



# CIVIL SERVICE NEWS **UPDATE**

A newsletter for Civil Service employees of Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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## RECRUITING: EVERYONE NEEDS TO HELP

As most everyone is aware, enrollment at SIUC is the lowest it has been in several years. This decline in enrollment is a problem that needs to be addressed immediately by the university administration, faculty, staff, and students. Although SIUC has had many crowning achievements to "brag" about (i.e. successful alumni, sports teams, faculty achievements, etc.), we are still battling that old "party school" image that has dogged us for so many years. The questions are, what can we do to improve our image, how can we promote the university, and how can we increase enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels?

Although many units on campus are already trying to address these issues, the University needs eve-

ryone to become involved. The last thing anyone at SIUC wants to see are more budget cuts, lost jobs, and eliminated programs. If enrollment keeps decreasing, this is likely what we will see.

It is important that we promote SIUC in every way possible. The administration is using resources to attract both Illinois and out-of-state students that we have been losing to other universities. Academic units on campus may ask, "What can we do to help?" First of all, EVERYONE working in academic units should be willing to promote their own programs. After all, who knows more about your programs than your own faculty, staff and students? Secondly, by contacting high schools and community colleges you can find out who may be interested in your pro-

grams. Individual letters can then be sent to those interested high school or community college students promoting your individual programs, as well as the University in general. Finally, you can correspond with high schools and community colleges and provide brochures and information about your programs that teachers and guidance counselors can disseminate to their students. These are just a few things that can be done to "start" the process. Once the process has begun, other means of recruiting and promoting SIUC will follow.

For instance, the SIUC School of Accountancy held its 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Accounting Challenge Competition for High School Students February 16th.

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## UPDATE NEWS TRIVIA



**Question: Trivia Question:** In honor of Women's History Month, what world-renowned former SIUC faculty member had her life immortalized on film, and what was the title of the movie?

See answer on Page 2

### Trivia Answer:

**Answer:** The faculty member was none other than Marjorie Lawrence, the Australian Wagnerian soprano, who became a Metropolitan Opera star. Ms. Lawrence joined the faculty of SIUC with the Artist-in-Residence Program of the 1960's. She taught voice at SIUC from 1960-1973.

The 1955 movie about her life, *Interrupted Melody*, starred major film greats Eleanor Parker, as Marjorie Lawrence, and Glenn Ford, as Dr. Thomas King, her husband.

The manuscripts materials, e.g., music scores, costume sketches, photos, performance programs, and her personal correspondence are available for viewing and research at Morris Library's Special Collections Research Center (SCRC),

## Wall & Grand Complex Opens for Business

The first building at Wall & Grand Apartments opened on December 16, 2006. Wall & Grand is the first on-campus housing built since Evergreen Terrace in 1969. When completed, Wall & Grand will consist of three four-story brick buildings, housing a maximum of 400 residents. Students choose between two- and four-bedroom apartments, with four students per apartment. The housing contract includes all utilities, ethernet, cable, local telephone and a washer/dryer in each apartment. Students who are freshmen age 21 and older and sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students of any age are eligible to live there.



Building "I" was originally scheduled to open August 2006. Construction delays prevented moving in until December 16. The first building has 36 apartment units as well as commons space for the entire complex, the area office, mail room, a lounge area and convenience store. The convenience store will be opening this August. Building "II" & "III" are still under construction, but

are on schedule to open in August 2007.

Civil Service Staff were instrumental in the successful opening of Wall & Grand. It was a combined effort of Housing, Physical Plant Operations, Information Technology & Telecommunications that made this project a big success.

Civil Service employees in Housing were very busy working on Wall & Grand before construction on the building began. Employees in Housing's Contracts Office started talking with students and selling contracts for Wall & Grand over a year ago and continue to do so for the two buildings still under construction. Housing's Housekeeping staff also did a wonderful job. They had to clean the building from top to bottom before move in. They had to do this while working around the contractors still there finishing their work. In the Residence Life Office, clerical staff were busy making the keyless entry fobs and programming a separate fob for each future resident.

There were also many Civil Service employees in the Physical Plant who did a great deal of work to ensure a successful opening day. The refrigeration crew went through each apartment to ensure each furnace was properly heating. Physical Plant carpenters had a variety of projects including putting up

wood strips on the bedroom walls for hanging pictures and posters. The locksmiths were busy installing locks and making sure the building was properly secured for the new residents. Electricians had to check and verify the fire alarm system was properly working.

Telecommunications and Information Technology did complete installation of the telephone system, ethernet and cable television system. They did everything from pulling the wire through the building to purchasing and installing all the routers and other associated equipment. They too did a wonderful job.

