

2025-2026 CIVIL SERVICE COUNCIL
Wednesday, August 6, 2025
Student Services Building Room 307
1:00 PM

I. Call to Order

The August meeting was called to order by Vice President Anthony Travelstead.

II. Roll Call of Membership

Present: Thomas Becker, Odessa Colombo, Mickel Cordes, Ann Coward, Liz Franklin, Cyndy Green, Amelia Ketzle, Kristen Matthews, Diane McIntyre, Jason Phillips, Terry Richardson, Jamie Schrader, Dina Timmons, Anthony Travelstead, and Christopher Vick.

Absent: Elizabeth Cheek, Rick Pierson, and Marianne Schoonover.

Guests: Jaclyn Durcholz, Melissa Laake and Austin Lane.

III. Guest Speaker: Chancellor Austin Lane

(summary)

The institution continues to navigate a complex financial landscape shaped by budget challenges, current state appropriation uncertainties, and internal equity concerns. Although publicly described as “flat,” the state funding is not whole—\$2.6 million in expected increases has been partially withheld, with only \$877,000 currently accessible. This shortfall significantly affects operations, especially for a mid-sized institution where every dollar is vital for instruction, support, and contractual obligations.

To address long-standing compensation issues, the institution launched a CBIZ study, which confirmed salary compression and inequities. The study provided detailed data on salary ranges, compression levels, and minimum thresholds, forming the basis for a proposed budget strategy. This includes targeted adjustments for underpaid employees, a 1% across-the-board increase for non-represented staff, and a broader plan to retain and promote internal talent through career development and a structured career ladder. The goal is to “grow our own,” recognizing that internal promotions are more feasible and sustainable than external hires.

Hiring freezes and chills have helped preserve resources for current staff. While hiring continues in special cases, leadership is cautious, especially given the uncertainty around the full release of state funds. We will probably stay in this hiring freeze all year. The centralized budget pool created from these savings is being used to fund compensation adjustments, ensuring equitable distribution rather than favoring specific departments. Leadership has emphasized that the worst-off employees—those hired in at inequitable rates or who missed raises—will receive meaningful adjustments, in some cases amounting to thousands of dollars. These corrections are based on both minimum salary thresholds and compression analysis.

Morale remains a critical concern. Many non-represented staff report feeling overburdened, having taken on multiple roles due to staffing shortages, and receiving minimal compensation increases. Leadership acknowledges this and is prioritizing adjustments for those most affected. However, there is tension around perceived inequities when some employees receive large increases while others receive only 1%, especially when job duties are similar but titles differ. Leadership is working to correct classification inconsistencies and ensure that roles are properly aligned with responsibilities. The CBIZ study is not a one-time fix but the beginning of a sustainable, data-driven compensation model that will be revisited annually to maintain equity and market alignment. The institution is also working to reduce a \$9.4 million internal deficit—down from \$22 million when current leadership began—by applying \$3.8 million in anticipated savings, potentially bringing the remaining balance to around \$5 million. This payback is part of a financial sustainability plan approved by the Board of Trustees in 2016. While not legally mandated, it is a fiduciary commitment that leadership is expected to honor. There is openness to revisiting compensation mid-year if

additional state funds are released, with the possibility of increasing the 1% raise or introducing a merit pool.

Enrollment is another key factor in financial health. While overall enrollment is slightly up, there are areas of concern. Our student population (2.74 GPA and below) – we used to put a lot of the students in exploratory studies. We are actually down about 100 students right now, but we think we will get them back between now and the 10th class day. International student enrollment has dropped by 11%. Efforts are underway to re-engage these students and address visa-related issues. On the positive side, retention among continuing students is strong, and fully online programs are experiencing significant growth. Online education is seen as a critical path to reaching the institution's goal of 15,000 students by 2030, with accelerated master's programs and expanded marketing efforts driving momentum.

To support financial sustainability, leadership is considering a tuition increase for the first time in several years. While not yet official, discussions are underway with student leaders to explain the rationale—primarily the need to support staff and operations amid uncertain state funding. Current tuition stands at \$14,348, with room and board bringing the total to around \$26,000. Any increase would be carefully calibrated to avoid pricing students out.

A major challenge in the tuition revenue picture is the high rate of tuition discounting—currently at 46%. This means nearly half of tuition is being waived, significantly reducing net revenue. Leadership is actively working to tighten waiver policies, reduce arbitrary allocations, and ensure that financial aid is distributed equitably and strategically. Waiver costs have already been reduced from \$42 million to \$30 million, with a goal to bring the discount rate closer to 35%. We have tightened up on the last dollar model on scholarships to help ensure students first use all eligible state and federal aid before receiving institutional waivers or scholarships. Additionally, the university's Foundation holds \$11 million in unspent funds, which will now be more strategically deployed to support students after their external aid is applied.

Leadership remains committed to improving communication and transparency with student and constituency groups. While monthly one-on-one meetings with constituency presidents continue, there is openness to reintroducing larger group meetings—such as the Chancellor's Leadership Council—that were paused during COVID. These meetings would allow broader sharing of updates and concerns across faculty, staff, and student bodies, fostering a more inclusive and informed campus environment.

The overarching theme is clear: the institution is focused on stabilizing finances, correcting inequities, and investing in its people. While challenges remain, the strategies in place—from compensation reform and enrollment growth to tuition and waiver restructuring—are designed to build a more equitable, transparent, and sustainable future.

Meeting was temporarily adjourned to take a photo.

Motion: A. Travelstead

Second: L. Franklin; Everyone approved.

Chancellor Lane took a group photo with the Council members.

