



**MINUTES OF THE TWO-HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-FOURTH  
MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD –  
MARCH 14, 2024**

**State Universities Civil Service System (University System)  
1717 Philo Road, Suite 24,  
Urbana, IL 61802  
& WebEx**

Chicago State University  
Cook Administration Building  
9501 South King Drive  
ADM Room 201  
Chicago, IL

Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville  
School of Dental Medicine  
2800 College Ave.  
Alumni Conference Room, Room B273  
Alton, IL

Illinois State University  
718 W. College Avenue  
Room NSB 101A  
Normal, IL

University of Illinois at Chicago  
Discovery Partners Institute  
200 S Wacker Drive  
Conference Room 2006  
Chicago, IL

Northern Illinois University  
116 Altgeld Hall  
Altgeld Hall, Room 125  
DeKalb, IL

*Also, via live stream at the following address: <https://multimedia.illinois.gov/sucss/sucss-live.html>*

**Call to Order and Roll Call – Julie Annette Jones, Chair**

Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m. Chair Jones stated that the agenda had been posted in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. The public had been notified of the date, time, and location of the meeting. For the record, Chair Jones stated that one board member, Ms. Craig Schilling, had requested to participate via audio conference.

Members present at the University System Office and via WebEx were: Julie Annette Jones, Chair, from the Illinois State University Board of Trustees; Barb Baurer from the Eastern Illinois University Board of Trustees; Carolyn Blackwell from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees; John Butler from the Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees; Ramon Cepeda from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees (joined at 1:33 pm); Tami Craig Schilling from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees (joined at 1:35 pm); Jim Kvedaras from the Governors State University

Board of Trustees; Jason Quiara from the Chicago State University Board of Trustees (joined at 1:30 pm); and John Simmons from the Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees.

Member absent was: Derek Wise from the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees.

Also, present were: Gail Schiesser, Executive Director, and Teresa Rademacher, Secretary for the Merit Board. Various other university employees and State Universities Civil Service System (University System) staff were also in attendance.

**Consideration of participation by other Merit Board Members not physically present at the meeting site**

Chair Jones stated that Ms. Craig Schilling had requested to actively participate in the meeting at a non-public site due to a work conflict. However, since Ms. Craig Schilling was not in attendance, this was put on hold until she joined the meeting.

**Welcome new Merit Board Member from the University of Illinois**

Chair Jones welcomed new Merit Board member J. Carolyn Blackwell from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees and is grateful for her service on the Merit Board.

**Approval of the Agenda for the 224<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Merit Board – Julie Annette Jones, Chair**

Mr. Kvedaras made a motion to approve the agenda for the 224<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Merit Board. Mr. Simmons seconded Mr. Kvedaras’s motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara .....Absent  
Mr. Simmons .....Aye  
Mr. Wise .....Absent  
Ms. Baurer .....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Dr. Butler .....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda .....Absent  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent  
Chair Jones .....Aye

**Merit Board Reorganization**

The Merit Board conducted reorganization activities, electing its officers for the calendar year 2024. Chair Jones informed the Merit Board that the following officers needed to be elected for 2024: Chair, Vice Chair, and two Executive Committee members, and the appointment of a

Secretary for the Merit Board. Chair Jones asked Executive Director Schiesser to proceed with the election of officers.

Executive Director Schiesser stated that Ms. Jones had agreed to continue to stand as Chair of the Merit Board. Ms. Baurer made a motion to elect Ms. Jones as Chair. Mr. Simmons seconded Ms. Baurer's motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Dr. Butler .....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda.....Absent  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent  
Chair Jones .....Aye  
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara .....Absent  
Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
Mr. Wise.....Absent

Executive Director Schiesser stated that Dr. Butler had agreed to continue to stand as Vice-Chair of the Merit Board. Mr. Simmons made a motion to elect Dr. Butler as Vice-Chair. Ms. Baurer seconded Mr. Simmons' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
Mr. Wise.....Absent  
Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Dr. Butler .....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda.....Absent  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent  
Chair Jones .....Aye  
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara .....Absent

Executive Director Schiesser stated that Mr. Simmons had agreed to stand on the Executive Committee of the Merit Board. Dr. Butler made a motion to elect Mr. Simmons to the Executive Committee. Ms. Baurer seconded Dr. Butler's motion. There were no other nominations to the Executive Committee. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Dr. Butler.....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda.....Absent  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent

Chair Jones .....Aye  
 Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
 Mr. Quiara .....Absent  
 Mr. Simmons .....Aye  
 Mr. Wise .....Absent  
 Ms. Baurer .....Aye  
 Ms. Blackwell .....Aye

Executive Director Schiesser stated there is still an open position on the Executive Committee that needs to be filled. She stated that this could be filled at a later date.

