

STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY MEETING

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

12:30 p.m.

Wolfram Research Building

100 Trade Centre Drive, Suite 303, Champaign, Illinois, 61820

Chair Odom called the meeting to order at 12:38 p.m. on April 15th. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

Present: Aaron Ketchum, Andrea Hoskinson, Andy Harpst, Brad Green, Chris Doe, Christa Lawhun, Elizabeth Cheek, Jacqueline Pointer, Jill Odom, John Evans, Layla Campos, Patty Meyer, Shauna Bishop, Sheryl Jones-Harper, Tenea Harris

Absent: Mary Serio, Michael Robinson

Guests: SUCSS Office Noel Rowe, HR Manager
Maggie Miller, Legal Representative
Gail Schiesser, Executive Director

Public Comments: None

Review of Correspondence: None

Action Item:

Approval of minutes for January 22nd & 23rd, 2025 Quarterly Meeting

Motion: To approve January 22nd & 23rd, 2025 meeting minutes as amended

Made by: Elizabeth Cheek, **Seconded by:** Aaron Ketchum

Roll Call Vote

Name	Aye	Nay	Name	Aye	Nay
Aaron Ketchum	X		Jill Odom	X	
Andrea Hoskinson	X		John Evans	X	
Andy Harpst	X		Layla Campos	X	
Brad Green	X		Patty Meyer	X	
Chris Doe	X		Shauna Bishop	X	
Christa Lawhun	X		Sheryl Jones-Harper	X	
Elizabeth Cheek	X		Tenea Harris	X	
Jacqueline Pointer	X				

Motion Carried

Action Item:

Approval of Constitution & Bylaws Article C, Section 1, 1.4 language update

Motion: To approve Constitution & Bylaws Article C, Section 1, 1.4 language update

Made by: Brad Green, **Seconded by:** Chris Doe

Roll Call Vote

Name	Aye	Nay	Name	Aye	Nay
Aaron Ketchum	X		Jill Odom	X	
Andrea Hoskinson	X		John Evans	X	
Andy Harpst	X		Layla Campos	X	
Brad Green	X		Patty Meyer	X	
Chris Doe	X		Shauna Bishop	X	
Christa Lawhun	X		Sheryl Jones-Harper	X	
Elizabeth Cheek	X		Tenea Harris	X	
Jacqueline Pointer	X				

Report of Chair:

See attached

During discussion, Chair Odom elaborated on ways our members could be more proactive in presenting information to the Merit Board, where we identify concerns on our campuses and possible solutions to resolve them. There is a consensus from the committee that we need to educate our constituents on Civil Service and the rights afforded through the act. A few ideas presented were creating surveys, PSA's and/or quick fact pamphlets. We discussed having a short list of resources readily available in our toolbox, to provide to our constituents.

Report of Executive Committee:

Chair Pointer tabled her report until tomorrow, 4/16.

Recessed @2:19 p.m., Reconvened @2:32 p.m.

Report of Legislative Committee:

See attached

During discussion, some members pointed out the inconsistencies in hiring practices across universities as well as within their own colleges. Executive Director Schiesser reminded the committee that there is a 15-day window to ask for a director's review for any action carried out on your campus.

Report of the Election Committee:

Chair Harpst reported UIC will be holding elections on 6/10 for 2 vacancies. Western had 1 candidate apply, Heidi Skiles.

Report of SUCSS Executive Director:

Executive Director Schiesser took the time to lead the committee through a self-discovery activity, if you will. Her exploratory questions helped us zero in on our "why", why we initially joined the committee and what value our committee has/can provide to the Merit Board and to our constituents. We brainstormed topics of concern on each of our campuses and created a list to work from. This exercise, continued the following day, also included a presentation from Maggie Miller on the different arms of the legal system, the reach of the MB and how we fit into the system. This info was needed to help guide our discussion on things we would request of the MB. While we generated a good list of topics, we will continue to work on narrowing the focus to those things that are within the MB's reach. The MB creates policy based on the Enabling Act, while the System Office regulates them. Areas of responsibility for the MB include class plans, compensation, minimum hours and benefits, so we began to remove topics from

our list if they did not fit into one of those categories. As we began to narrow the focus, Open & Continuous Testing rose to the top of the list. The second priority was determined to be Extra-Help appointments. The third priority we decided on was Salary & Compensation.

Recessed @4:30 p.m.

STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY MEETING

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

10:30 a.m.

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Reconvened @10:59 a.m.

