

# Citizens protest prison lockdown

**CONDITIONS:** Marion Penitentiary meets standards for prisons; protesters' charges inflated, warden says.

**KIRK MOTTRAM**  
DAILY EGYPTIAN REPORTER

Oscar Lopez Rivera, a Puerto Rican nationalist who has been in prison for 17 years and was committed to the U.S. Penitentiary in Marion 11 years ago, writes to his friends that he is locked in his cell for more than 22 hours a day.

He cannot receive contact visits. He is allowed three 15-minute phone calls a month, does not have any access to educational programs or a library and must work in a factory where he is forced to produce cables for the U.S. Armed Forces. Lopez has not had physical human contact in 11 years except for with mailers, during which time his hands are cuffed and he cannot speak.

Though Bill Hedrick, warden at Marion, says these charges are exaggerated, more than 100 protesters descended upon the Marion Penitentiary Saturday to denounce these conditions and demand an end to what they say amounts to almost 15 years of systematic torture.

Members of the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners, and other penal system activists gathered about a half a mile away from the prison, brandishing placards and banners memorializing Rivera and other prisoners, who they say have been branded enemies of the U.S. government.

Protests are scheduled annually in accordance with the anniversary of the Marion lockdown, initiated on Oct. 27, 1983.

Chanting catch phrases condemning "Marionization" or "isolated torture," terms used by activists to describe the dehumanizing nature of permanent lockdown, the pro-

testers marched toward the prison and halted at a blockade before the gate.

There they circled the narrow road repeating these chants, their voices getting louder as the temperature continued to drop. After 30 minutes, they huddled together to resist the chilly winds and heard from committee leaders, relatives of prisoners, ex-prisoners and other activists who spoke defiantly against the conditions of confinement.

Lourdes Lugo, Rivera's niece, spoke passionately about her Friday visit with Rivera. She tries to visit her uncle at least two times a month, but said the conditions of the meeting are so strict, it is difficult to sustain conversation.

"He said it's been such a long time since he's heard women's laughter," Lugo said. "But, how long can you really talk on a telephone and look through a glass window — that's all we have to communicate."

"But, if you went in there and talked to him with your heart and soul in your hands, you would walk out with more strength than you've ever felt — that's just the kind of man he is."

Lugo said Rivera's situation is similar to that of all the prisoners in Marion. She said a lot of inmates are overcome by their predicament and become mentally ill, but some, like her uncle have only grown more tenacious. Lugo argues that Rivera was committed to prison because of his political beliefs and continues to be tortured at the hands of the U.S. government.

"Are you talking about a broken person? Nope. Are you talking about a weak person? Nope," she said. "He is in there because of his convictions and because he has such a profound sense of justice. He's a very strong human being, and he's been able to bear all this."

Rivera was sentenced Aug. 11, 1981, to 70 years in prison for a host of federal crimes, including seditious conspiracy against the



AMY STRAUSS/Daily Egyptian

**FOR PRISONERS' RIGHTS:** About 100 protesters from the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown and the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War came down from Chicago Saturday in protest to end lock downs in the United States Penitentiary in Marion.

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# Students tell how alcohol affected their lives

## PRISON

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federal government. Controversy still surrounds his situation as his supporters maintain he has never been convicted of a violent crime though people like Hedrick argue that planning an overthrow of the U.S. government is violent in and of itself.

"He (Rivera) is a dangerous individual," Hedrick said. "Everyone here (at Marion) is a violent offender and everyone has violated the laws of the federal government. I would think seditious conspiracy is a pretty violent crime.

"We have an obligation to provide a safe and humane environment for our inmates while protecting society from these people. I think we're doing that and to see this, one would only need to look at our accreditation."

Hedrick refers to the American Correctional Association's unofficial accrediting of the Marion Penitentiary. The ACA establishes standards for all correctional institutions in the country. There are 40 compliance standards a facility must meet to be accredited. There also are 40 non-compliance standards that are optional, but still examined. Marion's official accreditation hearing is in January.

Hedrick said his institution was found in compliance with the 40 mandatory standards and 98.6 percent of non-compliance standards.

"When you meet the standards, you're meeting some pretty high standards," he said. "What these groups [protesting Marion] are saying is just not true.

"The conditions of confinement, how they describe them, are exaggerated.

Hedrick also said Rivera, in his letters and personal visits, has been exaggerating his situation.

"He's got a window in his cell that he can open and close," he said. "He's got TV and radio. He has access to outside mail and religious and educational programming. He's got access to the law library. It's his decision whether or not to utilize these services."

Ralph King, member of Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, said wardens of Marion



AMY STRAUSS/Daily Egyptian

**UNITY:** Lourdes Lugo leads the protesters in chants during the lock down protest in front of the U. S. Penitentiary at Marion. On Friday, Lugo visited her uncle, Lupez Rivera, who is being held in the penitentiary.