Executive Director Schiesser recommended appointing Ms. Rademacher to continue as Secretary for the Merit Board. Mr. Kvedaras made a motion to elect Ms. Rademacher to serve as Secretary for the Merit Board. Mr. Simmons seconded Mr. Kvedaras’s motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
 Mr. Quiara .....Absent  
 Mr. Simmons .....Aye  
 Mr. Wise .....Absent  
 Ms. Baurer .....Aye  
 Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
 Dr. Butler .....Aye  
 Mr. Cepeda .....Absent  
 Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent  
 Chair Jones .....Aye

Chair Jones thanked the newly elected officers for serving.

**Consideration of the Minutes of the 223<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Merit Board, November 30, 2023**

The Minutes of the 223<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Merit Board, November 30, 2023, had been transmitted to members of the Merit Board with the agenda materials.

Mr. Kvedaras made a motion to approve the Minutes of the 223<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the University Civil Service Merit Board. Mr. Simmons seconded Mr. Kvedaras's motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
 Mr. Quiara .....Absent

Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
 Mr. Wise.....Absent  
 Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
 Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
 Dr. Butler.....Aye  
 Mr. Cepeda.....Absent  
 Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent  
 Chair Jones .....Aye

**Consideration of the Closed Minutes of the 223<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Merit Board, November 30, 2023**

The Closed Minutes of the 223<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Merit Board, November 30, 2023, had been transmitted to members of the Merit Board with the agenda materials.

Dr. Butler made a motion to approve the Closed Session Minutes of the 223<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the University Civil Service Merit Board. Mr. Kvedaras seconded Dr. Butler's motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Dr. Butler.....Aye  
 Mr. Cepeda.....Absent  
 Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent  
 Chair Jones .....Aye  
 Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
 Mr. Quiara.....Absent  
 Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
 Mr. Wise.....Absent  
 Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
 Ms. Blackwell .....Aye

**Public Comments**

Chair Jones stated that there were several requests for Public Comments. Chair Jones stated that the individuals who requested to speak were all about the same topic, agenda item 11, place of employment for the University of Illinois System Office (UI-SO). She further stated that it had been the practice of this board to move the public comments to the appropriate agenda item.

Chair Jones requested a motion to move the requested public comments to agenda item 11 since that is the topic for all the requests. Mr. Simmons made a motion to move the requests for public comments to agenda item 11. Dr. Butler seconded Mr. Simmons' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
Mr. Wise.....Absent  
Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Dr. Butler.....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda.....Absent  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent  
Chair Jones .....Aye  
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara.....Absent

Mr. Quiara joined the meeting.

**Report of the Human Resource Directors Advisory Committee – Janice Bonneville, DER for Illinois State University**

Janice Bonneville, Associate Vice President for Human Resources at Illinois State University, presented comments for the Human Resources Directors Advisory Committee (HRDAC). Ms. Bonneville reviewed some prior Merit Board topics and found that many of the items discussed previously continue to be at the forefront. She first spoke to the Illinois residency requirement, a topic that most certainly arises at virtually every meeting. She further stated that, looking at previous notes, the Merit Board approved a change to the residency requirements at their December 2021 meeting. She stated that no one wants to return to 2021 and the challenges that everyone faced, but she said she found the language from that meeting interesting. The approved statutory change removed any residency requirement.

Ms. Bonneville said that the proposal would have resolved the residency question, but there was no support for that legislation. As a result, HRDAC and EAC, with attendance by the University System, met three times in the calendar year 2023 (04/19/23, 08/25/23, and 10/18/23) in an effort to address this issue as well as other identified priorities (extra help hours; Rule of 3; management of grant-funded positions). In the fall of 2023, talking points for use when discussing the matter with members of the General Assembly were created to show collaboration between EAC and HRDAC. At the end of the final meeting, EAC advised that they would discuss the matter at their October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and get back to them on their position.

