







**STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**July 18 & 19, 2024**

**Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn at 12:13pm

Made by Christa Lawhun, seconded by Shauna Bishop

Respectfully submitted August 21, 2024

X *Tenea Harris*

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Tenea Harris  
Secretary

X *Jill C. Odom*

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Jill Odom  
Chair

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Chair Report by Jill Odom:

To: Employee Advisory Committee

From: Jill Odom  
Chair/Employee Advisory Committee

Date: July 18, 2024

Subject: Chair Report

The Merit Board met on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at 1:00pm, with members participating in-person and remotely. Chair Jones was unable to attend the meeting and so Vice-Chair John Butler presided over the meeting. I was unable to attend the meeting in-person due to the passing of a dear friend of our family but was able to listen to the meeting for most of the agenda.

Trustee Phillips from Northeastern Illinois University was welcomed to the board. I believe with his appointment to the board that all vacancies on the Merit Board have been filled.

Dr. Michael Ginsburg from the University of Illinois—Chicago spoke during the Public Comment period. Dr. Ginsburg has served in a variety of leadership positions at UIC and so has had the opportunity to work closely with all facets of the university and its employment groups. He began his remarks with a question to the Merit Board of “how much time do you have to spend with individual universities human resource officers? Do you have an opportunity to hear from department heads or leadership?” He went on to state that the State Universities Civil Service System was established fifty-plus years ago when issues such as nepotism existed and there needed to be rules and procedures to address the various issues. Since then, the universities have developed policies to address these issues. The Chicago hiring market is different now and the competition for employees is very tight. Specifically, the hospital struggles to compete with other hospitals that are just blocks apart from UIC-Health and the constraints of the civil service system leave them at a disadvantage to hire and retain the best staff possible. They need a more nimble hiring process. He asked that the Merit Board members speak to university leaders to help update the rules surrounding the residency requirement, Rule of 3, Extra Help, and Internships. They want to shift the focus from upholding seventy-year-old rules to updating them. They are antiquated and need innovative practices. He also mentioned that EAC has not responded to proposals and that the system has refused proposals. Vice Chair Butler asked if the constraining rules were internal or the statutes and Dr. Ginsburg said it’s a little of all of them—some internal, some SUCSS, some changes to the act.

Executive Director Schiesser replied to his comments stating that the system office continues to work with HRDAC. The residency requirement is nothing new and has been discussed with various groups numerous times. Gail noted that EAC does have objections to the proposal to extend the Rule of 3 and that has been shared. She stated that she is disappointed at the statement that the system office refused to work with HRDAC as they consider and move as appropriate however, this is a system and rules for one university do not outweigh the needs of all. I ask that Gail further share this portion of the meeting during her report.

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Carl Chambers from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville presented the report for the Designated Employer Representative Group. Mr. Chambers noted that at this time he is the most tenured in the SIU System with regards to Human Resource Leadership with one year and seven months under his belt. He spoke about his onboarding experience and the many challenges associated with getting up to speed with the State Universities Civil Service System. He did note that his experience with SUCSS has been productive. He then proceeded to speak about several items related to our discussions during the joint EAC/HRDAC meetings in 2023 such as the residency requirement and the Rule of 3. He also mentioned the delay in the audit process.

As I was unable to present our SUCSAC report, Executive Director Schiesser read the report into the record. It follows as such:

On behalf of the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee, we welcome you all and hope you are well. My sincere apologies for not being able to join you today. A very dear friend of my family has passed and today and tomorrow are the visitation and services. I believe this is my first absence from a Merit Board meeting since I joined SUCSAC so I'm looking forward to catching up regarding today's proceedings at a later date.

Mr. Phillips, welcome to your first meeting and I look forward to meeting you in-person soon. You find yourself in a very knowledgeable and involved group of individuals on this board as well as the staff of the State Universities Civil Service System office. We, the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee, also known as the Employee Advisory Committee (or EAC), are also a very committed and involved group of individuals from each of the state universities that we represent. Our purpose and goal are to review and advise the Merit Board on matters related to our Civil Service employees, taking into consideration what is best for our constituents, our universities, and the state as a whole. Again, a warm welcome and thank you all for your time and commitment to the Merit Board.

At the Merit Board meeting in March, I shared EAC's position on the request for the University of Illinois System Office to become a separate place of employment. This matter was of great importance to many constituencies within and outside of the University of Illinois System and we, EAC, would like to thank you for your thoughtful and diligent consideration of this matter. Your decision to defer this matter until further discussion and consideration of the various ramifications and outcomes that would affect all the parties involved is greatly appreciated. Transparency and collaboration in these matters is what makes our collective bodies work as a team.

EAC's last quarterly meeting was held on April 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield. At that meeting we installed one new representative: Andrea Hoskinson from the University of Illinois—Chicago, Division of Specialized Care for Children. Andrea has served as a member of EAC since January of 2019 and we are very pleased that she was elected by her constituents to serve another four-year term.

Kristin Eaton, the Executive Director of Human Resources at SIU-SOM joined our meeting to share various human resource processes and practices that are specific to SIU-SOM. Though their civil service staff are a little unique in their duties compared to other civil service employees, Kristin shared that they are committed to providing the most equitable and respectful environment for

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their employees as possible. Learning from each of our respective universities helps EAC understand the unique needs and contributions of our civil service employees across the state.

