

**STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE GENERAL MEETING**

*Thursday, July 21<sup>st</sup> and Friday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022*

*Meeting conducted via zoom conferencing.*

**Chair Odom called the meeting to order at 9:00am on Thursday, July 21, 2022. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.**

**Present:**

Shauna Bishop, Elizabeth Cheek, Andy Harpst, Andrea Hoskinson, John Hulseberg, Sheryl Jones-Harper, Rick Marr, Jill Odom, Jacqueline Pointer, Michael Pulley, Caryn Riley, Mary Serio, Peter Skrypkun

Tony Craven, Gary Gilpin, Tenea Harris, and Vee Steward

**Motion made to allow Representatives not physically present to participate remotely as allowed in amended SUCSAC Constitution & Bylaws:**

Motion carried. Gary Gilpin counted present as attending via conference call.

**Introduction of Guests:**

From the State Universities Civil Service System Office – Noel Rowe, Cindy Neitzel, Stacey Norton, and Jonah Jett announced themselves at the start of the meeting.

Gail Schiesser, Executive Director of the State Universities Civil Service System office in attendance.

**Report of the Chair:**

Merit Board meeting cancelled due to scheduling – next meeting scheduled for August 11, 2022, at 1:00pm. Locations are still to be determined. Hoping to have another in November to catch up.

No movement on HB1172 – Exec Dir Schiesser and Jacqueline Point to report on during their reports.

Covid has hit all of us and the reason for the move from in-person to zoom was made when we were still under the governor’s executive order. We are limited in the number of individuals that are able to attend in-person at the System Office and we, the executive committee, felt it unfair to allow only a portion of the full committee to attend in-person with the rest attending remotely as well as limiting the number of staff that we would have access to at the System Office on Philo Road.

Also, in addition to other members of the committee being affected by COVID, I myself had to quarantine as my husband tested positive, half of his workplace tested positive, and though I have not tested positive I have been quite ill and unable to work in the office.

With regards to our October meeting, the hope is that we will be able to meet in-person. We will plan to do so but are prepared to shift to virtual if we need to.

**Approval of Minutes from April 7 & 8, 2022 Quarterly Meeting:**

Shauna Bishop and Jacqueline Pointer noted grammatical corrections. Motion to approve the April 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes as amended made by Elizabeth Cheek. Motion seconded by Jacqueline Pointer. After a roll call vote with all members present voting “Aye,” the April 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> General Meeting Minutes are approved.

**Approval of Minutes from April 29, 2022, Special Meeting:**

Meeting called to approve January General Meeting Minutes.

Motion to approve the April 29, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes made by Andy Harpst. Motion seconded by Shauna Bishop. After a roll call vote with all members present voting “Aye,” the April 29, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes are approved.

**Report of Executive Committee by Jacqueline Pointer:**

Have not had a lot of movement on items the Executive Committee has been working on. HB1172 has not had any movement but requests that all members of the full committee submit thoughts and concerns related to the house bill to her for inclusion in the document being prepared.

Still reviewing the ways in which Civil Service employees are being promoted. We've just lost the HR director at my university but still working to gather information related to that.

Comment from Chair Odom, regarding the promotion process, please see Sec 36j. Promotions in the statute. In our January meeting we were asked by the Merit Board via Gail to look at how job promotions are processed, filled, etc. This is something that we really need to look at formulate a response to the Merit Board. How are jobs filled, promoted through the ranks, job audits, etc.

**Report of the Legislative Committee by Shauna Bishop:**

Have not had a lot of movement since April, not much done except some executive orders by the governor. The PA that the System Office was hoping would go through has gone through. It was HB 5408 and is now PA 102-1075. This is the one that amended the State Universities Civil Service act, and it was effective as of June 10, 2022. HB4201 is now PA 102-1045. This requires governing board of each public university and community college to employ navigator to assist students to apply for benefits programs. It was signed June 7, 2022 and goes into effect January 1, 2023. HB 5464 is now PA 102-1046 which creates equity plans to assist minority students, rural students, adult students, women, and people with disabilities for finishing higher education and report results to IBHE and was effective immediately June 7, 2022. There was an increase in MAP Grant funding for FY23 and an introduction of the family relief plan to help with groceries, gas, school supplies. Lowered the income tax for the first week of August. We are watching some legislation such as HB1758 which is the school security to arm teachers. Has been in rules committee since March 21, 2022. HB 4247 is the emergency contraception bill which has been in rules committee. And finally, HB 5374 is the firearms training order and it too is in rules committee.

**Report of the Election Committee by John Hulseberg:**

No report as we are meeting tomorrow.