On November 30, 2023, with no additional conversation between EAC and HRDAC, the EAC chair, in her comments to the Merit Board, outlined a position statement regarding the residency requirement. It is HRDAC’s understanding that the position statement was included with the board’s material. The position is not indicative of an agreement between EAC and HRDAC and, actually puts a more restrictive requirement in place than exists currently for individuals who reside out of state. The HRDAC members were ultimately provided with a copy of the comments by the University System on February 19, 2024. To date, EAC has made no outreach to discuss the contents of that statement. She stated that since the document was not indicated separately on the agenda, she presumed that it was relevant to the board’s approval of the meeting minutes

from November. She asked that the Merit Board simply not entertain any changes to the residency requirement based on EAC's document. HRDAC absolutely desires changes, but the language presented by EAC does not represent an agreement between the parties.

Ms. Bonneville's only other comment was related to the audits being conducted by the University System. She said she raised the same concern at the recent HRDAC held on February 15, 2024. The universities understand, better than most, the current hiring challenges facing the University System. She stated that even when a person is hired, the time it takes to train someone on all things civil service is substantial, but she stated that as a preface to the need to have audits conducted by the University System completed in a timelier manner. She stated that some of the universities have waited more than two years before receiving a draft audit report, while others are still waiting for their draft audit report. She said that even after the reports are received and responded to, others are waiting months to receive the final report from the University System. She used Illinois State University as an example, audited May 2 – 6, 2022, on work performed between December 1, 2017, and March 31, 2022, approximately 4 ½ years of work (Governors State University had a similar timeframe). Much of the delay in starting the audit was outside of the University System's control, given the pandemic. However, she said that ISU still has not received a draft audit report. She stated that the university is almost two years into the next 3-year audit cycle. If a university has findings, those are almost certainly guaranteed to be repeat findings given this extraordinary delay. She asked the Merit Board to do two things: (1) assist the University System in any way possible to get the resources they needed or revise the audit schedule to a more manageable timeframe and (2) show universities grace if repeat findings appear on audit reports.

### **Report of the State Universities Employee Advisory Committee – Jill Odom, Chair**

Ms. Odom, Chair of the Employees Advisory Committee, presented comments. She welcomed Ms. Blackwell to the Merit Board. She stated that the purpose and goal of the committee is 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.

She stated that the committee seated several members at the January 2024 meeting and elected officers for 2024. Ms. Odom said that Executive Director Schiesser and her staff provided the committee with updates related to the University System's work in several areas, such as the audit cycle, class plan updates, and legal updates. The committee also had a discussion with Executive Director Schiesser regarding the November Merit Board meeting and the various items on the agenda that were discussed, approved, and tabled. They also discussed the request from the University of Illinois regarding the separate place of employment for the System Office.

Ms. Odom stated that at the November Merit Board meeting she shared that EAC had had the opportunity to meet with the HRDAC on three separate occasions to discuss five specific items. She stated that those discussions were very educational, enlightening, and collaborative and it proved that the groups could come together with varying perspectives and experiences to discuss

items that are of great importance to the universities. She provided an update on each of the items:

1. Extra Help Extensions – EAC had not received any additional information or justifications related to a change to the Procedures Manual or Civil Service Rule 250.70(f) regarding Extra Help Appointments. A reminder that the use of an Extra Help Appointment is "to be casual or emergent in nature" and limited to 900 hours, or approximately six months in a position. EAC does agree that there are specific positions that are limited in nature to the need for short-term, seasonal, or temporary help, and these are currently covered within the rules and procedures of the University System. Our constituents at all our state universities remain concerned about the use and misuse of extra help employees and that they do not contribute to SURS, are a barrier to status employee's promotional opportunities, and the excessive use of extra help in a vacant position limits consistency within the unit. EAC continues to not recommend an extension of the 900-hour rule for Extra Help Appointments and agrees that the current rule addresses the need for emergent extensions.
2. Testing concerns for non-custom classifications – The committee discussed this item in detail with Executive Director Schiesser at the committee's January meeting and an update will be provided at the April meeting regarding this topic. EAC will continue to discuss testing concerns for non-custom classifications and report back as needed.
3. Grant Funded Appointments – EAC continues to be concerned that employees hired as Grant Funded Appointments are denied certain rights and protections that status civil service employees have. The HRDAC stated that these employees are fully aware at the time of hire that they are temporary based on the terms of the grant. This assumes that they understand what rights and protections they are not receiving that status civil service employees working alongside them do. This particular topic is mainly a concern for our research universities, and the committee understands that the University System is working with HRDAC on a process or possible position for a limited number of these. Executive Director Schiesser will continue to share information related to this item, and the committee looks forward to continued discussions to ensure rights and protections for our constituents are a priority.
4. Residency Requirement – EAC prepared a position statement related to the Residency Requirement, which Ms. Odom shared with the members at the November Merit Board meeting. EAC remains in support of a change to the residency requirement with the five provisions noted in the position statement. Following the November Merit Board meeting, Ms. Odom stated that she asked Executive Director Schiesser to share that document with the HRDAC group, and the committee is looking forward to their response.
5. Rule of Three – During the August 2023 joint meeting, EAC requested data from HRDAC to show what the candidate pool would have been if the Rule of Three had been expanded to the Rule of Five and the Rule of Eight. At the October joint meeting, HRDAC requested an extension to January to provide that data. On December 20, 2023, EAC received data prepared by eight of the 14 universities. The data supplied was limited and deviated from what was requested as it contained data for a Rule of 10 rather than a Rule of Eight. Additionally, the request was for data covering time periods before and after the move



