

**From:** [John Wilkin](#)  
**To:** [libnews-l@lists.illinois.edu](mailto:libnews-l@lists.illinois.edu)  
**Subject:** April 17 note, including hiring and next virtual hangout  
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Happy Friday to all of you! I hope you're staying well and not suffering too much from cabin (or COVID-19) fever. With our return to regular, albeit virtual, meetings, I've had the opportunity to "see" a number of you in groups and individually in your roles as division coordinators or in the promotion and tenure process. I've been grateful for that human connection, for the opportunity to talk about ordinary work issues and to kibitz about life.

Work at the campus level continues, as does our consortial and community work. While the in-person ARL and Big Ten Academic Alliance meetings have been canceled, we are meeting virtually and we have continued to advance our collective agenda around things like transformative publishing agreements and [the BIG Collection](#). With the Chancellor, the Provost and the Deans, we continue to discuss the implications of COVID-19 for our teaching and research, for our operations generally, and financially. We've begun to estimate the financial impact of the COVID-19 quarantine, and it's not surprising that the cost is already in the tens of millions of dollars. Our campus leaders are engaged in ways to absorb and mitigate the impact, and I'm especially grateful for their flexibility and transparency, and inclusiveness of their efforts.

Hiring is of course one of the things affected by all of this. As I have noted previously, the University is not freezing hiring. That said, we have been asked to prioritize hiring, to move forward slowly, and to be prepared to justify hiring requests in light of likely budget reductions. Our executive committee and the AULs have been hard at work on prioritizing currently open positions. Because every position is important, and because each hiring decision limits our financial flexibility, I have asked them to consider vacancies across all job families--faculty, civil service and academic professionals. In the midst of our work, the campus has produced criteria that will be used to review hiring requests, and I'm pleased to say that our prioritization is well-aligned with those criteria. Early next week, Skye will send an update on hiring, and a number of positions will be marked as "Suspended" as a result of the prioritization. This is based on the best information we have available to us now and may change depending on my conversations with the Provost. Please note, too, that hiring for these positions is *suspended* and not canceled, and we will undertake efforts to fill all of these critical positions as soon possible.

We are scheduling another virtual hang-out, this time for April 21st. Please look for an invitation from Lucretia. April 21st is also National Library Workers Day. Let's get together for a conversation and more sharing. Bring your pets, wear an outrageous hat--whatever sounds fun to you. I wish I had a great way of acknowledging all of your tremendous contributions through this challenging period. Looking forward to seeing you then!

Yours,  
John

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