I want to thank all those civil service employees that helped make the opening of Wall & Grand Apartments such a grand success. It would have never happened without you!

Written by Glenn Stine



# Morris Library Building Renovation Update

The contractors hope to finish the 3rd through 5th floors by November, 2007. During January, electricians have been working to distribute power to the upper floors, plumbers to connect the upper floors to the basement, and pipe fitters/tinners on upper story mechanical equipment.

Most of the drywall is in place on 4 and 5. The elevator framework is complete; an elevator car should be in place by the time this article appears. The new public elevators should be functional sometime in March.



The second shipment of steel, which

was expected a few weeks ago, has been delayed. Receipt of this shipment is expected within the first part of March. Other outdoor work was being held up as well, due to local weather conditions in mid-February. Contractors need the temperature to be approximately 40 degrees to continue work on the roof. Likewise, they cannot fireproof the steel on the west tower if the temperature is less than 40 degrees. The warmer temperatures during the week of February 18-23 were a great help with outdoor projects relative to the renovation.



Hang in there, SIUC! Students, fac-

ulty, and staff are weary of having Morris Library materials and staff farmed out to remote locations. This has not been easy on anything, or anyone. However, the "new" Morris promises to be well worth the wait, and something of which to be very proud! Enjoy the pictures... progress is being made, with each day bringing us closer to the finish!

Thanks once again to Dean David Carlson, the Library Affairs Policy Committee, Kevin Davie, Geographic Information Systems Specialist, and Greg Wendt, Video Producer, Instructional Support Services, for their willingness to provide this writer with a constant and timely flow of information and photos as the renovation process unfolds. I could not bring this information to you, without their help.

Submitted by: Darla Loftus

## **(RECRUITING cont'd. from pg 1)**

The event was sponsored by the School of Accountancy and the School's alumni group, "The Accounting Circle." Over 150 students from 12 different high schools and community colleges attended. The event was held at the SIUC Student Recreation Center, giving the students an opportunity to see and experience this facility.

During the day, the students participated in an academic individual com-



petition as well as a group competition. Trophies were awarded to individual students and teams, and a

total of \$2,500 in scholarships was awarded to students should they choose to further their educations in Accounting at SIUC.

The School's faculty, staff and students all participate in this activity and attend the event. Accounting students do the bulk of the work (such as preparing exams, grading, ordering food, soliciting prizes, etc.), and faculty and staff mainly act as a "support group" assisting students and answering questions high school teachers and/or students might have regarding the Accounting programs.

Each year, Larry Busch, Emeritus Professor of the School of Art & Design, presents the participants with a challenging activity that requires the students to work together in teams—a fun, team-building event. They then test their creation to see if it works and are graded accordingly.

The School of Accountancy says their Accounting Challenge competition has been a very good recruiting tool for them, giving them the opportunity to establish relationships with

many high school business teachers throughout the area. These same teachers often ask if Accounting faculty and/or students can visit their schools to talk about college and possible career paths in business and accounting. Visiting high schools is a very inexpensive way to recruit, and can get current SIUC students and faculty involved in the process.

Special events can also be arranged to bring high school students to SIUC to visit our beautiful campus. Getting current SIUC students involved can be a very valuable recruiting tool. And if they are proud of their university as students, they will also be proud of their university as alumni.

If everyone doesn't get involved and we don't put forth a "total effort" to increase enrollment, the reality will be that everyone at SIUC will lose. So, once again, **EVERYONE NEEDS TO HELP!**

Submitted by: Jeri Novara

## Health Care Q's & A's for University (i.e., State) Employees

### Q. Does the Illinois Constitution protect your health care benefits in the same way it requires the state to protect your pension benefits?

No, there is no constitutional protection for health care benefits. Potentially, your health benefits are even more vulnerable than your pension benefits.

### Q. Is the state considering making changes to state employee health care coverage?

It appears that no changes are currently in proposal. However, this is subject to change due to the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Rule #45. This legislation requires that all state, county, and local governmental bodies must show the "projected future cost" of all non-pension (i.e.: health insurance) costs on their financial reports beginning in FY2008. These "projected costs", obviously, will run into billions of dollars. This raises just concern that when these estimates of future costs are published, there will be an effort to cut back on state-paid health insurance.

### Q. Who bargains your health care benefits for you? Do you have a place at the table?

As a legal matter, the state is required to negotiate in good faith with all certified bargaining units. The same is true of public universities, and bargaining is over "wages, hours, and other conditions of employment." Health Insurance is therefore a "mandatory" subject of bargaining. Since 1985, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 31 negotiates health care benefits with Central Management Services (CMS). As the State of Illinois' largest union, the negotiated benefits are historically extended to all employees under the/affected by the State's program. Employees and retirees enjoy benefits today, including dental, vision, coverage for physical exams, etc. and you pay a lower percentage of the cost of these benefits than ever before.

