

April 25, 2025

Professor Jon Hale  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Senate  
Senate Executive Committee Chair  
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**Daily Illini, WPGU and Illio Alumni Letter in Support  
Of Mutual Academic Defense Compact**

Dear Professor Hale,

We are a group of University alumni who are also former Daily Illini, WPGU and Illio staff members. We write in support of those members of the faculty Senate seeking passage of the “Rutgers Resolution” Mutual Academic Defense Compact. We hope you will communicate our support to those members, and to the entire body.

These are not normal times. We are in new territory. We are alarmed by government efforts to consolidate dispersed power into the hands of a would-be monarch who is employing a divide-and-conquer strategy. High on his list are actions to consolidate power over colleges and universities nationwide. The Trump administration is [acting to dictate](#) what universities can teach, who they can admit, who they can hire, what areas of study and inquiry they can pursue, how and for what their students should be disciplined, and what viewpoints groups of students and faculty must have.

If these efforts are successful it is easy to see they will apply to student media as well. We shudder at that thought, and what it will teach to aspiring young journalists.

Tyrannical demands will never be satisfied—they will only increase after each capitulation. Solidarity is obviously critical in the face of a divide-and-conquer strategy that seeks to implement an existential threat.

We are heartened to see Harvard University tell the Trump administration “not to us you won’t.” We are heartened to learn that more than 240 college and university presidents and chancellors signed on to a [public statement](#) supporting constructive reform, opposing undue government intrusion, and rejecting coercive use of research funding. We are heartened to see that on April 23 University of Illinois Chancellor Robert Jones signed the statement, taking the UI a significant step forward toward solidarity with other higher education institutions.

We understand the UI faculty senate [will consider](#) a larger step this coming Monday—a resolution supporting a [Mutual Academic Defense Compact](#) among the 18 members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance. The compact is proposed by the Rutgers University faculty senate and has been since [endorsed](#) by a number of faculty senates.

The compact would take concrete and necessary measures to protect academic freedom and prevent a would-be king from consolidating all power over higher education in the United States. It would establish a shared defense fund to provide immediate support to any university under direct legal or political infringement. Members would jointly coordinate a "unified and vigorous response" to threats, including "Legal representation and countersuit actions; strategic public communication; amicus briefs and expert testimony; legislative advocacy and coalition-building; related topical research as needed."

This is a sound idea that should be expanded outside the Big Ten. We understand that any such compact would need to be implemented by the University of Illinois administration in conjunction with others. We understand that some potentially thorny details would need to be worked out. We respectfully request the faculty Senate to take the next step, so we can move on together to take the one after that.

Sincerely,

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