from E-tests to credential assessments during the summer of 2022. The data received was for the calendar year 2023 with the exception of one university, which supplied approximately two years of data. In order for the committee to make an informed decision, the committee is expanding the request to include data from calendar years 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023. This information will provide comparative data of what the candidate pool would have been prior to and following the move from E-tests to credential assessments. The committee did not request data during calendar years 2020 and 2021. With regards to the six universities that did not supply data, the committee asks for their participation as well since all state universities employ civil service employees, and the actions of this committee are on behalf of all state of Illinois civil service employees. A formal position statement has been prepared; however, based on the data provided on December 20, 2023, EAC is not in favor of expanding the Rule of Three at this time.

Ms. Odom stated the request of the UI-SO to be designated as a separate place of employment has been stated that it will have a limited impact on civil service employees with the intent primarily administrative to improve processes. She stated that EAC has serious concerns that this change will negatively impact civil service employees currently employed within the UI-SO units, as well as current employees at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Illinois Springfield, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as the UI-SO has staff on and supports all three universities. She stated that at the November Merit Board meeting, the board heard from individuals who spoke to the impact on bumping rights and promotional rights, EAC completely agrees that these are indeed of great concern. She further stated that if this change is approved, a UI-SO employee's options would be severely limited to just within the UI-SO instead of their current options for positions at the university they are geographically attached to. Promotional opportunities would also be severely diminished due to the size of the UI-SO relative to the universities. She said that employees would have the opportunity to apply for and accept positions at UIUC, UIC, or UIS. However, their seniority would disappear, no different than if they moved to another state university or agency.

Ms. Odom said that promotion and retention are a top priority for our HR offices; however, without these protections in place, EAC believes this will discourage employees from exploring promotional opportunities and further contribute to the difficulties that HR offices are experiencing with recruitment. Other questions that have arisen are related to an employee's benefits, vacation, and sick leave balances. How would this change affect an employee's benefit balances if they moved from the UI-SO to the university or vice versa?

There are many other concerns that employees have expressed, one being no communication from the University of Illinois regarding this change. Ms. Odom said that she knew of several individuals who would have spoken during the public comment period at this meeting today, however, there has been no communication internally regarding this change.

She further stated that it has also been stated that this move will improve hiring times from the time a position is vacated until the time it is filled since the UI-SO would no longer have to work

with the individual HR offices. These are internal processes that could be addressed and solved without any changes to the State Universities Civil Service System Administrative Rules and procedures. As long as the Administrative Rules and procedures are adhered to, changes to internal procedures could be implemented to increase efficiency and collaboration between these HR offices, which would benefit all parties involved.

Ms. Odom stated that if the Merit Board decides to move forward with this change, EAC requests that they require that all of the civil service employees' current protections remain intact, especially as they relate to bumping rights, promotional rights, and benefits, as well as provide an implementation date of three years from now to give current employees ample time to consider their career options. She further stated that this is not a way to say that EAC is supportive of this change, EAC respectfully requests that the Merit Board consider the position statement sent to them with their agenda materials as follows:

It is the unanimous position of the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee that the formation of a place of employment for the University of Illinois System Office will negatively impact civil service constituents throughout the University of Illinois System by diminishing rights guaranteed under the Civil Service Act (110 ILCS 170/36b *et seq*) including but not limited to the ability to compete for positions based on merit and fitness, promotion, bumping, retreat and seniority rights. State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee has had the opportunity to discuss this topic with a variety of stakeholders, and as such, we support and encourage the Merit Board to deny the establishment of the University of Illinois System Office as a place of employment.