Present: Aaron Ketchum, Andrea Hoskinson, Andy Harpst, Brad Green, Chris Doe, Christa Lawhun, Elizabeth Cheek, Jacqueline Pointer, Jill Odom, John Evans, Layla Campos, Patty Meyer, Shauna Bishop, Sheryl Jones-Harper, Tenea Harris

Absent: Mary Serio, Michael Robinson

Guests: SUCSS Office Maggie Miller, Legal Representative
Gail Schiesser, Executive Director

Report of Executive Committee:

See attached

2025 Quarterly Meeting Schedule

Executive Director Schiesser encouraged the committee to be flexible with our bylaws regarding in-person attendance. The System office offered to help facilitate the option to have multiple meeting locations.

- July Quarterly Meeting *possibly* with Merit Board meeting
 - Chicago State University7/22 – 7/23

Updates were provided regarding lodging accommodations and possible evening activities.

- October Quarterly Meeting with Council of Councils
 - Governor's State University10/22 – 10/24

Sheryl Jones-Harper confirmed that meeting rooms have been reserved, and they are working on speakers and the agenda. Lodging has not been confirmed yet.

Lunch 12:20pm-1:36pm

SUCSAC Priorities:

There is a consensus from the committee that we need to educate our constituents on Civil Service and the rights afforded through the act. We discussed constructing a survey to be used on all our campuses, exploring the issues and concerns of our constituents, to help direct our efforts. We discussed having a short list of resources readily available in our toolbox, to provide to our constituents. We also talked about updating our page within the System website, to help disseminate information.

During our exploration exercise, we discussed attending MB meetings and the importance of speaking out. Chair Odom asked all members to let her know if they will be in attendance so she could announce

their presence during her presentation time. It was also suggested that individual members take the time to present their own opinions as well.

Other Items as Presented:

The DER group prefers that we not meet in person every meeting and they could possibly present this to the MB to mandate the change. We had a lengthy discussion regarding remote meeting locations and travel costs, as it pertains to this committee meeting in person. We agreed to have multiple meeting locations pre-arranged for committee members to attend and be counted as part of the quorum.

Members were instructed to talk to their DER for prior authorization to travel for July meeting. Any requests for a remote meeting location should be submitted by May 6th.

Motion to Adjourn: Christa Lawhun Seconded by: Patty Meyer

A voice vote was taken, and all were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tenea Harris
Secretary

Jill Odom
Chair

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Tuesday, April 15, 2025

12:30 p.m.

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100 Trade Centre Drive, Suite 303, Champaign, Illinois, 61820

To: Employee Advisory Committee
From: Jill Odom
Chair/Employee Advisory Committee
Date: January 22, 2025
Subject: Chair Report

The last Merit Board meeting occurred on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 1:00pm. There was a meeting scheduled for February 6th at 1:00pm, however, that was canceled, and the next meeting of the Merit Board will take place on Tuesday, April 22nd at 1:00. As has been the practice for several years now, the Merit Board will meet both in-person and remotely. There will be several in-person meeting locations to accommodate the needs of the Merit Board members and adherence to OMA requirements.

Since the Merit Board has not met since my last report to this committee, I do not have any updates with regards to the Merit Board. Instead, I would like to take this opportunity to speak about a couple of other topics.

The first relates to the meetings of this committee. Over the past several years we have worked to revise our Constitution & Bylaws to allow for remote meetings for our standing, special, and ad hoc meetings. This has worked quite well for our committee in being able to conduct our business in an efficient and expeditious manner. We have also revised our Bylaws to include language that will allow us to meet in multiple locations for our quarterly meetings so long as we have a quorum of committee members physically present. We as a committee have chosen to continue to meet in one physical location for our quarterly meetings, however, I believe the time has come for us to revisit this discussion. We all remember how difficult the pandemic was, however, it did reveal our ability to meet remotely and still conduct business. Given the budget situation that our universities find themselves in now and expectations for reduced resources over the next few years, there had been discussion surrounding our continued decision to meet in one location rather than remotely or in multiple physical locations. We will discuss this further later on in our agenda but I wanted to get this on the table so you can begin formulating your thoughts.

The second topic that I wanted to speak to is regarding each of our purposes and concerns as they related to being a member of this committee. I'm sure when each of you chose to run for election as a representative you had some specific ideas about what you could offer to the committee and what you would like to help achieve. As we move forward, it is imperative that we create a specific and detailed plan for specific items or topics that we would like to address and present to the Merit Board. Our role is to be advisory to the Merit Board and this should be in a proactive manner rather than reactive. If we want a seat at the table and we want our voices

to be heard then we need to share our thoughts, concerns, and solutions with the Merit Board and take advantage of the opportunity we have before us with Merit Board. We can be of great value and our efforts will be appreciated, we only have to stand up and be part of the process. As always, I want to let each of you know that I truly value your opinions and your commitment to this committee. I know we have a great deal to offer and look forward to what we can all accomplish together.