Executive Director Gail Schiesser provided a report to EAC via Noel Rowe and Jonah Jett; two members of her staff who are invaluable not only to Gail and the System Office but to EAC as well. Their knowledge, interest, and collaborative discussions with EAC provide the committee with necessary information and tools to further our goal of providing the best possible information and opinion to the Merit Board on matters related to civil service employees.

Our next quarterly meeting will take place next week on Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup> and Friday, July 19<sup>th</sup>. We have a full agenda and I look forward to reporting back to you (in-person) at the next scheduled Merit Board meeting.

Thank you for your time, your commitment, and your continued dedication to our civil service employees.

As I was unable to hear the remainder of the meeting, I kindly ask that Gail give an update regarding the discharge proceeding against Hannah Wooldridge from EIU, proposed rulemaking change regarding the DER section, increasing the fee for a Hearing Officer for service on discharge/demotion hearings, and the remainder of the reports from the system office.

In closing I would like to once again welcome Nick Nedeau to the System Office and thank him for his patience, understanding, tact, and input with this group. You are greatly valued by us all.

Thank you, Jill Odom

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Legislative Report from Leg Comm Chair Shauna Bishop:

PA 103-0633 - Board of Higher Education - (with Dept of Commerce and Economic Opportunity/Dept of Employment Security) compile on annual basis a list of most in-demand jobs in IL, starting salary, median salary, education level available to public on website - Eff 7/1/24.

U.S. Dept of Education final regulations for Title IX - For federally funded education, protect against all sex-based harassment and discrimination, promote accountability and fairness, and empower and support students and families. Eff 8/1/24.

HB3519 (similar HB3520, SB3627, SB3628) - Tier II Pension Benefits - Reduces final rate of earnings period to highest 5/10 consecutive years of employment (instead of current 8/10), increases pensionable earnings limit to Social Security Wage Base, allows retirement at 60 w/20 yrs. of service credit or 67 with 10 yrs. Rules Committee 4/19/24.

HB4162 - Amends Open Meetings Act - Except as otherwise provided in the Act or any other Illinois statute, a quorum of members of a public body must be physically present at the location of an open meeting or present by video or audio conference at the open meeting (now, members must be physically present at the meeting).

Provides that a member is present by video or audio conference at an open meeting if the member can hear and be heard by all other members of the body who are participating in the meeting.

Specifies that, if a member wishes to attend a meeting by video or audio conference, the member must notify the recording secretary or clerk of the public body before the meeting, unless providing that advance notice is impractical for the member.

Repeals existing provisions concerning the participation of public body members in open meetings by video conference or other means. Rules Committee 4/5/24.

HB4358 - Amends the Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act - Provides that each public college or university shall develop and implement an evidence-based, comprehensive, campus mental health and suicide prevention plan. Rules Committee 1/16/24.

HB4508 - Police Reciprocity - Adopt Retirement Systems Reciprocal Act - Tier II police retire at 55 w/20 yrs. of service (instead of 60). Assignments Committee 4/19/24.

HB4873 - Tier II Pensions Omnibus - Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DRO) During the period of the DRO member's participation in the DRO (not to exceed 5 years), the applicable pension fund or retirement system shall transfer, and the State Treasurer shall credit into a notional account on behalf of the DRO member, an amount equal to the monthly amount of retirement annuity the DRO member would otherwise be eligible to receive if the DRO member had retired on the date of the election under this Section. Rules Committee 4/19/24.



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HB5079 - Amends the State Universities Civil Service Act - Provides that nothing in the Act or any rules adopted under the Act prevents the parties to a collective bargaining agreement subject to the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act from agreeing to a provision that enhances employee rights. Assignments Committee 4/17/24.

HB5452 - Amends the Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act - All higher education institutions shall include info on protection against retaliation in their sexual violence policies. Rules Committee 4/19/24.

HB5568 - Higher Ed In-state tuition - Beginning 2025-2026 academic year, individuals should be considered an IL resident until/unless that individual establishes residence outside of the State (with some provisions). Rules Committee 4/19/24.

HB5547/SB3459 - Fund Appropriation - Appropriates funds from the General Revenue Fund to the governing board of each public university for personal services and the related costs of increasing the wage rates of university personnel employed in positions covered under the State Universities Civil Service System, beyond the annual cost of living adjustment, adjustments provided for in collective bargaining agreements, and any increases required by the Minimum Wage Law, in a fair and equitable manner so as to close the pay gap between public university workers and other State employees. Would be effective July 1, 2024. House Rules Committee 6/29/24 - Senate Assignments Committee 6/26/24.

HB5798 - Tier II Hypothetical SS Benefit - If an eligible Tier II member would receive a pension benefit that is less than the eligible Tier 2 member's hypothetical Social Security benefit, then the eligible Tier II member's pension benefit must be increased to the amount of the hypothetical Social Security benefit plus \$1. Requires this determination to be made on an annual basis and the amount of the pension benefit to be adjusted annually. Rules Committee 4/2/24.

SB3667 - Amends Public Higher Education Act - Governing board of each public institution of higher education shall provide free date rape drug testing kits to students. Senate Assignments 5/3/24.

Chicago minimum wage increase - to \$16.20 on 7/1/24. This applies to all businesses regardless of the number of workers they employ.

More time off for Chicago workers - all Chicago businesses are now required to provide workers with at least 10 days off each year under the Chicago Paid Leave and Paid Sick and Safe Leave ordinance. The ordinance provides workers who work at least 80 hours within 120-day period five days of guaranteed paid leave and five days of sick leave. 7/1/24