Ms. Odom concluded by saying that everyone comes to these discussions from different points of view, that everyone involved should have the same goal of achieving what is best for our civil service employees and our universities. We all agree that needs, demands, and processes change over time, and the necessity for defined rules, impartial oversight, modern benefits, and employee protections are paramount. EAC continues to be committed to assisting the University System and, thus, the Merit Board with supporting updates and revisions to the Administrative Rules and procedures and necessary changes to the Act, with our civil service employees as our driving focus.

### **Consideration of participation by other Merit Board Members not physically present at the meeting site**

Executive Director Schiesser informed Chair Jones that Ms. Craig Schilling had joined the meeting and that the Merit Board needed to take action to allow her to participate. Chair Jones asked Ms. Craig Schilling to state for the record her reason for not being able to participate at a public location. Ms. Craig Schilling stated it was work-related.

In accordance with the Open Meeting Act, Chair Jones asked for a motion to allow Ms. Craig Schilling to participate by other means. Mr. Simmons made a motion to allow Ms. Craig Schilling

to participate via a nonpublic WebEx location. Mr. Cepeda seconded Mr. Simmons' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
Mr. Wise.....Absent  
Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Dr. Butler .....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye  
Chair Jones .....Aye  
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara .....Aye

**Reconsideration of the Separate Place of Employment for the University of Illinois System Office**

Chair Jones asked Ms. Painter to represent her public comments.

Jami Painter, Senior Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer at the UI-SO presented public comments relating to the separate place of employment request for the UI-SO. Ms. Painter stated that the request was approved at the August 2023 meeting of the board. At the November 2023 meeting, there was an unprecedented pause on the approval. When the request was submitted, this was done after considerable analysis and consultation with the University System. On January 1, 2023, she stated that she met with Executive Director Schiesser and Legal Counsel, asking for any concerns. Executive Director Schiesser stated she would give it some thought and get back to her. She then emailed me on February 7, 2023, stating there was nothing found in the rules to prevent the separate place of employment. Ms. Painter said that Executive Director Schiesser then provided her with the information needed to submit the request to the Merit Board for approval. She said that at no time was she made aware there were concerns from any party. She was very surprised and frustrated when the subject was placed on the November agenda after it had been formally approved at the August meeting. She stated that they had focused considerable attention on implementing this change for the UI-SO. On December 21, 2023, she received an email from Executive Director Schiesser with eight items, including a seniority list for every system office classification. She stated that her staff worked diligently to comply with the request. On February 1, 2024, she provided a thorough response to her request, and then on February 16, 2024, she received another letter requesting 21 additional items of data. The request included a request for specific work arrangements of every UI-SO employee on how many days they work in person, remotely, and hybrid. She said she was given nine days to provide this information. On February 21, 2024, she requested an extension due to the significant amount of time it took to pull the information from the system. This request was denied the same day. On February 29, 2024, UI-SO submitted the requested data. Ms. Painter said she understood the importance of identifying the impact of this change but remains puzzled as to how some of the data relates to the UI-SO as a separate place of

employment. Such as the employee remote working arrangements, including those not governed by the University System. Ms. Painter said her office demonstrated a good faith effort to provide the requested information. The UI-SO, becoming a place of employment, will provide significant operational efficiencies, shorter time to fill civil service openings, more opportunities for promotions, and stabilization of staffing levels still remain the focus and priority for this change. On behalf of the UI-SO, Ms. Painter respectfully requested that the Merit Board uphold their August 2023 decision to establish UI-SO as a separate place of employment.

Dr. Butler stated he appreciated Ms. Painter's concerns about the unprecedented action the Merit Board took to reconsider the matter. Dr. Butler asked Ms. Painter her thoughts on the disadvantages that have been asserted by those who believe these changes will be significant disadvantages to the status employees. Ms. Painter stated that all benefits and rights would be laterally transferred, and the employees would not lose any benefits. She further stated that they would be transferred "whole." In terms of opportunities, in the last 10 years, the university has not had any layoffs where an employee has lost their job. She said they would make sure an employee was not disadvantaged.

