

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Willie Mink → CPO_C_Ryback · 2 days ago

To say the budget mess in Illinois is due to "too many promises to too many" is to demonstrate total ignorance of what's caused the mess. Unless the "too many" is the wealthy living there, n whom have benefited from state government corruption, and all of whom benefit from a flat sta (just imagine how much of Illinois' budget shortfall could be eliminated by a fair income tax!). R determination to union bust, and his obnoxious delaying of the budget in an attempt to do so, is another big problem. Not to mention the animus he and his ilk hold toward higher ed as suppos

indoctrination camps for liberalism.

And hey, that's quite the nasty racist dog-whistle you have there (BHO, Detroit, "handouts" sup only going to black people, etc.)

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Joseph Colorado → Willie Mink · 2 days ago

Lived in Illinois my entire life up until 2 years ago (45 years), mother was an AFSCME president, I worked for WIU, and your response is parroting exactly what those who have majority of the responsibility for the mess in Illinois - democratic politicians making promises to their supporters (including unions and public employees) without the necessary money being put aside by the politicians.

Madigan and his ilk have contributed much more, and for longer, to this mess despite the simple facts that the politicians of the state created the mess by making their ongoing, unfunded, promises.

These problems (including Madigan) were all there well before Rauner was elected. He elected to do exactly what he is doing by the citizens of Illinois.

Unfortunately, those who are being harmed have nobody to blame but Madigan and his ilk who have refused to fund public pensions since before I was born or to address the rural social programs that have financially hamstrung the state.

Yet, please continue to only see one side of the topic because you cannot think beyond your own personal bigotry and interests. At some point the money does run out and bills will be due.

And, being a racist actually demands the person has the power to impose their bigotry.

Otherwise, they are a bigot. For a person that is attempting to demonstrate an education nice fail.

Ryback may be a bigot, but you have demonstrated purposeful ignorance of the situation viewed as a whole. Instead, you choose to only see the issue through your own bigoted view of the world.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CPO_C_Ryback → Willie Mink · 2 days ago

That's right, ignore reality seen by third parties --

<http://www.reuters.com/article...>

" .. The state has a chronic structural budget deficit, as well as the lowest credit ratings, the worst-funded pension system among the 50 states. Chicago, the third biggest U.S. city, the place where about one in five of the state's residents live, is suffering from similar problems and may have to take additional pain, the investors said .."

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



doot → Willie Mink · 2 days ago

Not to mention the animus he and his ilk hold toward higher education as supposed indoctrination camps for liberalism.

can you refute this? i have seen little evidence of the opposite.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



1luvHavenMonahan → Willie Mink · 2 days ago

As someone who has lived in the state of ILL for the past ten years, Rybeck is spot on.

corrupt cronyism by the rich democrat elite who bought and sold offices, admissions a of Clout, plunged the state into debt to pay off the IFT and IEA- who get six-figure pensi after working half a day in the classroom and molesting students to boot. I commend to memory how Emil Jones shookdown taxpayers so he could illegally steer \$5 million to Chicago State. Or Reg Weaver's NEA pension of \$600k a year which is paid by the tax not the membership. This but one of many such that has made ILL the mess it is today course the less said about felon Rod Blahgojevich the better. It wasn't Rauner that plur state \$6 billion in the red.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Willie Mink → 1luvHavenMonahan · a day ago

"It wasn't Rauner that plunged the state \$6 billion in the red."

Right, it a combination of your cherry-picked corrupt dems AND corrupt repubs AND the lack of a fair tax.

Tax the rich of Illinois fairly and a huge part of the budget mess would disappear. (And please, don't throw the canard at me that most of them would then leave; it's just that, a canard.)

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CPO_C_Ryback → Willie Mink · a day ago

Time for more mean ol' facts --

Illinois felon governors, including Blag-o --
<http://abc7chicago.com/archive...>

From Illinois, a felon Congressman & felon wife --

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08...>

With these number of felons, a trillion in taxes would not be enough, IMHO.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



marcus → Willie Mink · a day ago

(And please, don't throw the canard at me that most of them would then leave; it's just that, a canard.)

so you want to base it on hoping they don't leave...

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



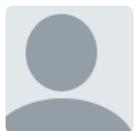
Hankiam → Onesense · 2 days ago

Adjuncts at Western? Not likely, at least not enough to make a difference, unless they hire those they back as part timers. People have been known, during interviews, to say "no" when asked if they're still interested in the job after seeing the location.