There are however two items we need to take action on which is the Second Reading of the three bylaw changes to our Constitution and Bylaws. In Article C Section 1 1.1a is to strike the word Ballot and change it to rollcall. Article C Section 1 1.1b is to remove "who are members of SUCSAC" after the word "teller." And in Article C Section 1 1.1d is to change Chair to "teller."

Motion was made to amend Article C Sections 1 1.1a, 1.1b, and 1.1d by Michael Pulley. Motion was seconded by Elizabeth Cheek. After a roll call vote with all members present voting "Aye," the motion carried and the changes to Article C Sections 1 1.1a, 1.1b, and 1.1d are approved.

Since Hemali Shaw has left the University of Illinois at Chicago for employment outside of the university, there is now an open position at UIC. The legislative committee now has an open position for a member from the U of I system and one from the SIU system. I would like to open the floor for a nomination of someone to replace Hemali Shaw. Since we have representation as required in our Bylaws, we can nominate anyone from the full committee. Michael Pulley volunteered and the Chair Odom motion to accept the nomination of Michael Pulley; seconded by John Hulseberg. After a roll call vote with all members present voting "Aye," the motion carried and Michael Pulley is now a member of the Election Committee.

John provided a brief update regarding where we are with current elections for terms that will begin January 1, 2023. Shauna is up for election; UIS and UIC are also up for election. John will give a better report after tomorrow's Election Committee meeting.

Caryn Riley asked a question of the Election Committee. When she and Hemali ran for election, they both ran for and accepted the positions. Caryn agreed to take the shorter term but now that Hemali is gone, does Caryn move into the longer term? John responded that they are still working on this. The elections

committee will meet tomorrow and discuss this. That does seem to make the most sense but need to confirm with the bylaws and the committee. We will also have Gail weigh in on this.

### **Orientation Update:**

Cindy Neitzel from the System Office reported that we really have not had many new members that need the orientation and there may be others who would like a refresher. There is a fairly large Human Resource group that will do their orientation on July 27<sup>th</sup> or July 28<sup>th</sup> but will do a separate one for EAC. Would like to have everyone that desires an orientation agree to the same day so that we can have the most participation for the time that is required. Chair Odom reminded the group that if you are new to the committee, you do need to go through the orientation but if you were reelected then you do not have to. Please let Cindy know if you are interested. Cindy noted that the orientations are tailored to the audience so would be best to conduct the EAC Representative Orientation separately from the Human Resource group. Cindy will connect with Caryn Riley, Tenea Harris, Vee Steward, and Elizabeth Cheek to schedule a time. This also piggybacks on an agenda item for Council of Councils and I've spoken with Jill about what we can do during Council of Councils.

### **Report of SUCSS given by Cindy Neitzel on behalf of Executive Director Gail Schiesser:**

Again, the next Merit Board meeting is on August 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm and another potentially in November.

**Knowledge Testing to Credential Assessments** are next on the agenda. We did send out the first very large group of classifications that had knowledge exams that we converted to credential assessments. We are sending out the second group now. From the Audit perspective, this is going to be a very big endeavor for the Human Resources offices. It's supposed to be open and continuous testing. Anyone can apply for and submit a resume/application for positions in which they qualify for. In theory you should see a flood of folks sending in for new positions/promotions. Since they are supposed to freeze registers and pull from that for who you referred and when, we will be looking closely at this from the audit perspective. Make up of employment register can look different on any given day depending on the day the exam is given. Credential assessment is the exam so easy to freeze those dates. You could get ten resumes today and ten tomorrow and freeze on Monday. In theory you could unfreeze that register to allow more resumes in. Will require a lot more scrutiny from the System Office. Our audits are always retrospective in nature, we have to look backwards to determine what they did and what they were supposed to do. Will be more work than they realized. What is the impact from process standpoint to move all these knowledge tests to credential assessments? Noel, do you know when next large group that we're converting is? Noel stated she believes it will be September 1<sup>st</sup>. Cindy went on to state that we are moving right along with these and these are in the triple digits in size, in context we have about one thousand classifications Making sure they are current with occupational trends and don't have classifications going back to 1976. The process is ongoing, and the completion date is up to Gail and Danielle. List of classifications is listed on the website. The goal is to move all classifications to credential assessments. This is the decision of the System Office and what we intend to do with all of the exams. Michael Pulley noted that this was part of HB1172 and some of the concerns in the bill was that subject matter experts are not always used. Word choice can be missed by and HR professional that may not be missed by a subject matter expert. Cindy noted that you could run that risk in any situation. The credential assessment is still a "test" and is focused on training, knowledge, veterans' points, more broad categories and not words so not a difficult thing to assess and System Office would do all possible to keep that from happening. You are still going to have to refer the register with the top three scores and unless you have applicants that completely do not meet the MAQ's you probably will not have those. Each classification is going to have its own exam. I cannot discuss how the scoring variables are constructed as those are still examinations. How they are scored and referred is going to be the primary driver rather than what the banded score would be. The top three scores may look like the top three banded scores as they often look the same. We have custom class plans that are banded but can't say if that is the composition of them all.

