

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

FACULTY LAYOFFS OR CONTRACT NON-RENEWALS

What is a layoff?

A layoff is a stoppage of work required by management and due to the elimination of the employee's position.

Why are layoffs and contract non-renewals happening now?

WIU is undergoing personnel reductions due to demonstrable enrollment reduction. The layoff is considered a permanent reduction.

What guides the layoff process for faculty employees?

The 2023–2026 Western Illinois University and University Professionals of Illinois Local 4100 Agreement (WIU/UPI Agreement) outlines procedures for staff reductions. Tenured/tenure-track faculty and librarians are covered by Article 24, Staff Reduction Procedures for Unit A. Associate Faculty and Academic Support Professionals are covered by Article 40, Staff Reduction Procedures for Unit B.

How much notice will be given?

An employee with a probationary appointment shall be given the same notice in the event of a layoff as would be given in the event of non-renewal of their appointment. As specified in Article 20.8.b, of the WIU/UPI Agreement, a tenured employee who has received notice of layoff shall be employed for at least one additional academic year.

Can I appeal my layoff or position elimination?

Alleged violations of the WIU/UPI Agreement are subject to the grievance procedure set forth in Article 6 of the WIU/UPI Agreement.

What opportunities exist for reemployment?

Pursuant to Articles 24.4 and 40.3 of the WIU/UPI Agreement, the University shall make a reasonable effort to locate other equivalent employment within the University for a laid-off employee prior to the effective date of their layoff.

What options are available for pay spread?

If an employee currently has their pay spread over 12-months and their employment ends in May, the pay spread can remain in effect through the summer, allowing the University to withhold insurance premiums from their paychecks. The last paycheck would be paid September 1, 2025.

If an employee currently has their pay spread over 12-months and their employment ends in December, any amount still owed will be paid to the employee on January 1, 2025.

If an employee wants to cancel their pay spread, they may do so no later than August 12, 2024.

How will the FY2025 3% basic salary increase, promotions, minima lane increases, and professor 5-year appraisal adjustments be impacted?

An employee that was scheduled to receive any of the above salary adjustments will receive them as scheduled. All contracts for the upcoming fiscal year will be updated by mid-August.

BENEFITS

How are insurance benefits affected by a layoff or contract non-renewal?

Insurance coverage for employees who are laid off on a permanent basis or receive notice of non-renewal shall have their benefits terminated according to the following schedule:

Employee Type	Termination of Insurance Benefits
9-Month Faculty with a 12-month pay spread	Midnight on August 31, 2025
9-Month Faculty without a 12-month pay spread	Midnight on August 31, 2025, however will be on direct bill from CMS for summer months
All other Faculty	Midnight on the last day of employment

An employee will be eligible to continue health, dental, and vision coverage including dependent coverage under COBRA. Under COBRA and pursuant to Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) policies, employees have the option to continue coverage for eighteen (18) months by paying both the employer and employee premiums for that coverage plus 2% (102% of the cost of insurance). Learn more at:

<https://cms.illinois.gov/benefits/stateemployee/cobra.html>

Health insurance can also be purchased in the marketplace. Government Health Plans are those created and mandated by the Affordable Care Act. Learn more about Government Plans at: <https://www.governmenthealthinsurance.com/>. A layoff constitutes a qualifying event that will entitle an individual to enroll in a marketplace plan outside of the designated enrollment period.

State life insurance coverage ends at midnight on the date of termination of employment. MetLife will mail the employee a form upon termination of employment which may be returned to them to continue the life insurance policy privately. For questions regarding the life insurance policy, please contact MetLife at (800) 880-6394.

How are SURS retirement benefits affected by a layoff or non-renewal?

Employees who are laid off on a permanent basis can elect to have their retirement contributions remain with SURS or elect to receive a lump-sum payout. The lump-sum payout election can only be selected after the employee has been on a permanent layoff for more than 120 days. Payout elections are administered directly by the [SURS office](#).

If an employee has had a retirement counseling session with SURS within the past year, will the employee be able to meet with SURS again because of these extenuating circumstances?

Yes. Employees may schedule another appointment. Employees must contact SURS directly at (800) 275-7877.

How long does non-payable sick leave balance count towards additional SURS service credit?

Non-payable sick leave can be counted for additional SURS service credit for up to 60 days after termination. SURS does not consider an employee to be terminated until 120 days have passed from the date of the layoff.

If an employee chooses to take a separation refund from SURS for retirement contributions and later returns to work or becomes employed with another SURS employer, can the employee select a new retirement plan?

No. The plan election is a one-time, irrevocable election. Whatever plan an employee selected when originally employed will be the plan that remains should an employee be employed again within the SURS system.

What happens to accrued benefits?

Vacation Leave

Employees will receive pay for any accrued vacation leave balance as of the date of separation from service.

Employees who are reemployed by the university will not have vacation leave balances restored. However, the service year that establishes rate of accrued leave earning will be determined by adding all previous periods of State service which qualified for earning accrued leave.

Sick Leave

Unused Payable Sick Leave (earned from January 1, 1984–December 31, 1997)

Employees will receive pay for half of the payable sick leave balance as of the date of separation of service. The other half will be considered non-payable sick leave.

Non-Payable Sick Leave

According to the State Universities Civil Service System Merit Board Policy IV.C.4, a former employee who separates in good standing and returns to employment within two years, shall have former accrued Sick Leave restored.

WIU will keep record for three years of non-payable sick leave for all employees who are permanently laid off.

Unused, Unpaid Sick Leave (if retiring)

If an employee elects to retire, the non-payable sick leave will be reported to SURS at that time. Employees will receive additional service credit for any unused and unpaid sick leave earned in accordance with an employer's generally applicable sick leave policy *if the retirement annuity begins within 60 days* after termination of employment covered by SURS or one of the other systems subject to the Illinois Retirement System Reciprocal Act.

<u>Full Work Days</u>	<u>Additional Service Credit</u>
20-59 Days	¼ Year
60-119 Days	½ Year
120-179 Days	¾ Year
180 or more Days	1 Year

When are sick or vacation payouts received?

Eligible sick or vacation payouts will be processed in the next payroll cycle following separation.

Are laid-off or non-renewed employees eligible for unemployment compensation?

Yes. Employees who receive notice of permanent layoff or contract non-renewal may apply for unemployment benefits with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) at ides.illinois.gov. Please note that the University does not process applications or have the ability to inform an impacted employee of any actual benefit entitlement. Questions should be directed to IDES at (800) 244-5631.

Is employee assistance counseling available?

Yes. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential service free to all benefits-eligible University employees and their families. The EAP provides professional assistance to individuals experiencing a range of personal and work-related concerns. The EAP offers confidential counseling, legal support, financial information, and personalized resources as part of the coverage. To contact the EAP, call (800) 851-1714 or go to

<https://www.guidanceresources.com/groWeb/login/login.xhtml> and use the member Web ID code: StateofIllinois.

What happens to the tuition waiver benefit for an employee or their child?

If the employee taking a class is in active status on the first day of the class, the waiver will continue until the end of the semester.

If the employee has a child enrolled at WIU, the tuition waiver will continue until the end of the semester. Eligibility for the 50% tuition waiver benefit is conditioned upon the parent being employed as of the first day of the academic term (in accordance with the academic calendar where the student is enrolled) for which the tuition waiver benefit would apply. In the event a child loses eligibility through a parent's separation from employment during any given academic term or semester, the benefit shall not be rescinded for the duration of that term or semester. However, no future benefits may be extended until such time as the employee regains eligibility status.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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