The place is in the middle of nowhere, literally - look in Britannica. Under "Middle of Nowhere" that is the picture. It is surrounded by 100 square miles of corn, soybeans, and cattle.

The U is the town of Macomb's major industry, and the place was beginning to look like a ghost town a few weeks ago. About 10% of the properties in town are for sale, and it is truly a buyers market. Bruce Rauner has killed the town with his budget shenanigans. And to think he ran for office on a platform that included creating jobs. Erasing jobs is more like it.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



couchloc · 2 days ago

The chair of Philosophy makes a good point about second majors. Philosophy is a discipline with lots of double majors since students often find it after their first year, like students who do Political Science and Philosophy for law school. That could easily double your number of students so it's a shame if those aren't counted

for law school. That could easily double your number of students so it's a shame if those aren't counted.

8 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Linda Fairtile → couchloc · 2 days ago

Agreed. The course requirements are the same whether philosophy is your second major or your only

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Guest → couchloc · 2 days ago

Maybe if people took more philosophy courses they might be able to recognize a distinction without a difference.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



IllinoisGrad · 2 days ago

Out of fairness, we also need to see average course enrollments in courses and have this split by gen ed and gen ed. You can have a robust gen ed program in an area of study without majors. Majors with student numbers in the single digits are not sustainable, but in some schools the majors in question get curious students taking upper division elective courses or keep their enrollment numbers up by cross listing.

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alsotps → IllinoisGrad · 2 days ago

"Out of fairness," one then needs to stop pretending to be a 'university' and change the name to professional training school.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



jhp151 → alsotps · 2 days ago

A University does not need to be all things to all people. Especially one that cannot afford it.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



wiuoozy → jhp151 · 2 days ago

that's kind of the actual *definition* of a university, though. So yes, make these changes then your title should reflect what you know offer. "Professional training school" does the well.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



jhp151 → wiuoozy · 2 days ago

The actual definition (Merriam-Webster, Oxford, Cambridge) of university does not state nor imply ALL studies. Given the changing nature of the core requirements (removal of latin for example) for a BA / BS, it would seem the Universities agree with the idea that some studies are not required.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



IllinoisGrad → alsotps · 2 days ago

Silly comment, alsotps. I can name you programs that have same themselves by understanding enrollment numbers. This idea that a university has to be everything to everybody isn't going to

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Concerned WIU Employee → IllinoisGrad · 2 days ago

Out of fairness, the Bilingual/Bicultural education major had only 7 majors (and no second majors), ve degrees completed and teaches no general education but is allowed to continue.

Out of fairness, the Clinical Lab Science degree program has 7 majors (no 2nd majors), the university tuition for those students' internships, spends money recruiting them, and has graduated a maximum 2/year over 5 years. No one is even reviewing that major.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



MoniLontra → IllinoisGrad · 2 days ago

also, a university should keep knowledge formation and research and training going in different fields, or not the State Legislature or the Chamber of Commerce has decided that they are profitable. Cutting philosophy out of universities is absurd: it's like eliminating general medicine because oncology is more profitable. Cutting out African American and gender studies, even as a casual look at the daily news makes painfully clear how much we have to learn in those fields, is unconscionable. (And many of those same universities simultaneously call for more "diversity." Yeah right.)

7 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



t → MoniLontra · 2 days ago

Why not fold African American studies and women's studies into sociology? Getting rid of the departments doesn't mean getting rid of the courses or research in that area. It just means that undergraduate students interested in those fields may need to take a broader, more discipline-based degree.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



GWMIII → t · 2 days ago

African American and women's studies are probably more interdisciplinary than Sociology, and that interdisciplinarity can be important to really becoming an expert in those fields. However, in practical terms, I sort of agree...eliminating something as a dept isn't necessarily eliminating the courses or research in the area (I speak as someone in an interdisciplinary dept that has always getting glared out myself).