Gary asked if this going to be for Crafts & Trades as well and Cindy responded yes. Caryn asked if this would make the hiring process quicker and help us be more competitive? She responded that this certainly could be but depends on how the HR Offices will proceed. People will not need to come in and take a test, it's based on resume review and scoring. There will continue to be a push for open and continuous testing. Michael noted that in the past, the back date for pay was the date the test was taken but with credential assessment, back pay will not occur like it used to. Cincy agrees that is possible. If an employee's audit isn't being completed in a timely manner, then they can contact the System Office. Open and Continuous testing is in the statute and advancement in classification is a promotion. Reclassifications and reallocations, i.e., desk audits, are for positions that have evolved over time. It is not the mechanism for promotion. Michael Pulley noted that this is not something that regularly happens on our campuses and this is something our committee is looking at. Cindy went on to state that the statute doesn't say that you can only test when there are position vacancies; that is not consistent with open and continuous testing. I would suggest that you share with your constituents that if you see a classification that you meet the MAQ's for, send your resume and ask for a credential assessment. It's going to end up being more than they anticipated but I don't know for sure. Jill asked, regarding promotions, what you said that it's not an advancement in class but a change in position, can you clarify? Cindy responded with an advancement in class is a promotion and when we talk about reclassification and reallocation in a position, those are when a position evolves and changes over time. They are not the vehicle by which a promotion happens. Could be an outcome but not the vehicle in how they should be promoted. At this point, Executive Director Gail Schiesser has joined the call and clarified that it should be by merit and fitness.

What happens when the skills needed, requirement to do the job have changed? Depends on the specs. The problem we all have when we try backing into a promotion is that it's not the design. The universities should have a business plan related to the evolution of positions. The university should evaluate positions on a regular basis and figure out a plan on what the university should do with its staff. Positions can evolve and employee's skill sets evolve but there should still be promotions based on merit and fitness. When a position evolves then it should be assessed as to the evolution of that position. If the current employee has the skillset needed for the position that has evolved, then they should apply for and compete for that position. If the current process is that an employee is promoted because their skills have changed then that is wrong in relation to the statute. The process is going to have to change to be in line with the statute. Moving duties around to see who is capable of doing those duties is not the process. Posting positions on the System Office website was suggested in addition to just posting on the individual universities website. The System Office is not equipped to run a system-wide job board. Unlikely that will happen. The university is required to do all that they have been required to do before. Shifting exams from knowledge or e-test to credential assessments does not change the requirements for filling positions. They do not have a lot of autonomy; they still have to follow the MAQ's and follow the statute. One of the things this committee is to do is to help put policies and procedures in place to improve those practices. By definition, everything happens before an audit is done and we do not know what the Human Resource offices are going to do well or not. The Crafts & Trades is currently a knowledge test and what is done to admit applicants to a test is make sure they meet the MAQ's. If someone is refused admittance to an exam that they meet the MAQ's for they should contact the System Office. Open and Continuous testing allows individuals to submit their resume to be scored for a particular classification not a specific position.

We collect data quarterly from the universities and we look for trends, but we don't have the ability to match up position to position. When we audit, we sample rather than pull every transaction. The use of Extra Help may be utilized to bridge the gap in positions. They have 900 hours to decide if they need a status position or roll that into another type of position. We cannot require them to refill a position within a certain period of time – not a good business practice but we can not look over their shoulder except through the audit process and that is on a three-year cycle.

There are classifications that do not have MAQ's but they may have some local requirements. With that, any individual that applies for the position should be able to take the test or receive a credential

assessment. MAQ's get you admitted to the exam, if there are no MAQ's they anyone should be admitted to the exam. What the credential assessment looks like at a later date will be determined.

