

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Matt Bierman

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft Oral History project

Interview # ISC-A-L-2016-018

Matt Bierman, the Director of Budget at Western Illinois University, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Pension Crisis in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: March 7, 2016 Location: Sherman Hall Western Illinois University,
Macomb, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:02 / 1.03 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on May 31, 2016.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield,
Illinois.

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Abstract

Matt Bierman, Illinois Statecraft-Pension Crisis, ISC-A-L-2016-018

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Matt Bierman was born in Effingham, Illinois in July, 1974. He graduated from Newton High School (Jasper Country), earned a Bachelor of Business in Information Management from Western Illinois University in 1997, a MA in Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education from Ball State University in 1999, and an MBA in Finance and Supply Change Management from Western Illinois University in 2003. Matt's work experience began as an assistant residence hall director at Ball State from 1997 to 1999. He then returned to Western Illinois University, serving first as complex director (1999-2003), then as Assistant Director of Residential Facilities and Administration from 2003 to 2006, followed by serving as director from 2006 to 2012, and then as Director of the University Budget. His current assignment includes directing the University's budget process, providing long range financial projection analysis, and preparing financial reports for the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Matt also has served on the Macomb Community Unit School District School Board since 2011, and was board president at the time of this interview.

Bierman discusses the challenges facing Western Illinois University due to the budget crisis of 2015-16, and how questions on pensions and retirement impact university operations. He reviews the types of pensions found at the University, the Early Retirement offerings, and State University Retirement System (SURS) eligibility and vesting. Also covered were changes in employee benefits due to Tier 2, and how the university reacted following the passage of Senate Bill 1 in 2013. The IL Supreme Court overturned the legislation in 2015. Bierman also explores the difference between SURS and the retirement system used by Illinois school districts and the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS). WIU was the first university in Illinois to use the four year tuition and fee locked in rate. Finally, he talks about the status of retired university personnel, and the requirements that must be followed if retirees return for part time work.

Subject Headings/Key Words: State University Retirement System (SURS); Tier 2 retirement system; impact of early retirement on universities; budget development for Illinois universities; Western Illinois University; comparing SURS to TRS; impact of Illinois budget crisis on state universities; possible solutions to Illinois pension crisis

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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Matt Bierman EXCERPTS

30 & 55 solutions to the pension crisis and the Universities first plan for pension cost shifting

103-developing early retirement incentives/plans which might help the University loan term's financial outlook

117-creating a 4 year tuition/fee rate