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



doot → MoniLontra · 2 days ago

Cutting out African American and gender studies, even as a casual look at the daily news makes painfully clear how much we have to learn in those fields, is unconscionable

please tho classes are practically just activist 101,

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



graddirector · 2 days ago

I would love to see what the class sizes are in the large majors (1600 majors in law enforcement !!) compare three tiny programs slated for cutting. At my institution, the class sizes for senior level courses our largest majors are four fold larger than our smallest. No one seems interested in ensuring that the largest majors are well staffed we are just told "increase class sizes" as folks retire. If those religious studies majors are taking senior seminar students while those law enforcement students are in classes of a hundred or more, it is definitely time to think about realigning resources, hopefully mostly by attrition (sounds possible if the minors are being maintained) couple hiring to make sure that the majors that students are actually interested in are well resourced.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Willie Mink → graddirector · 2 days ago

So why even call it a "university," when what you seem to be calling for is what, a slightly glorified trade school?

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Another CC Prof → Willie Mink · 2 days ago

Harvard started as a glorified trade school for ministers. I am familiar with the criminal justice requirements at some universities, and their graduates take more than half of their classes in the arts. So, no, grad director is not calling for your strawman.

But here is mine: Wouldn't you rather have law enforcement officers with some education in the humanities and social sciences than ones who just attended Police Academy?

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



jax → Another CC Prof · a day ago

Exactly -- MoniLotra's comment applies to police officers especially. Wouldn't you want to take at least one African-American and/or Women's Studies course?

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



GWMill → Willie Mink · 2 days ago

Well, yeah...but...you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him [t]hink...if students are enrolling in the classes, eventually those of us teaching the small classes need to deal with the live with the fact that maybe the university needs to put its resources where the students are.

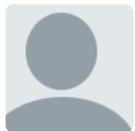
1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



graddirector → Willie Mink · a day ago

No, I am calling for universities to fairly apportion instructional resources to students. The current situation has students in popular majors taking enormous classes and/or classes with underpaid adjuncts with little opportunity to interact with professors (see relative ratios between majors and faculty below). In contrast, students enrolled in much less popular majors which exist for historical reasons get a boutique educational experience.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Mark · 2 days ago

Clearly, the decisions are not based on a revenue driven analysis of the majors/programs. The analysis, if there actually is any, is supporting the contrast of faculty/instructional costs versus the University as an enterprise. If a revenue model were applied to each and every program, only a few would actually be running deficits. As long as tuition is greater than overhead plus salaries, then the financial model suggesting otherwise needs review (or a better explanation of the true purpose). Some years ago a major beer company (Miller?) closed an older plant because though it still made a profit, it did not make a big enough profit (apparently, this happens frequently, but beer is not news). They built a brand new, high tech brewery, devastating the town they left and bringing few new jobs to

next venue. Profits were good, though. Sound familiar?

Since faculty salaries have barely kept up with inflation while tuition has skyrocketed, it is kind of hard to blame instructional cost as the major drag on university finances. Nevertheless, we should focus on more auxiliary enterprises, student resources, athletics, and accountability. This fuzzy instruction stuff just gets in the way. I reminded of the old saw about college administrators during the summer: "With all the students and faculty you sure can get a lot of work done!"

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



CPO_C_Ryback → Mark · 2 days ago

Also: "hey, if it weren't for the students, this would be a great job!"

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



K-Design Media · 2 days ago

It is difficult to get around the statistics at public universities of 60% of incoming students need remedial math English courses before declaring a major. Marketing attempts by faculty and administrators while trying to compete with private elite universities which have a completely different mission and a highly selective student population marketing plan resulting currently in creating a deceptive and distorted perception of their propose in a new era. Both the public and private institutions should provide a curriculum that fits the scholarly pursuits of its students as in the case of public, a water down version of the Ivy League schools they try to emulate. In a time when government mandates that all citizens, no matter their academic achievements, be required to obtain a higher education degree. Resulting in both private and public universities softening their standards and the rigors and dedication to achieving a degree due to pressure to adhere to funding metrics. Education should be a reformist solution in a free and liberal society but public universities can not be a catch basin for the total population. Most citizens want to be educated in skilled labor, work force technology, and business management aside from the scholarly liberal arts concentrations, and done so in a respectful high level of achievement that adds jobs and businesses to society and supports high wages and career learning potential. Public universities should either accept their new role or downsize admissions, become more selective and uphold higher academic standards.

accept their new role or downsize admissions, become more selective and uphold higher academic standards, manageable cost effective and value plan for their students and the taxpayer. Providing a clear objective and path for the public's future needs.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



RustyBrown · 2 days ago

Surprised not to see the numbers of faculty reported here alongside the number of majors. According to the V website:

Philosophy: 6 faculty (one of whom is the dean), 17 majors

Religious Studies: 3 faculty, 5 majors

African American Studies: 6 faculty, 13 majors

Women's Studies: 5 faculty, 7 majors

Law Enforcement, btw, has 24 faculty (and a ton of part-timers), for their 1,700 majors.