### Q. But don't all SIUC employees contribute to Medicare as a back-up plan?

**Not necessarily.** Any employee hired after March 31, 1986, contributes to Medicare. Those employees who were hired on or before March 31, 1986, however, do not contribute to Medicare unless they recently elected (through the SURS Medicare Referendum) to start contributing to Medicare beginning with salary earned on or after September 1, 2006.

### Q. If you lost State of Illinois health care coverage through Central Management Services (CMS) upon your retirement from the university, would you still be able to rely on Medicare

Well ... that depends on whether or not you are Medicare **eligible**. Medicare is provided to those who have 40 or more Medicare credits upon turning 65 year of age or older. If you are a contributor to the plan, you earn a Medicare credit for each \$1000 you earn in salary. You may earn no more than 4 credits in a calendar year, which is equivalent to \$4,000 of your income. Thus, on average, it would require at least 10 years to amass the required 40 Medicare credits. These amounts, however, are subject to change every January 1. You can, therefore, rely on Medicare **only** if you meet the criteria stated. If you are not yet 65, you could find yourself in serious jeopardy if you are relying solely on Medicare for your health care coverage.

It bears noting that some employees may qualify for Medicare coverage based on their spouse's Social Security credits or ex-spouse (if they had been married 10 years) and if s/

he has earned the requisite number of Medicare credits to qualify: Most people 65 or older are eligible for Medicare hospital insurance (Part A) based on their spouse's (or divorced spouse's) work record, and that spouse is at least 62 (your spouse does not have to apply for benefits in order for you to be eligible based on your spouse's work). For Medicare Medical Insurance (also known as Part B), almost anyone who is 65 or older or who is under 65 but eligible for hospital insurance can enroll for Medicare medical insurance by paying a monthly premium. Aged people don't need any Social Security or government work credits for this part of Medicare.

([http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov/cgi-bin/ssa.cfg/php/enduser/std\\_adp.php?p\\_faqid=400](http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov/cgi-bin/ssa.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=400))

### Q. Upon retirement, how serious is losing your State of Illinois Health coverage if you still have Medicare? What benefits would be lost?

If eligible for Medicare, it will become available on the first day of the month that you turn 65 years old. Without State of Illinois coverage, retirees younger than 65 years of age would be without health care benefits until becoming Medicare eligible. For those individuals not eligible for Medicare (or until they become eligible), other health care coverage would need to be purchased by these employees.

For example, you could pay for COBRA for 19 months. Even after you 65, you may wish to add supplemental insurance to pick up expenses and services that Medicare will not cover. For example, Part D prescription benefits.

### Q. If State of Illinois coverage is lost, do all doctors & medical care facilities accept Medicare payments?

**No.** Some doctors do not accept Medicare patients at all. Others may accept Medicare patients but not accept the Medicare approved payment amount for the medical services received. In either situation, this could result in greater and often significant out-of-pockets expenses for the patients.

### Q. What can you do to remain informed of the issues that could possibly impact your health care benefits?

Join the SIUC Emeritus and Annuitant Association (the local chapter of the State University Annuitant Association). This is the only voice that collectively takes on the issues involved in your pension and benefits. Dues are only \$27 a year. Active employees can pay annual dues through a single payroll deduction transaction. Retired employees can do the same or opt to pay \$2.25 a month through a payroll deduction plan.

Contact your governor, state senators, & state representative and express your concerns about this issue. Their identities and both e-mail and snail mail addresses can be obtained through the website: [www.elections.state.il.us/DistrictLocator/AddressSearch.aspx](http://www.elections.state.il.us/DistrictLocator/AddressSearch.aspx)

**Much of the information shared within this sheet** has been sourced from investigations and reviews conducted by John Terwilliger. To receive his interesting and provocative commentaries, go to [www.SUAATalk@lists.eiu.edu](mailto:www.SUAATalk@lists.eiu.edu) to add your email address to his mailing list.

**For more information regarding Medicare**, visit <http://www.medicare.gov/>>[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

**For more information regarding Social Security**, Visit <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/>>[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)

**For more information regarding your retirement benefits**, Visit the websites of the **State Universities Annuitants Association (SUAA)** at [www.suaa.org](http://www.suaa.org) and the **State Universities Retirement System (SURS)** at [www.surs.com](http://www.surs.com)

This information provided to you by the SIUC Joint Benefits Committee and SIUC Emeritus & Annuitant Association.