Thank you, Jill Odom

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April 15, 2025

Executive Committee Chair Report

The Executive Committee of the State Universities Civil Service Employee Advisory Committee met on January 23, 2025, at the State Universities Civil Service System Office. During the meeting we elected Christa Lawhun as Executive Committee Secretary and Andy Harpst was elected as Parliamentarian.

Updates were provided on the proposed changes to the SUCSAC Constitution and Bylaws Article C Section 1 1.4. An explanation for the changes to the C&B was presented to provide context for the need of amendment.

The Executive Committee members proposed recommendations for the Merit Board to take action on as well as potential topics to report. At the campus level, we heard that some employees have experienced difficulties obtaining their Seniority information form HR and subjectivity related to credential assessment concerning comp-qual's.

Executive and Legislative will work together to compile legal statutes and laws that the Universities must comply with as a reference document to be added to the Membership Manual. This document will also include the regulatory agencies and information on the recourse if noncompliance is discovered. Additional content will include a list of State Representatives/Legislatures for each Campus.

Chair Odom encouraged members to share any reporting topics to be included in the report to the Merit Board. Anyone can attend the Merit Board in person or at one of the meeting locations. The position statement for the Residency Requirement was discussed and minor revisions were reviewed for clarity. Further discussion was tabled for the full body to determine if EAC will continue the conversation with DER and/or refine and reaffirm the existing position statement and submit it to the Merit Board. It was agreed that the data provided by DER did not justify an amendment to the Rule of Three. The Position statement will be shared with the Merid Boad and EAC is open to further discussion with DER. Additional discussions were tabled for the full body.

It is recommended to express workplace concerns that are non-civil service related at your respective University Borad of Trustees meetings. The Board may be able to influence leadership and affect change on your campus.

Thank you,
Jacqueline Pointer

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Legislation as of 4/14/25:

HB0026 - Amends Open Meetings Act - An open or closed meeting subject to the Act may be conducted by audio or video conference, without the physical presence of a quorum of the members, if the National Weather Service has determined that all or part of the jurisdiction of the public body is located within an area that is subject to a severe weather alert on the day of the meeting. Re-referred to Rules Committee 3/21/25.

HB1046 - Amends IL Pension Code - With regard to police officers, firefighters, and similar public safety employees, removes Tier 2 limitations on the amount of salary for annuity purposes; provides that the automatic annual increases to a retirement pension or survivor pension are calculated under the Tier 1 formulas; and provides that the amount of and eligibility for a retirement annuity are calculated under the Tier 1 provisions. To be effective immediately. Re-referred to Rules Committee 3/21/25.

HB1149 (Formerly HB5873) - Higher Ed-Firefighter Credit - Creates the Educational Credit for Firefighting Experience Act. Provides that before July 1, 2027, each institution of higher ed awards academic credit for firefighter training considered applicable to the requirements of a student's certificate or degree program for any individual who is enrolled in the institution of higher ed and who has completed a firefighting training course or program that meets certain requirements. Passed House 4/8/25. Senate Assignments 4/9/25.

HB1206 - Higher Ed Student Assistance Act amendment - IL Student Assistance Commission shall establish the Returning Police Officers Loan Repayment Assistance Program to assist police officers who have left law enforcement with repayment of student loans and in order to help place officers into areas of the State that are the most under-staffed and in need of additional officers. Provides that each award under the Program shall be equal to \$6,000 per year for up to 5 years or until the applicant's student loans are paid off, whichever is sooner. Provides that an applicant has one year from the date that the first student loan assistance payment is received to begin work in a shortage area. Provides that those applicants currently working in shortage areas are eligible for the Program, but those who left law enforcement due to reasons other than retirement or a permanent disability shall be given priority for the Program. Effective July 1, 2026. Re-referred to Rules Committee 3/21/25.

HB1433 - Educational Credit for Election Judges Act - Each institution of higher ed may adopt a policy to aware academic credit or a non-credit alternative for election judges. Re-referred to Rules Committee 3/21/25.

HB1581 - Adequate and Equitable Public University Funding Act - Provides that all general operating expenses for public universities shall be distributed by the Board of Higher Education through a funding formula for eligible public institutions and shall be administered by the Board. Effective Immediately. Re-referred to Rules Committee 3/21/25.

HB2332 - Amends Pension Code - Provides that a Tier 2 member who has at least 20 years of service in this system as a police officer or firefighter is entitled to a retirement annuity upon written application on or after the attainment of age 55 (instead of age 60) if a specified rule is applicable to the participant. Provides that the changes apply retroactively to January 1, 2011. Re-referred to Rules Committee 4/11/25.