Specialty factors are applied at the stage of the MAQ's; must meet those to gain access to the test. Each classification is being reviewed individually to make sure that the specifications of the class are being met. Most MAQ's will not change, we are just changing the process for scoring from scoring an e-test to scoring a resume. Each HR is going to be marginally different from each other in how to accept resumes for classifications that have not been posted. Please contact your HR for those specifics. Current vacancies have to be replaced with their old classification because that just doesn't allow the campus to shift in any direction. Also, this is not something that we will look at in an audit. We would not be welcomed to opine on what particular classification should be posted for the university but we would certainly look at it within the audit process which occurs afterwards. If you only look at your overarching staffing policy when someone moves-retires-leaves your employ, then that is a bad business model. Jacqueline spoke to the point that the System Office can not dictate to the universities how they fill a vacant position... the universities fill vacant positions with Extra Help, or the work is redistributed to other employees using the Other Duties As Assigned and this leads to more and more duties being added to current employees without compensation or advancement. Other Duties as Assigned become permanent over time. Perhaps we work to define or set parameters around Other Duties As Assigned. Some units have defined Other Duties As Assigned around 5% of other duties or 5% of time. Employee needs to still be able to complete their normal duties. Other Duties As Assigned includes duties that are within the class spec and classification. Other duties outside of the classification or job description are a different matter. How do we address when the volume of current duties expands beyond the ability of an employee? Need to communicate with the Human Resource offices at your universities as a mass exodus is not desirable. As leaders in your communities, you need to have discussions with HR, with your managers. Explain that if the employee doesn't have enough time to complete the duties, what are the priorities? Employee cannot complete 10.5 hours of work in a 7.5-hour day. Need to focus on having too much work thrown at you versus having different work thrown at you, work outside your classification.

Took a brief 10-minute break from 11:07am to 11:17am

Gail clarified that specialty factors are not part of the MAQ's. Specialty factors are applied to the position after you've met the MAQ's for the classification. They are intended to enhance the MAQ's, not replace them.

#### **Governance Risk & Compliance Audit report by Cindy Neitzel:**

Reminder that we've moved to a tri-annual audit process and that impact is starting. SIU-C, U of I Peoria, and SIU-E are all finished and should be out on the website. We have reports that we continue to work on. Have visits completed for NEIU, UIC, ISAC, SURS, COM Rockford, NIU, CSU, and GSU. Jonah Jett and I are working feverishly to get data reconciled. The first audit for FY2023 is coming. It was posted to occur in August but bumping that to September. We do remain engaged with CSU as their audited was completed in FY2020 as Jacqueline noted earlier their AVP/HR person left a month ago and have not designated their DER yet – still working with them and overseeing some of those processes. We do encourage you if there are certain positions we need to look at, please provide us with that but need to have those before the audit sample is requested at least a month in advance, sometimes two months in advance. Requests are based on risk and need – has to make sense.

#### **Legal Update by Gail Schiesser:**

There are still several matters pending – Seymour which is the matter at NEIU. It has been settled between the parties, dismissed by agreement of parties. Bradford still exists, there is briefing still in place. Keoho is new as an administrative review request by a police officer discharged by Merit Board after written charges for discharge by UIC. He is arguing that he was unfairly treated at the hearing because the Merit Board allowed UIC to speak in public comment without prior notification to him. Bateman which is

the electrician cheating test still exists. It is on the last continuous as so says the judge in Madison County. It is going to appear before a jury trial on September 13<sup>th</sup>. It's not really ours so will just see what the judge has to say.

Question was asked with regards to hiring of legal counsel for the System Office – Gail's replacement. Gail responded not yet, most are still studying for the bar exam and will repost at end of the month on the website and on Indeed.

**Quarterly Meeting Update:**

Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022, meeting is confirmed and as we are unable to meet at NEIU, Michael Pulley is going to check into arrangements to meet at SIU-E.

Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup> will be Council of Councils. NEIU is unable to host CoC so it will be conducted via zoom by our committee with more information to come as soon as available. Committee discussed options and topics for Council of Councils and will be discussed more in depth with the Executive Committee.

Northern Illinois University is hosting our October 2023 Quarterly Meeting as well as Council of Councils on October 18<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup>.

University of Illinois at Chicago is tentative for the 2024 Council of Councils.

**Other Items as Presented:**

Michael Pulley shared that he has worked with the System Office on a couple of things and hoping to come to some closure since the beginning of COVID. They have a Civil Service employee who had an opportunity to move to Florida. The department did not want to lose her and was ok with her working remotely. They confirmed with the System Office that the law is silent regarding post-hire residency requirement. Advised the group to reach out to their Human Resource department and do the necessary work to make sure that all was covered, such as holidays in Florida that may be different from Illinois and have to be recognized. Some of the residency component may resurface.

Other matter that has resurfaced regarding position elimination – desk audits temporarily suspended. Will keep the group posted.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Sheryl Jones-Harper      **Seconded by:** John Hulseberg

*The meeting was adjourned on Friday, July 22, 2023, at 1:30pm by Jill Odom.*

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Mary Serio, Secretary

  
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Jill Odom, Chair