- IV. Public Comments** – A. Travelstead read a comment from E. Cheek stating she gives her best and that she has faith in you (Chancellor Lane) for making Civil Service a priority.

V. Approval of the Minutes for July 2, 2025

Motion: A. Coward

Second: K. Matthews

A vote commenced: 0 Nays, 0 Abstentions; The minutes from July 2, 2025, were approved as presented.

- VI. Announcements** – A. Travelstead suggested sending flowers to E. Cheek through the Card & Flower Fund. Members can still donate to the fund if they haven't already done so. Victor Martin resigned from

the Rec. Center and took a job at another campus. His council seat was filled by Jason Phillips. Jason Phillips has served on the council before. (Per election guidelines, A. Travelstead stated we went to the next people on the ballot -there were none – then we went to the write ins. Danielle Rains declined the seat; Jason Phillips accepted to serve for the year.)

VII. Reports

A. Council President

1. **Chancellor's Meeting** – Have not met. There are no pre-scheduled meetings over the summer.
2. **Board of Trustees' Meeting** – Next meeting is September 18, 2025 at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville - East St. Louis Center. The agenda has not come out yet.
3. **Chancellor's Leadership Council** – No meeting in July. No report.

B. School of Medicine Civil Service Council – *Dawn Hattey* – (no report)

C. Annuitants Association – *Carolyn Harvey* – A. Travelstead reached out to C. Harvey. The local chapter met July 24, 2025. People are encouraged to join the local SUAA chapter (expect membership dues).

D. Human Resources – *Nicholas Wortman, Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources* (no report – see guest speaker Section III.)

E. SURS Member Advisory – *Elizabeth Cheek* – The committee has not met.

F. Council Committees

1. Executive/Budget – *Tony Travelstead*

A. Travelstead stated he missed that meeting. T. Becker said that they met and set the agenda.

2. Bylaws – *Marianne Schoonover* – A. Travelstead stated the reading of the bylaws will be done at the September meeting. The committee has not met.

3. Civil Service Benefits – *Odessa Colombo/Amelia Ketzle* - Committee has not met.

4. Education Assistance – *Tony Travelstead* - Committee has not met. A. Travelstead stated the award applications are being processed through the Foundation. Council members were asked to get donations for the luncheon. T. Becker stated he added the Excel sheet in Teams.

5. Elections – *Tony Travelstead* - Committee has not met.

6. Public Information – *Thomas Becker* - Committee has not met.

7. Range – *Tony Travelstead/Ann Coward* – Committee has not met. A. Travelstead stated he, E. Cheek, and A. Coward met with Director Renee Colombo and ACV Nick Wortman to discuss the CBIZ report. We should get another report that includes the previous missing information (entire classifications).

G. Constituency Committees

1. Academic Calendar Committee – *Todd Duermyer* – Committee has not met. No report.

2. Advisory Committee to the Director of Public Safety – *Andy Hawkins* The committee has not met.

3. Computing Advisory – *Ann Coward* - The committee has not met.

4. Honorary Degrees – *Todd Duermyer* – The meeting is September 15, 2025. A chair will be nominated, and they will begin reviewing nominations. Nominations will be accepted until the end of August.

5. Intercollegiate Athletics Advisory – *A. Travelstead* - Committee has not met.

6. Naming University Facilities – *Marianne Schoonover* – (no report)

7. Parking and Traffic Appeals – *Mickel Cordes* - Committee has not met.

8. Recreational Sports and Services Advisory – *Shari Garnett* – Committee has not met.

9. Student Center Advisory – *Todd Duermyer* – Committee has not met.

10. Traffic and Parking – *Stacia Werner* - (no report) Committee only meets once per

semester.

11. **University Joint Benefits –Dina Timmons/Elizabeth Cheek** – Committee has not met.

H. **Special/Other**

1. **Chancellor's Planning and Budget – Elizabeth Cheek/Marianne Schoonover**
Committee has not met.
2. **Chancellor's Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion – Amelia Ketzle**
A. Ketzle stated I haven't heard anything from the committee. A. Travelstead stated he will reach out again and pass off her name to them.
3. **Employee Advisory Committee to the Merit Board – Elizabeth Cheek**
Committee met July 21-22, 2025 at Chicago State University. SIU Carbondale was a remote location open to the public. Next meeting will be held October 22-23, 2025 at Governors State University. Council of Councils will follow on October 24, 2025.
4. **Legislative Advisory – Ann Coward** – Committee has not met.
5. **Network Empowering Women Committee – Diane McIntyre**
Committee has not met.
6. **System Staff Advisory – Elizabeth Cheek** – A. Travelstead stated they wrapped up the July training sessions. It was a great success. There will be more sessions in October. Leadership training will continue. There are plans for online professional development.
7. **Assistant Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance – Thomas Becker**
Committee will meet August 11, 2025. There will be four on-campus interviews.

VIII. **Old Business**

- **Future Guests** – September – John Charles, Executive Director of Government & Public Affairs

IX. **New Business**

- **Council of Councils Attendance** – A. Travelstead stated all Civil Service Councils in the state will meet. There will be a presentation from SURS and SUAA. A block of hotel rooms is being held at Hampton Inn for the event. Council of Councils will be October 23-24, 2025, which is the Thursday and Friday before our Homecoming weekend. There is no registration fee; registration is open until August 31, 2025. A. Travelstead stated he will ask the Chancellor for financial assistance to help fund the trip. The following Council members stated they are interested in going: A. Ketzle, O. Colombo, M. Cordes, C. Green, L. Franklin, and A. Travelstead.

X. **Non-Agenda Items – (none)**

XI. **Adjournment**

Motion: T. Richardson

Second: A. Coward