

EIU Candidate Statements

Position: EIU President

Candidate Name: Jennifer Stringfellow

I believe that when you join a union and work for the benefit of all it is like joining a chorus – the sound is stronger and the power is multiplied. I have most recently served as the Vice-President of our local and have learned a great deal about not only circumstances on our campus but how that fits with what is occurring on other campuses across Illinois with faculty unions. I have been involved in the discussion regarding both our Fall MOU and our Spring/Summer MOA. My primary goal, if I am elected, is to continue the work started in supporting and organizing members of the EIU UPI Local 4100 to assure that our needs are met to the best of our ability and the work begun in lending an ear and support to other unions on our campus. We are stronger when we work together for mutual purposes.

Position: Vice President

Candidate Name: Billy Hung

The Rauner years galvanized me and proved to me that Union activism is an essential element of a functional campus. Unions, however, cannot work unless the members put in the work. I've volunteered for our Union as communication coordinator and as a member of the contract negotiating team. Currently I serve as the Unit A representative on our executive board and as the co-chair for our Committee on Political Action and Legislation. Stepping into the Vice President position will allow me to serve our campus more directly and offer me a greater vantage point to help organize our campus. My main goal as the VP of our executive board is to assist our President, and to represent our members, across all units, in advocating for a campus community that serves our needs in an equitable, just, and responsible manner. Thank you for your consideration.

Position: Chapter Treasurer

Candidate Name: Thomas Canam, Ph.D.

Professor of Biological Sciences (Unit A)

I have been with the Department of Biological Sciences since 2011, and a member of EIU-UPI during my entire tenure at EIU. I have become increasingly interested in union matters since the Rauner budget crisis, which highlighted the importance of strong union leadership. Recently, I have been an outspoken critic of EIU's handling of COVID-19, and am one of several EIU-UPI members fighting for transparency and science-driven policy relating to the pandemic. With respect to the position of Treasurer, I have experience with operating laboratory and research budgets from both internal and external funding sources, as well as managing the finances of two campus RSOs. In addition, I have a reputation in my department and college for careful note keeping and preparation of important documentation (e.g. departmental and college by-laws, IBHE reports). I look forward to applying my budgetary and writing experience to advance the interests of our union members.

Position: UNIT B/ASP REP

Candidate Name: Catherine "Betsy" Jewell

My name is Catherine "Betsy" Jewell. I am running for the UPI-EIU Chapter Executive Board as the Academic Support Professional (ASP) Representative. Having worked at Eastern Illinois University for over 20 years as an ASP, I have a deep respect for and understanding of the unique challenges faced by ASPs. I have been the ASP representative for the past five years and have worked very hard to be available to all our ASP employees on campus. I will continue to fight for the interests of all our members and to ensure ASPs have a voice in our union and in our upcoming negotiations. Over the past several years, I have become aware of how differently some of our members are treated and I am committed to bringing these inequities to an end. It has been my honor to serve on the board and I look forward to continued service.

Position: EIU-UPI Unit-B ASP Representative
Candidate Name: Derrick Douros

My union “roots” run deep, as I first joined a union in the 1970s working at a grocery store in high school. My previous place of employment was in a union comprised of different divisions similar to EIU. Therefore, I understand and believe the divisions need to vigorously work together and “melt” into one in solidarity so everyone’s needs are met, even-though each has different requirements and goals. Since my employment began at EIU almost 10 years ago, I have seen the erosion of ASPs. These positions are disappearing through past layoffs, attrition, and currently by the SUCSS reclassification system. Since we are the smallest group in the local, I will work to build the membership of ASPs through pushing for retaining and expanding our campus positions. The “work plan” system also needs to be addressed because there are no “true” standards, assigned obligations, or real work plan limitations.

Position: EIU Executive Assistant Executive Board
Candidate Name: Bryan Murley

It has been an honor to serve the members of the EIU chapter of UPI local 4100 for the past two years as Executive Assistant. When I opted to run for this position, I could not have predicted how significant these two years would be. Now, I am asking for a full term to serve in this position. Since arriving at EIU in 2007, I have seen EIU-UPI function as a powerful force on campus and in the state. I am proud to be part of a force for good for students, faculty, staff and the larger community. Going forward, we face more mountains – a new contract, the ongoing effects of the pandemic, and changes in academia and society. I hope to continue serving the Board through this position which I feel is a good place for me to impact the future of the university and the state.

Position: EIU Unit A Executive Board
Candidate Name: Bogdan Petrenko

I'd like to run for the position of Unit A Representative. I think that I'm familiar with some of the needs and concerns of our Unit A faculty. I understand, however, that there are matters that are quite important to some of my Unit A colleagues that would be new to me. I'll do my best to listen to my colleagues and then to educate myself on these matters, as they arise, to be a useful Unit A Rep.