

5 September 2014

The Program in Comparative and World Literature has joined with other units to vote its lack of confidence in the leadership:

The faculty of the Program in Comparative and World Literature at the University of Illinois stand united in their trust that academic freedom and a commitment to fairness and transparency in all academic procedures and practices, including faculty hires, form the foundations of the American public higher educational system. Chancellor Phyllis Wise's unilateral decision on August 1, 2014, to inform Dr. Steven Salaita, summarily and without faculty consultation, that she would not forward his contract to the Board of Trustees, voided every preceding review by faculty and administrative personnel, and has caused immediate and lasting damage to the national and international reputations of the University of Illinois.

Furthermore, Chancellor Wise's August 22, 2014, explanation of her action in the name of "civility" directly contradicted the protection of tenure and the right to free speech guaranteed by University statutes and its membership in the AAUP, and obscured the role played in this decision by political pressures. President Robert Easter and the Board of Trustees exacerbated this damage by their endorsement of this violation of shared governance, due process, and academic freedom on August 22, 2014. The University of Illinois Statutes clearly state that, "It is the policy of the University to maintain and encourage full freedom within the law of inquiry, discourse, teaching, research, and publication and to protect any member of the academic staff against influences, from within or without the University, which would restrict the member's exercise of these freedoms in the member's area of scholarly interest." The faculty of the Program In Comparative and World Literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign declares its lack of confidence in the leadership of the current Chancellor, President, and Board of Trustees. We call on the Chancellor, the President, and the Board of Trustees to: reverse their decision by reinstating Dr. Salaita; to reaffirm the established protocols for hiring, tenure, and promotion; and to abide by University statutes to protect *all* members of its academic staff "against influences, from within or without the University."