HB2466 - Amends Higher Education Student Assistance Act - Removes provision specifically excluding academic programs for incarcerated students.

House Floor Amendment No. 1

Replaces everything after the enacting clause. Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act. In the definitions of "institution of higher learning", "qualified institution", and "institution", provides that the exclusion of academic programs for incarcerated students does not apply to the monetary award program. Effective July 1, 2026. Passed House 4/10/25.

HB2920 - Amends IL Pension Code - Would create a deferred Retirement option plane (DROP) for SURS participants. Would allow a participant who is eligible to retire to continue in active service for up to 5 years while having their monthly retirement annuity deposits into a special account. Re-referred to Rules Committee 3/21/25.

Per SUAA, since similar to other bills for Police and Firefighters, SUAA was encouraged to wait with this bill. Continued discussions are expected.

HB3046 - University Civil Service Employee Rights - Nothing in Act prevents provisions that enhance employee rights. Passed House 4/8/25. Referred to Senate Assignments 4/9/25.

HB3062 - State University Civil Service Exams - Removes residency requirement for applicants.

House Floor Amendment No. 1

Replaces everything after the enacting clause. Amends the State Universities Civil Service Act. Removes language requiring applicants taking examinations under the State Universities Civil Service System to be citizens of or residents in the State. Provides that preference shall be given to applicants who are citizens of or residents in the State; however, if, after 6 months, no qualified State residents have filled the position, the position may be filled by any qualified candidate without requiring an additional posting on behalf of the university or other State entity. Provides that if a qualified candidate is chosen who is not a State resident, that candidate shall have 12 months to establish residency within the State or within 60 miles of the facility located within the State at which the candidate will be employed. Passed House 4/10/25.

HB3194 - Amends State Universities IL Pension Code - Provides that a survivors insurance beneficiary or the personal representative of the

estate of a deceased survivors insurance beneficiary or the personal representative of a survivors insurance beneficiary who is under a legal disability may waive the right to receive survivorship benefits, provided written notice of the waiver is given by the beneficiary or representative to the Board of Trustees within 6 months after the System notified that person of the benefits payable upon the death (instead of 6 months after the death) of the participant or annuitant and before any payment is made pursuant to an application filed by such person. Effective immediately. Re-referred to Rules Committee 4/11/25.

HB3522 - Public University Direct Admission Program Act - Beginning with the 2027-2028 academic year, the IBHE, in collaboration with the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and the State Board of Education, shall establish and administer a direct admission program. Requires each public university in the direct admission program to identify and provide its grade point average standards for general admission for first time admission and for transfer students to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission by March 1 of each year. Provides that, beginning July 1, 2026 and each July 1 thereafter, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission shall use data collected from school districts to determine which students meet the standards for general admission and provide the data to the Board of Higher Education. Provides that, beginning with the 2027-2028 academic year, the IBHE, in collaboration with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission and the State Board of Education, shall develop, in consultation with the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a preselection outreach campaign to encourage qualifying State high school juniors and seniors to apply to the University of Illinois at Chicago or the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Requires a school board to provide access to high school student directory information and each student's email address and grade point average to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and each public institution of higher education for the purpose of informing students of educational and career opportunities. Passed House 4/7/25. Senate Assignments 4/8/25.

HB3709 - Amends Public Higher Ed Act - Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, each public institution of higher ed with student health services shall provide enrolled students with access to health care professionals authorized under State law to prescribe contraception. If the institution's student health services include a pharmacy, the pharmacy on campus shall dispense contraception to enrolled students who wish to fill their prescriptions at the university pharmacy. Each institution with student health services shall provide enrolled students with access to health care professionals authorized under State law to prescribe medication abortion. An institution that dispenses medication abortion from the university pharmacy shall enter into a referral agreement with a tertiary care facility with OBGYN services in the event of complication from medication abortion or suspected complicated pregnancy prior to dispensing medication abortion. Effective immediately. Passed House 4/8/25. Senate Assignments 4/9/25.

HB3717 - Amends Public Community College Act - Would implement Governor's plan to have community colleges offer four-year bachelor's degree programs. Re-referred to Rules Committee 3/21/25.

Per SUAA, several universities have concerns that expanding the number of institutions offering bachelor's degrees could collapse the existing programs at these universities, thus driving down the student base and ultimately making them nonoperational. Rep. Stuart, who chairs the Higher Education Committee, also expressed concerns that the bill could have ruinous effects on schools such as Northeastern Illinois University and Chicago State University that serve largely minority student populations. A spokesperson for Governor Pritzker said there was still time to negotiate a bill that would satisfy the concerns of lawmakers and universities.