Dr. Butler asked Ms. Painter to respond to employees concerned about moving to a place of employment with fewer positions in a classification in case of layoffs, how retreat rights would affect both employees seeking positions on campus and in the UI-SO, and how they would lose these rights under this proposal. Ms. Painter stated this seldom happened, and positions are not often left open to see in an employee works out in a new position. These positions are filled, and if an employee does not work out during their probation period of the new position, the university would then find them a position on campus. Ms. Painter said that this request was in no way to take away the rights of employees and that they believed this would help serve the civil service employees better.

Dr. Butler asked if Ms. Painter was suggesting that those we had heard from at the last meeting were incorrect about the disadvantages they were ascertaining. Ms. Painter stated that she is not saying they are incorrect; however, they have mechanisms to address the issues and still be successful as a place of employment and not disadvantage employees.

Chair Jones stated that a concern was the lack of communication on the subject to employees, and this has added to the problem. Ms. Painter stated all the University of Illinois campuses can put a plan together in writing, so employees are not disadvantaged.

Chair Jones asked Leana Coffey to present comments.

Ms. Coffey, Manager of Administrative Information Technology Services from the UI-SO, presented comments. She stated that System HR understands the knowledge, skills, and technical aspects of her department. Many qualified candidates have not made it to the review process due to a lack of understanding of job responsibilities, technologies, and terminology in the talent acquisition office. She said they have had missed opportunities to interview candidates and have had failed searches or hired less qualified candidates. She believes a closer affiliation

and understanding by System HR would help remove this. The amount of time to process transactions and hiring employees would be significantly reduced if the UI-SO became a place of employment.

Dr. Butler asked why the UI-SO cannot handle these searches today. Ms. Coffey stated that the UI-SO handles part of the process, then goes to campus HR to complete the process and campus HR does the credential review. She stated that the request for a separate place of employment is so UI-SO can handle the entire process.

Dr. Butler asked Ms. Coffey to explain to the Merit Board why the university cannot resolve these internal issues since these issues do not relate to civil service rules. Ms. Coffey deferred the question to Ms. Painter. Ms. Painter stated the process was established so the DER designates this; the UI-SO is not its separate place of reemployment, so UI-SO cannot do the process from beginning to end, and that is why this change would be so beneficial. She further stated that they could complete the entire process instead of having two different HR offices handling the process.

Dr. Butler asked to hear from the University System regarding the concerns mentioned by Ms. Painter. He asked if civil service rules were creating the issue, or whether or not the university has the capacity to run the searches exclusively within the UI-SO without having to utilize campus HR offices. Executive Director Schiesser stated that the conversation with UIC HR suggested that they inquire about other universities, including those in their system, to assist with scoring. Executive Director Schiesser said there is nothing in the civil service rules that says you cannot and stated that there is actually a provision for courtesy scoring that is perfectly allowable in our system. She stated that if scoring is done by HR personnel and not department personnel, there is nothing to prevent the universities from arranging with their HR staff in any manner that is appropriate to them. Ms. Painter responded to Executive Director Schiesser's comments regarding other universities helping with scoring by stating that they did have the resources to help UIC with their scoring. Ms. Painter said that UI-SO is considered a department HR, which is what is causing the issue. Executive Director Schiesser stated that the conversation was about department personnel who could not score exams. HR staff is HR staff, no matter where they sit. The System Office requires that HR staff, rather than, for example, the staff in the French department, score the examinations. That is the distinction we are making. HR staff is required by rules to score the examination.

Chair Jones then asked Dave Beck to present comments.

Mr. Beck, AFSCME Regional Director of Council 31, stated their union represents approximately 60 employees at UI-SO. He summarized their argument and highlighted the negative impact this change would have on the individuals represented by Council 31; they rejected all the claims for the UI-SO as a place of employment. These include different policies on different campuses, and this is clearly a problem of their own making. The university is well within its rights to make its policies and, therefore, could decide to create uniform policies across the campuses to alleviate these issues. He said they could simply hire more staff in the HR department. Secondly, they

argue a separate place of employment would help them hire and retain more qualified staff and he said they reject that claim also. Common sense says taking away the ability to promote lateral movements within the same campus employees will be less satisfied. He said they fail to recognize the harm they would be causing to their employees by reducing their ability to maintain their position and maintain their geographic position and maintain a position at the university in the instance of a layoff.