I'm also surprised that the article makes no mention of the fact that this plan seems to cut the major in the De own department. Seems unusual.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



one → RustyBrown · 2 days ago

Actually there are ONLY 3 full time Philosophy faculty.

1 dean

1 chair (who teaches 1 class)

3 full time faculty

*there was a fourth faculty member who was hired as a temp replacement for chair).

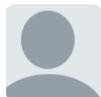
^ | v · Reply · Share ›



graddirector  one · a day ago

So, that still means that there is a 1:5 ratio between full time philosophy faculty and majors, w enforcement is struggling with a 1:70!!! ratio between faculty and students. One can just imag what those class sizes look like.....

 |  · Reply · Share ›



Willie Mink  RustyBrown · a day ago

"Religious Studies: 3 faculty, 5 majors
African American Studies: 6 faculty, 13 majors
Women's Studies: 5 faculty, 7 majors"

I suspect all of these faculty have joint appointments with other departments.

 |  · Reply · Share ›



Daywalker53 · 2 days ago

You mean making market wages.

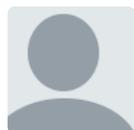
 |  · Reply · Share ›



Brown_Dog · 2 days ago

Philosophy? In the age of Trumps and Clintons, thinking will not be tolerated and certainly there will be no nee ethics or logic.

1  |  · Reply · Share ›



C. Slack · 2 days ago

Did faculty in the disciplines slated for elimination assist in recruitment efforts? My guess, from experience, is you have niche market at an institution, you have a responsibility to help recruit and retain students. LEADER needed here.

1  |  · Reply · Share ›



Joseph Colorado → C. Slack · 2 days ago

WIU alum: BA 94' & MS 96'

Former employee entry level admin

Worked with recruitment 2006-2011

No, requests to departments for recruitment typically were ignored or the department made unreasonable demands that went against what admissions was allowed to do when visiting schools/going to fairs/etc

Departments would make it difficult (especially sciences/math) for transfer students to bring in college courses from other schools.

The general mantra from faculty was it wasn't their job to recruit students. What they didn't understand that if they were not engaging with prospective students it would be that much more difficult to get students into the degree program. African American/Women's Studies (going back to my time as a student) were always on the cusp of elimination due to low enrollments/graduations. Kinda shocked PHI is being cut considering the lack of students in other programs.

And, the loss of enrollment is better tied to the local community (police and city leaders) making it very difficult that out of area students (from more than 30 minutes away from Macomb) are not welcome and will be a major funding source for the city. Another issue: when the current administration decided that the city

[see more](#)

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



mIm → Joseph Colorado · 2 days ago

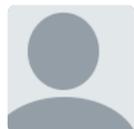
Its not faculty's job to recruit.

Its the recruiters job to recruit.

However, universities should not recruit.

They should perform well enough people want to go there to learn.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



AC · 2 days ago

If every public university in Illinois decides to eliminate a liberal arts program that fails to attract at least 40 undergraduate majors, then philosophy majors would be offered at only two state universities in Illinois (Illinois and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), and African American Studies would be offered nowhere at Illinois public university (based on the information I saw here, at least: <http://www.wiu.edu/IRP/>). My primary concern is about student access to small but vital liberal arts majors--student access at public universities. While I recognize that not every public university will offer a major in my own field of religious studies (WIU had only a minor in religious studies when I arrived, and our brief experiment with a major did attract some wonderful majors, including transfer students from community colleges), I do worry about the future of public higher education if access to a philosophy major is limited to the 11% or so of undergraduates at the University of Chicago who choose philosophy as a major, while leaving out the 20-30 students at a regional public university who discover philosophy as a major, and who often do not have access to an elite private university. So I am hoping very much that other public universities in Illinois make the kinds of decisions WIU has this past week.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Frank Rojas → AC · 2 days ago

If you cut philosophy majors at some public universities it would appear logical that their number would increase at some others and you might have more public universities with good departments instead of a larger number with small, mediocre at best departments. There are many benefits to having a more workable/efficient size. More courses taught more often, better faculty in subareas instead of generalists, more peers with shared interests. And lots more.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



AC → AC · 2 days ago

A CORRECTION here: at the University of Chicago philosophy is the 11th most popular major, with 20 majors. Sorry for the initial error!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



doot · 2 days ago

"We're not making tires," Pynes said. "We're providing students an educational experience at a university, and we need to have access to the things that universities have, like philosophy departments."

he is just trying to save his department. i don't much use for philosophy among anyone these days.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



AreaMan → doot · 2 days ago

You are unintentionally hilarious.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



rs1593a · 2 days ago

"Major degree programs to be cut are African-American studies, philosophy, religious studies and women's studies."