"These people are not allowed contact visits, they're not allowed to touch another human being, they don't have access to rehabilitation or their own religious services," King said. "Their cells are the size of bathrooms or large closets. They have to eat in their cells, too, and typically, their food is smelly and cold by the time it reaches them.

"These conditions are abhorrent. I'm not saying that everybody here belongs in a choir, but the punishment is prison, not this excessive torture."

Marion Penitentiary was built in 1963 to replace Alcatraz Prison. the

"There's really nothing more we can do for these people — that's the kind of prisoners we have here."

Dana Weis, an SIU School of Law student from Chicago, spoke to the crowd on the economics of the prison and its effect on the community. She said it is difficult for prison guards to reject the horrors of the institution because they have an important stake in its livelihood. Most guards, she said, must support their families and that without the significant salaries reaped from prison employment, "they would have no place else to go."

One of Weis' good friends is

The wrong ad ran on Thursday October 23, 1997. This is the new and corrected ad:

SIUC Faculty Association, IEA/NEA  
**PERSPECTIVES**

The following summary is a companion to our last salary study. Once again our thanks to Professor Beaulieu.



Jim Sullivan  
President

### QUESTIONS DESERVING OF ANSWERS

Our last commentary concluded SIUC faculty salaries are inadequate. SIUC salaries trail the average at Carnegie II universities by 9.8%. They lag behind the IBHE selected peer average by 13.1%, and rank a distinctive last among Illinois Doctoral granting schools. Clearly we continued, salary negotiations must not only focus on 3% legislative appropriations. There must also be dialogue about the distribution of current expenditures. The latter point will be addressed today. In fiscal year 1996, SIUC's total education and general expenditures (E&G Exp.) were \$307.3 million. Of this total, 10.5% flowed to institutional support, i.e. the administration, and 15.9% to academic support, arguably some of which supports the administrative function. As shown below both percentages exceed those for selected peers. In comparison, expenditures on the instructional, research and service mission of SIUC were 51.4% of total E&G Exp. A look at the growth in these categories raises serious questions deserving of answers. Since fiscal year 1992, SIUC E&G Exp. have increased 15.4% but while expenditures in support of SIUC's instructional, research and service mission are up 8.0%, those reported for institutional and academic support have climbed 17.6% and 47.2%, respectively. Of much concern, given SIUC's Carnegie II status, is that expenditures on research have actually fallen by 2.4% since 1992.

### THE COMMON DENOMINATOR - FULL TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENTS

The source for all data is integrated postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Reported in the Institutional Characteristics Survey are fall term credit hours. Financial data is reported in the annual Finance Survey. SIUC reports 244,848 undergraduate credit hours and a combined graduate and professional credit hours of 37,747 for fiscal year 1996 fall term. Dividing undergraduate hours by 15 and the others by 12 yields full time equivalent students (FTE), or 19,469. Full time equivalence is a comparative gauge, often used by the IBHE, to measure cost effectiveness and productivity of programs. For this report, a representative sample of 55 schools was selected from public Carnegie II and IBHE peer institutions. The selected schools have an FTE within 20% of SIUC. Resulting is a sample of 26 universities. SIUC's reported E&G Exp. ranks 16th in this group. SIUC's institutional support are the 4th largest. Academic support is second. Table 1 reports selected expenditures as a percent of total E&G Exp. and as a ratio to FTE.

"He's got a window in his cell that he can open and close," he said. "He's got TV and radio. He has access to outside mail and religious and educational programming. He's got access to the law library. It's his decision whether or not to utilize these services."

Ralph King, member of Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, said wardens of Marion have been lying about the conditions of the inmates since the prison initiated permanent lockdown. He said evidence of this can be found readily in reports compiled by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, two international human rights organizations that have declared confinement conditions at Marion Penitentiary to be torturous and inhumane.

King's organization was founded in 1985 to fight the brutality of conditions at Marion, stop the spread of what they call "control unit prisons" and expose the white supremacist nature of the United States' prison system.

King said the majority of prisoners in Marion are minorities and are people "the United States doesn't happen to like or agree with." He said prisoners' conditions have not only been condemned by human rights groups, but by church organizations around the world.

King said. "Their cells are the size of bathrooms or large closets. They have to eat in their cells, too, and typically, their food is smelly and cold by the time it reaches them."

"These conditions are abhorrent. I'm not saying that everybody here belongs in a choir, but the punishment is prison, not this excessive torture."

Marion Penitentiary was built in 1963 to replace Alcatraz Prison, the infamous supermax correctional institution on the coast of San Francisco that closed that same year. King said that throughout Marion's history, political prisoners have been sent to the facility, including Black Panther leaders, Cuban refugees and activists, and 1960s American civil rights and anti-war leaders like Bill Dunne, who is still there.