Dr. Butler asked what this change would have on the bargaining agreements. Mr. Beck stated he was unsure; this is still a pending question, and that he was concerned about this.

Dr. Butler asked if the concern is with material conditions changing, not the employer. Mr. Beck confirmed that that was correct. The contract is with the University of Illinois, so the employer is not the issue. He said parts of the contract would need to be addressed to reflect the changes that would occur.

Chair Jones asked Executive Director to present her comments.

Executive Director Schiesser commented that the University System did a careful analysis of the information provided by UI-SO. The data showed that the creation of a place of employment for UI-SO would involve three campuses, more than 40 units and departments, three collective bargaining units, and 52 civil service classifications. The UI-SO data shows that more than 1,100 employees would be shifted to this new place of employment, and 524 of the affected employees are currently designated as civil service employees. She said our good faith estimate that nearly 60% of the 630 employees UI-SO now designates as exempt from civil service are misclassified and should be reclassified and returned to civil service and have their seniority properly calculated and added to the proper seniority list. If UI-SO becomes a place of employment, these employees would suffer an immediate loss of civil service seniority and employment rights by having their rights shifted from the larger campus to the smaller UI-SO place of employment. These employees would also be subject to a change in their seniority status. If an employee has earned and accrued seniority, it is a reasonable expectation that there will not be a change or material change during their employment. In the documents provided to the University System, approximately 75% of the employees are required to report to their campus location at least one day a week. She further stated that if an employee chooses to take the promotion, they will leave behind all of their seniority. Executive Director Schiesser gave further examples of retreat rights. UI-SO has not provided any information on why the processes cannot be changed. Just that the policies and procedures are in conflict among the three campuses. Executive Director Schiesser stated that instead of changing the policies, they want to shift this to the new place of employment. The Executive Director gave examples of just certain positions being shifted to the UI-SO instead of the entire department.

Mr. Kvedaras stated that this seems to be more of a management issue.

Chair Jones commented that a lot of information had been given to the Merit Board in public comments and asked if anyone had any further questions.

Dr. Butler asked the Executive Director if she had inquired about why they were only moving part of the departments to the new UI-SO. Executive Director Schiesser stated that a more general question was asked, but continued to receive responses from UI-SO that it was about policies and procedures.

Ms. Baurer asked the Executive Director why this request was not made in the beginning. Executive Director Schiesser agreed that it should have been presented to the Merit Board at the initial request and that it would have changed the timing, but not the effect.

Mr. Simmons apologized to the University of Illinois for any frustration. Mr. Simmons made a motion to table agenda item 11 dealing with the UI-SO separate place of employment and requested Ms. Painter and her colleagues to work with the University System to put something together to protect current and future employees and vote on this again in August. Ms. Craig Schilling seconded Mr. Simmons' motion.

Mr. Kvedaras cautioned that the board should not just continue the matter.

Dr. Butler asked that the motion be amended to just table the item, and if the parties come up with a plan or agreement, it would be brought up at that time. Mr. Simmons clarified his motion that he did not mean to say August and that the motion is to table agenda item 11 dealing with the UI-SO separate place of employment and requests Ms. Painter and her colleagues to work with the University System to put something together to protect current and future employees. Ms. Craig Schilling seconded Mr. Simmon's clarified motion.

In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
Mr. Wise.....Absent  
Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Dr. Butler.....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye  
Chair Jones .....Aye  
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara.....Aye

**Update and authorization for the Executive Director to implement and administer the Merit Board Budget for FY 2025**

Executive Director Schiesser stated the Governor had approved the University System's requested budget of \$1,444,500. She stated that budget hearings are coming up with the House

and Senate. Executive Director Schiesser stated that our priorities remain the same in that we need to speed up the audit process and improve Police testing, and this budget will help the agency accomplish this.

Ms. Simmons moved to authorize the Executive Director to implement and administer the Merit Board budget for FY 2025 with the following Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Merit Board authorizes the Executive Director to administer the FY 2025 agency budget, pursuant to the availability of funds and final approval by the Governor’s office. Contingent upon the availability of funds, the FY 2025 agency budget may include employee salary adjustments administered in accordance with applicable Merit Board Policies and Pay Administration Guidelines. The Merit Board also authorizes the Executive Director to make any other expenditures necessary for the operation of the State Universities Civil Service System and the Merit Board office, commencing July 1, 2024, and continuing until such time as the FY 2025 appropriation becomes effective or the Merit Board directs otherwise.