Apparently, these aren't 'growth' majors at this school. By growth, I mean that the more students get this major, the more jobs/contribute to society, the more demand there is for these majors - a 'virtuous cycle'.

Economics appear to be a growth major, for example. The opposite of growth is redistribution. New graduates are just getting a smaller and smaller slice of a constant pie.

Too bad - there's no reason these majors couldn't be growth. Must be the curriculum.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



AC → rs1593a · a day ago

More the issue has been declining enrollment as there are fewer high school students graduating in Illi overall, in combination with many more Gen Ed options (from AP credit to Dual Credit to a glut of departments, some outside the liberal arts, adding their courses to the Gen Ed curriculum, to a change decade or so ago that dropped the expectation of two humanities courses down to one, with the option other fine arts or humanities course). The same classes were full 15 years ago.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

Load more comments

ALSO ON INSIDE HIGHER ED

Education Department wants to eliminate national accreditor to many for-profit colleges

27 comments · a day ago

Eric H Happe — Same here Steve. We selected ACICS as there are very few accrediting options available. We are too small, and the process too ...

How Davis Chancellor Spent Money on Public Relations

2 comments · 13 hours ago

Guest — As a nation, isn't it time to stop treating upper management, whether it be at a university, corporation, non-profit, or government agency, ...

Lessons From My First Presidency

1 comment · 2 days ago

Freedom1212 — Thank you for the thoughtful es wonder if you would comment on the intersector between your points about taking ...

For-profit opponents continue to fight propos expand military base access

7 comments · a day ago

Natty Bumpoo — Please - there is one reason fo profits want onto those military bases: 90/10. Comparing schools that have a major incentive .

WANT TO ADVERTISE? CLICK HERE



WE HAVE 13,221 JOBS TO BROWSE



POST A JOB

I'm looking for ...



SEARCH JOBS

SEARCH TIPS

JOB CATEGORIES

Faculty Jobs (4,997)

Social Sciences / Education (973)

Humanities (497)

Fine And Performing Arts (328)

Professions (2,090)

Science / Engineering / Mathematics (1,114)

Administrative Jobs (8,264)

Executive Positions (393)

Alt-Ac Careers (3,834)

Community Colleges (2,186)

Outside US (83)

RELATED JOBS

[BROWSE ALL](#)

Executive Vice President of Student Affairs

Erie Community College • Orchard Park, NY

Assistant Vice President for Student Support and Resource Centers

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute • Webster, NY

Provost

Marywood University • Scranton, PA

Vice President for Enrollment Management

Berklee College of Music • Boston, MA

Executive Vice President Finance and Administration

The University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley • Rio Grande Valley, TX

Vice President, Administrative Services

Moraine Valley Community College • Palos Hills, IL

Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management

Capital University • Columbus, OH

Assistant Vice President, New Media

Virginia Tech • Blacksburg, VA

FEATURED EMPLOYERS

[VIEW ALL](#)



The Chicago School is a not-for-profit, accredited institution with more than 4,000 students at campuses across the country (Chicago, Los Angeles and...



Washington and Lee University, the nation's ninth oldest institution of higher education, is an independent liberal arts university that develops...



WANT TO POST A JOB? CLICK HERE

MOST: [Viewed](#) [Commented](#)

PAST: [Day](#) [Week](#) [Month](#) [Year](#)

[Education Department recommends eliminating national accreditor to many for-profit colleges](#)

[Debate over whether all undergraduates should take mathematics course](#)

[Ohio State Drops Mascot From Gay Pride Parade](#)

[Public university presidents seeing big gains in bonuses, other perks](#)

[UC Davis Chancellor Sent Aides to Switzerland](#)

[Examining Why Female Students Leave Engineering](#)

[For-profit opponents continue to fight proposal to expand military base access](#)

[Commercialization and Fraud in International Student Recruitment](#)

BACK TO TOP



495
SHARES

