



**MINUTES OF THE ONE-HUNDRED-AND-NINETYTH
MEETING OF THE MERIT BOARD – November 13, 2013**

**State Universities Civil Service System Office
1717 Philo Road, Suite 24
Urbana, Illinois 61802
&
(Video Conference)
University of Illinois at Chicago
College of Pharmacy
Room 270
833 South Wood Street
Chicago, Illinois
&
(Video Conference)
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Morris Library
Conference Room, 1st Floor
605 Agricultural Drive
Carbondale, IL**

Vice Chair Montgomery called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

Member present at the primary meeting location was: Robert D. Webb, representing Eastern Illinois University.

Members present at the Chicago videoconference location were: James D. Montgomery, Vice Chair, representing the University of Illinois; Spencer Leak, Sr., representing Chicago State University; Robert T. Marshall, Jr., representing Northern Illinois University; and Brian Mitchell, representing Governors State University.

Member present by audio conference was: Karen Hasara, representing the University of Illinois.

Members absent were: Lyneir Cole, representing Western Illinois University; Marvin Garcia, representing Northeastern Illinois University; Patricia Brown Holmes, representing the University of Illinois; and Donna Manering, representing Southern Illinois University.

Also present were: Lewis T. (Tom) Morelock, Executive Director; Mari Martinelli, Manager, Legal Services and Legal Counsel; Teresa Rademacher, Secretary for the Merit Board; and Julie Benedict, Chair of the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee. Various other university employees and University System Office staff were also in attendance.

Since a quorum of six (6) Board members were not present at the video conference sites, the Merit Board was unable to take formal action on any agenda items.

Report of the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee – Julie Benedict, Chair

The Merit Board heard a report from Julie Benedict, Chair of the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee. The Committee last met on October 16 and 17, 2013 at Chicago State University. The Council of Councils group also met on October 18, 2013. Ms. Benedict stated that attending the Council of Councils meeting was a great venue for various service councils across the state to share and compare their challenges and triumphs. Ms. Benedict stated that there were two new members to the EAC group: Ann Jaso, representing Governor's State University and Anthony Travelstead, representing Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Ms. Benedict stated that she had encountered some personal challenges over the last few months, and that Gary Fry had stepped up into a leadership role to keep the EAC committee running smoothly. She noted the importance of working respectfully with fellow committee members and the University System office. Ms. Benedict spoke of working together and building trust with the University System office to work towards common goals.

Report of the Human Resource Directors Advisory Committee – Maureen Parks

The Merit Board heard a report from Maureen Parks, representative of the Human Resource Directors Advisory Committee. Ms. Parks stated that the HR Committee had not met with the University System office since the last Merit Board meeting in September, but that the committee had still been able to collaborate and to continue work on some projects. One of the items that Ms. Parks stated that the committee has been working on is researching Public Act 97-0968, which is the SURS Return to Work Act. She explained that this act went into effect in August, 2013, and put many restrictions on universities and community colleges when re-employing SURS annuitants. These restrictions are in direct conflict with civil service statute and have posed many challenges to universities to be able to administer this law and stay in compliance with the Civil Service statute. This law affects annuitants by limiting the amount of money they can earn, and the number of weeks that they are allowed to work. Ms. Parks

stated that throughout the last year, state universities, community colleges, SURS, and the University Service have been working collaboratively to introduce language to the legislature that would protect civil service employees. Just last week, in the Illinois Veto Session, Ms. Parks stated that representatives were able to communicate and educate legislators to adopt changes that will take the two referenced statues out of conflict with each other and is hopeful that this bill will be signed into law soon. She stated that she would report more on this issue at the next Merit Board meeting.

She further stated that Mr. Morelock has asked Designated Employer Representatives from each university to participate in discussions about updating the exemption procedures. The group has had two meetings and has been very productive. The state HR directors and university administrators do not agree with the removal of exemption of authority from the individual universities; however, it is felt that good suggestions and recommendations can be obtained from this collaboration, which may end up producing satisfactory solutions for all parties.

Consideration of the 2014 Schedule of Meeting of the Merit Board

Mr. Morelock informed the Merit Board that future Merit Board meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of the month. The dates that are being considered are:

- Wednesday, February 19, 2014
- Wednesday, May, 21, 2014
- Wednesday, August 20, 2014
- Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Mr. Montgomery stated that February 19 will not work for him. After discussion, the Merit Board agreed to meet on Tuesday, February 11, 2014. The other dates will be discussed at the February meeting.

Biennial Audit Program – Review of Recent Activities

Mr. Morelock updated the Merit Board on the Final Audit Reports that had been completed since the last Merit Board meeting. Following are the audits that had been completed and are posted on the University System office website:

- *Eastern Illinois University*
- *Chicago State University*
- *Northern Illinois University*

Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Morelock provided an agency report which included the following items:

- FY2013 Annual Report – The 62nd Annual Report was mailed to the Governor on October 28th, 2013. Each Merit Board member was also mailed a copy on October 30th, 2013.
- Compliance Audit by the Auditor General's Office - Auditor General's office was onsite April 29 and 30, and May 1, 2013. Mr. Morelock stated that the University System had recently received a draft Audit Report, which will be distributed to Merit Board Members at the next meeting.
- FY 2013 and FY 2014 Budget Updates – Agency's budget was reviewed. FY 2013 and FY 2014 yearly expenditures were included in the agenda materials.
- Classification/Examination Update – A list of current classifications was included with agenda materials. Mr. Morelock explained that many classification activities are in progress at this time.
- University/Agency Visits – Information regarding interagency activities with a list of University/Agency visits was included in agenda materials.

Report of Legal Counsel – Mari Martinelli, Manager, Legal Services and Legal Counsel

Ms. Martinelli updated the Merit Board on some outstanding legal matters. Thus far in FY 2014 there have been 13 Written Charges for Discharge served on employees at the various universities and agencies. No employees have requested a hearing.

Ms. Martinelli further updated the Merit Board regarding an administrative review case – Ramakrishnan vs. University Civil Service Merit Board et. al. This was a discharge case where the Merit Board dismissed all charges and reinstated the employee at Northern Illinois University. Northern Illinois University has appealed the case to circuit court for administrative review. Ms. Martinelli will provide further updates as this court case develops.

Other Items as Presented

Mr. Morelock stated that the next meeting of the Merit Board will be on Tuesday, February 11, 2014 at the University System office, with videoconference locations in the Chicago and Carbondale areas. The meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Teresa M. Rademacher

Teresa M. Rademacher
Secretary for the Merit Board

APPROVED:

/s/ James Montgomery

University Civil Service Merit Board

March 11, 2014

Date