

**From:** [John Wilkin](mailto:John.Wilkin@lists.illinois.edu)  
**To:** [libnews-l@lists.illinois.edu](mailto:libnews-l@lists.illinois.edu)  
**Subject:** COVID-19: Extending library services under stay-at-home order  
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All,

I'm writing to you today to discuss our next great challenge: extending necessary and appropriate library services in a period where we must also take measures to protect the health and safety of our employees. The work of the University, particularly instruction, is essential and must go on. Moreover, in my conversations with him, the Provost has expressed appreciation for the important work the Library does to make possible that continuity. During this period where the Governor has issued a stay-at-home order, much of what the Library can do to support that work can be done through virtual services and with support offered remotely. Most of our current acquisitions are electronic, and we are justifiably proud of our robust virtual reference service. Still, more is needed to ensure the University is able to work effectively during the coming weeks.

In early March, when we faced the possibility of suspending in-person instruction, and after consultation with our Executive Committee, I charged a group to ensure "Continuity of Instruction." That group includes Bill Mischo, Heather Murphy, Tim Newman, Chris Prom, and is chaired by Cherié Weible. I have now asked that group to begin to give consideration to the matter of gaps between our current (virtual) services and that which is necessary for effective functioning of the University. What services or functions should or must we deliver while at the same time ensuring the safety and health of our employees?

I want to be clear that in laying out this challenge I am not suggesting that we perform tasks or offer services in ways that we have in the past. Services may be offered less frequently and with less convenience than they were previously, and they may be offered only to smaller patron groups in order to mitigate risk and deliver necessary services. The first of these services will be scanning print materials for online delivery where no alternative for the print is available, and where our faculty and students need the print. The Continuity of Instruction working group has shaped a process to satisfy these requests that will work first to ensure that no other alternative is available, that only offers this service to faculty, students, and staff at Illinois, and that delivers materials to users less frequently than has been the case in the past. I believe this is an appropriate and responsible strategy. The strategy is also designed to protect the health and safety of our employees. I will be meeting with the Continuity of Instruction working group and unit heads tomorrow to answer questions our unit heads have about the strategy.

Going forward, we will need to determine other necessary services and delivery strategies. This work will require creativity and contributions from many of you. I want to again emphasize the two needs that drive this effort: (1) protecting our employees and (2) ensuring vital and effective University services. These two needs must be considered together, and our challenge is to be proactive and careful throughout this coming period.

Yours,  
John

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John P. Wilkin  
Juanita J. and Robert E. Simpson Dean of Libraries and University Librarian  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
230 Library, MC-522  
1408 W. Gregory Drive  
Urbana, IL 61801

[jpwilkin@illinois.edu](mailto:jpwilkin@illinois.edu)

217-333-0790

Assistant: Lucretia Williams | [lawillia@illinois.edu](mailto:lawillia@illinois.edu)