"The people who get singled out to come here are hated by the Bureau of Prisons and are usually enemies of the federal government — the leaders and protesters who asserted their dignity and convictions," King said.

Hedrick said that while it is true all Marion prisoners have committed crimes against the federal government, they all have committed violent crimes in society and most have pursued violent acts while incarcerated.

to the crowd on the economics of the prison and its effect on the community. She said it is difficult for prison guards to reject the horrors of the institution because they have an important stake in its livelihood. Most guards, she said, must support their families and that without the significant salaries reaped from prison employment, "they would have no place else to go."

One of Weis' good friends is training to become a prison guard and despite Weis' efforts, her friend will soon work within Marion's walls.

"She's such a beautiful woman, but it's so difficult for her to acknowledge what's going on," she said. "I've been trying to dissuade her from this."

"But, when guards are offered \$30,000 a year, it's hard to say no. You're really just another sacrificial lamb — it's part of the perversity of the system."

Hedrick said Marion's guards are not sacrificial lambs, but are honest people providing an important service who put themselves on the line every day to ensure safety and humanity within the prison.

"Guards are always at risk," Hedrick said. "And all of these prisoners have at one time assaulted other inmates, guards or have tried to escape."

had gotten into an accident when he was with someone who was driving drunk.

"We were both drunk and trying to stay awake," he said. "The driver fell asleep, and when we got up we were in the median of the road and the front of the car was smashed."

"We went home and lied to our parents. We told them that we had hit a deer."

Kim received her first DUI in 1987, and her second in 1992. She remains without a driver's license.

"I could have killed someone," she said. "I drove drunk all the time. I don't have a license now. I'm

waiting to see if I can ever get it back."

Stanley realized he had a problem when he returned home from a vacation.

"My sister died when I was in California," he said. "While I was out partying, she was dying. I will never drink like I used to drink."

Kim said it feels like she is starting her life over.

"I'm living my 20s now, because I don't remember them the first time," she said. "It was like I was born when I became sober."

"Life is good sober. God, it's good sober."

## VIGIL

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alcohol.

"I wouldn't call myself an alcoholic," Stanley said. "But I did have an alcohol problem."

Stanley said his problem began when he finished high school. He said people in his community looked up to him, and they never thought that he would have a problem.

He spoke about the times he had close calls with the police when he was driving, and one time when he

students(FTE), or 19,469. Full time equivalence is a comparative gauge, often used by the IBHE, to measure cost effectiveness and productivity of programs. For this report, a representative sample of 55 schools was selected from public Carnegie II and IBHE peer institutions. The selected schools have an FTE within 20% of SIUC. Resulting is a sample of 26 universities. SIUC's reported E&G Exp. ranks 16th in this group. SIUC's institutional support are the 4th largest. Academic support is second. Table 1 reports selected expenditures as a percent of total E&G Exp. and as a ratio to FTE.

**Table 1. Selected expenditure categories as a % of total E&G Exp. and expenditures per FTE, Fiscal Year 1996**

Instructional support		Institutional support		Academic support	
% of E&G	Exp. per FTE	% of E&G	Exp. per FTE	% of E&G	Exp. per FTE
36.4%	\$5,744	10.5%	\$1,654	15.9%	\$2,505
36.5%	\$6,004	7.8%	\$1,259	9.2%	\$1,516

As demonstrated, as a percent of total E&G Exp. SIUC's instructional support expenditures are on par with the average of the selected peers. The remainder of the table leaves much, for both students and faculty, to be concerned about. Percentage expenditures for institutional support and academic support exceed peer averages by 2.7% and 6.7%, respectively. SIUC's instructional support expenditures per FTE fall \$260, or \$5 million in total, short of average. Whereas institutional support and academic support exceed average by \$395 and \$999, respectively, for a combined total of about \$27 million. Unreported in this table, but clearly as disturbing, is that on average, peer expenditures for the combined instructional, research and service mission are 61.2% of total E&G Exp. As noted above, at SIUC, this percentage is 51.4%. Certainly, there is reason to question these discrepancies as negotiations on the comprehensive contract progress.

### ADMINISTRATIVE SANCTION OR INDIFFERENCE?

The question posed by this and the previous commentary is: Should SIUC faculty be content with the status-quo 3% annual salary increase? Our salaries compare very unfavorably to average salaries at peer universities. There is, in the least, a discrepancy between the way SIUC allocates its financial resources and the way our peer universities do. Personally, I am left wondering if it is by administrative sanction, or because of administrative indifference, that this is the case. The status quo must be changed. In coming commentaries, we will examine SIUC's budgeting process in greater detail.

**For a full comparative study, visit the association website at <http://SIUC-faculty-assoc.org>.**

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