

Report on EAC meeting held on 7/18/2019 and 7/19/2019 held at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

The July 2019 meeting of the State Universities Civil Service System Employee Advisory Committee was held in the Holmes Student Center on the Northern Illinois University campus.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair, Jill Odom, and roll call was taken by Committee Secretary, Mary Serio.

Designated Employer Representative (DER) of Host Campus

- Celeste Latham, Associate Vice President for Administration and Human Resource Services
- Pulchratia Smith, Director for Employee Services

NIU has converted approximately 50 to 100 position from PAA to Civil Service-primarily at vacancy. NIU has approximately 1,500 civil service employees, up from about 1,200 a few years ago.

Public Comments

None

Review of Correspondence

None

Minutes from Prior EAC Meeting

The minutes of the April 2019 quarterly meeting of the EAC were emailed to committee members prior to the meeting in order for members to review them in advance. Chair Odom asked if there were any corrections/amendments to the minutes as emailed. There were none. Minutes were approved by roll call vote.

Report of the EAC Chair

No Merit Board meeting has occurred since April 2019. There are still many vacancies due to vacant positions on University boards of trustees.

Report of the Executive Committee

Minutes of the 6/6/19 Executive Committee Meeting minutes were presented for review and approval by members of the Executive Committee. Minutes were approved.

Report of the Elections Committee

Minutes of the 6/6/19 Elections Committee Meeting minutes were presented for review and approval by members of the Elections Committee. Minutes were approved.

The Committee requested approval for a special election to be held at University of Illinois Springfield to fill the position being vacated by Jeff Young who is leaving the University for a position with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (Poor fellow is moving to Florida.) The EAC Committee discussed the pros and cons of holding a special election now versus leaving position vacant until the October election process. The EAC Committee voted to allow special election to be held soon.

Report of the Legislative Committee

Possible update to occur to 110 ILCS 114 – Smoke Free Campus Act to address recreational marijuana, especially edibles.

Report of the SUCSS Executive Director – Mr. Brownfield was not present so this portion of the meeting was presented by Gail Schiesser, Legal Counsel to the Merit Board.

- The Merit Board is missing three members. The next Merit Board meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, August 29, 2019 at the State Universities Civil Service System's Office in Urbana, IL.
- There has been no forward movement on the issue of how to handle grant funded civil service employees due to ongoing Human Resource Department Advisory Committee (HRDAC) conflicting needs and concerns of the Civil Service Employee Advisory Committee. Mr. Brownfield is looking for a position statement from the EAC Executive Committee who is waiting on information from HRDAC that has not yet been received. The EAC Executive Committee is requesting that they be allowed to directly collaborate with HRDAC on this issue to minimize the delay. Ms. Schiesser will express this request to Mr. Brownfield upon his return from vacation.
- The SIUCSS has redesigned their website as required by the State of Illinois. The new design went live prior to the state-imposed deadline. The new website design allows for printing of regulations in a normal-sized font.
- There are no class plan updates.
- Governance Risk & Compliance Audits were scheduled to resume but had to again be placed on hold due to the departure of the Assistant Director of Legal and Compliance Services, Cindy Nietzel. Audits, once resumed, will cover the entire period of time from the time of audit to when the last audit was done – so could cover several years (e.g., NIU's audit covered 5 years). Newer years will be the primary focus.
- The new rules per HB3185 are progressing. SUCSS has recently met with JCAR. This is the change to allow easier employment of more senior police officers from municipal/state police forces.
- Civil Service employment E-Tests have encountered a few snags. These should be worked out but if campuses are experiencing any further problems, they should contact the I.T. Manager at SUCSS for assistance.
- Ms. Schiesser has been working with HRDAC to update the language in the discharge process, mainly to rearrange what was already in place and to add section headings for ease of reading. HRDAC had requested addition of language about discharge could occur with violation of law and/or University policy but SUCSS believes this language is too vague. For example, someone has violated a law by being married to more than one person but this would not be a justifiable reason for discharge from their employment. SUCSS is adding language requiring campuses to have a police officer present at discharge hearings. Discharge updates will require further discussion, collaboration and amending. Second draft is with HRDAC.
- Non-agenda item: SUCSS has received a request for a Director's review. Request alleges discrimination based on race.

Additional Guests

- At the beginning of the second day, NIU had additional guests present. The DER guests on day one gave the H.R. perspective of the PAA conversion process at NIU. The Day two guests were invited to give the employee perspective of the conversion. The guests were: Sarah Klaper, University Ombudsman and Catherine Doederine, Director for Internships and External Relations and President, Support and Professional Staff Council.
- At NIU, their PAA (A/P) employees are referred to as SPS (Support and Professional Staff). Their SPS Council has 48 members. The numbers of individuals they represent has declined due to the PAA conversion process but the Council has decided to still leave the Council at 48 members. NIU SPS employees have two primary concerns related to the PAA conversion process: (1) feel they are losing status in hierarchy and (2) concerned about going from one-year layoff notice to 30 days. NIU is addressing these concerns by

focusing on strong communication with affected employees and educating the campus regarding the rights they gain as Civil Service employees. There are still a few unhappy employees but most say once the conversion has occurred they don't notice any difference in their day-to-day work life.

- NIU also has a "University Council" that includes representatives from all other councils, including their "Operating Council." It is made up of 60 people: 51% faculty, 25% students and 24% staff (SPS and Operating).
- NIU is considering combining the SPS and Operating Councils into one "staff" council but this is still in its early stages.
- Communication has been the biggest struggle with the PAA conversion process but they have a "Frequently Asked Questions" document and they are working on having a "Myth Busters" event. Seniority is the biggest area of concern for most individuals being converted from SPS to Civil Service. NIU had 900 SPS employees in 2012. In November 2018, it was 711. They now have 620. Some of this is due to retirements/attrition but this shift is largely due to the PAA conversion.

Report of the SUCSS Executive Director (continued-by Gail Schiesser)

- During FY19, SUCSS handled 54 written discharges. Of these 54, 16 requested hearings, 2 settled prior to the hearing, 2 resigned, 2 were reassigned, 1 failed to show for the hearing, 1 University withdrew before the hearing, 1 employee withdrew request, and several occurred where the University withdrew during the process. SUCSS has 8 discharge matters pending.
- Conversion of PAA positions across Universities is continuing. Currently, no metrics exist to document the PAA conversion process on campuses but anyone can see numbers of PAA and Civil Service employee numbers by going to the SUCSS website and reviewing the quarterly employee data. This site shows the current quarterly employee data as well as several past years/quarters. (<https://www.sucss.illinois.gov/pages/report/qed.aspx>)
- The electrician's civil service employment exam was compromised and, as a result, shut down. Campuses can hire electricians on a "provisional" basis. This means someone who meets the minimum qualifications of the classification can be hired and begin work but will be required to pass the new exam once one exists. This may take time some time as it requires individuals in this area of expertise to become involved.

EAC 2019 Meeting Schedule

October 16 & 17 – UIC / October 18 (Council of Councils)

Council of Council website: <https://sac.org.uic.edu/SAC%2022nd%20Council%20of%20Councils.html>

EAC 2020 Meeting Schedule

January 2020 – State Universities Civil Service Systems Office, Urbana, IL

March 2020 – TBD (Possibly Illinois State University if there is a joint HRDAC and EAC meeting)

July 2020 – TBD

October 21 & 22, 2020 – SIU School of Medicine / October 23, 2020 (Council of Councils)

Respectfully submitted,

Shari Garnett