Ms. Bauer seconded Mr. Simmons' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
Mr. Wise.....Absent  
Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Dr. Butler .....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye  
Chair Jones .....Aye  
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara.....Aye

**Governance, Risk, and Compliance Audit Program review of recent activities – Colton Kurtz**

Executive Director Schiesser commented that the University System, as stated by Ms. Bonneville, is very behind on providing audit reports and is working to put systems in place to increase turnaround time and increase staff. The University System appreciates Ms. Bonneville's comments.

Mr. Kurtz stated that the audit division is currently in four different stages across multiple audit processes: drafts, analyzing data, data collection, and upcoming audits. Drafts are being edited for Chicago State University, Northern Illinois University, Governors State University, and Illinois State University. The University System is analyzing initial data reports for Western Illinois University and the University of Illinois Springfield. Data has already been analyzed, and more



data has been collected from Eastern Illinois University, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Division of Specialized Care for Children. Upcoming audits will be conducted at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and the University of Illinois Chicago Medicine at Peoria.

### **Report of the Executive Director – Gail Schiesser**

Executive Director Schiesser stated that Section 250.50 of the Administrative Code, adding a definition for Law Enforcement Personnel and amending Section 250.30(g) of the Administrative Code to delete work areas within class specifications that are no longer being utilized, were approved by JCAR and were effective January 26, 2024.

The University System is currently under audit by the Auditor General's Office. We continue to provide information and answer questions.

There is currently \$570,079 unspent in FY 2024; most of this will be taken up with personnel services, and the balance not used is due to staff vacancies.

The agency is continuing to work through the list of classifications and examinations that need to be reviewed. In addition, the universities have provided a list of classifications they have expressed interest in having the agency review.

### **Report of the Legal Counsel – Gail Schiesser**

Executive Director Schiesser stated that there were no changes to the previous meeting. There are currently two matters in review:

#### **Vincent Bradford**

Vincent Bradford, a former employee at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), has filed a Complaint for Administrative Review in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, requesting a review of the Merit Board's December 10, 2021, decision to discharge him. The Illinois Attorney General's Office represents the Merit Board and the System Office. Mr. Bradford prepared and served a Second Amended Complaint. It was filed after the deadline set by the Court. The Attorney General's Office filed a Motion to Dismiss. The Motion for dismissal was granted. Bradford has filed a Notice of Appeal. The matter is fully briefed. We are waiting for a decision.

#### **Christopher Bean**

Christopher Bean, a former University of Illinois at Chicago employee, filed a "Charge Against a Labor Organization" with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB). Mr. Bean alleged a violation of the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRA), 115 ILCS 5, and identified the agency as a "Labor Organization." The Illinois Attorney General's office is representing the agency in that matter. Following a recommendation by

the Executive Director of the IELRB, the IELRB dismissed the charge on February 4, 2022. On May 27, 2022, Mr. Bean filed an appeal in the Appellate Court to overturn the IELRB dismissal. The Assistant Attorney General has filed a motion to dismiss. This Motion was denied, and the case is proceeding against our agency. The Court is waiting for Mr. Bean to file his brief based on the merits. The case is still pending.

**Other Items as presented**

Executive Director Schiesser stated several discharge cases are in progress and will need to be addressed prior to the scheduled meeting in August. The University System proposed new meeting dates for June 6, 2024, September 19, 2024, and November 21, 2024, in lieu of the previous scheduled dates.

Mr. Simmons made a motion to accept the new meeting dates. Ms. Baurer seconded Mr. Simmons' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
Mr. Wise.....Absent  
Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Dr. Butler.....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye  
Chair Jones .....Aye  
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara.....Aye

Mr. Simmons moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Baurer seconded Mr. Simmons' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Mr. Simmons.....Aye  
Mr. Wise.....Absent  
Ms. Baurer.....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Dr. Butler.....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye  
Chair Jones .....Aye  
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara.....Aye

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Teresa Rademacher*

Teresa Rademacher  
Secretary for the Merit Board

APPROVED:

*/s/ John Butler*

---

John Butler, Vice Chair  
University Civil Service Merit Board

July 9, 2024

Date