



***MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL (Retreat) MEETING of  
THE MERIT BOARD—  
MERIT BOARD RETREAT and ORIENTATION – August 8, 2014***

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***I-Hotel and Conference Center  
Knowledge Room  
1900 South First Street  
Champaign, Illinois***

Chair Montgomery called the Special (Retreat) Meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Members present at the meeting location were: Chair, James D. Montgomery, representing the University of Illinois; Marvin Garcia, representing Northeastern Illinois University; Karen Hasara, representing the University of Illinois; Donna Manering, representing Southern Illinois University; Robert T. Marshall, Jr., representing Northern Illinois University; Brian Mitchell, representing Governors State University; and Robert D. Webb representing Eastern Illinois University.

Members absent were: Lyneir Cole, representing Western Illinois University; Michael Curtin, representing Chicago State University; Betty Kinser, representing Illinois State University; and Judge Patricia Brown Holmes, representing the University of Illinois.

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 various other university employees and University System office staff were also in attendance.

***System History, Purpose and Mission***

Mr. Morelock opened with explaining that this was the first meeting (of this kind) that had been held for Merit Board Members. He explained that the meeting will serve as an orientation to the State Universities Civil Service System and Merit Board members should feel free to guide the meeting if they have questions or concerns. Binders for each Merit Board member were distributed containing information for the Retreat, as well as a PowerPoint presentation that will be available at the University System's website.

Merit Board members took turns introducing themselves and spoke about their professional lives, outside of their duties as a Merit Board member. Guest speaker, John Brewster, former Merit Board Chair, also gave some personal insights resulting from his experiences while serving on the Merit Board.

Mr. Garcia and Mr. Montgomery spoke regarding personal conflicts that arise for Merit Board Members as they also serve as Trustees for their respective universities. Chair Montgomery stated that he feels that Merit Board members need to know what goes on at the university level, so that Merit Board members can be better informed to make decisions that directly involve and impact the universities.

Mr. Morelock stated that the problem with getting information at a university level is that it is not available to all other board members. The same information needs to be available to all board members, and if the University System office can do a better job of providing necessary information, a recommendation can and should be made.

Mr. Morelock asked Merit Board members to give their input as to how they would like to receive agenda materials for Merit Board meetings and discharge case materials, since there is a vast quantity of information. Dr. Manering added that she appreciated the material that is received during discharge cases, as it is helpful in making a final decision. Mr. Morelock stated that it is possible to transmit some of the agenda materials electronically (for those members that would like to receive it in this fashion). Several Merit Board members also stated that handling information electronically makes information destruction much more efficient.

Mr. Brewster spoke to the Merit Board in regards to finding balance between their role as a Merit Board member and other roles they play. Mr. Brewster stated that he always thought of himself as “making decisions for the people of the State of Illinois” in regards to discharge cases and other issues presented before the Merit Board, rather than strictly being a representative of his university.

Mr. Morelock spoke to Merit Board Members about the value of having members that are willing committed to staying on the board for an extended period of time. Continuity is important factor due to the learning curve that exists for Merit Board members. It takes time to build a knowledge base regarding the operation and function of the University System and the Merit Board.

Mr. Morelock’s role as the Executive Director involves being the primary administrator of the University System, and most of these duties are captured in the Act and Administrative Rules. The Executive Director serves at the will of the Merit Board; there is no formalized contract for the Executive Director’s position at this time.

Mr. Morelock gave a brief history of the University System. The University System is provided authority through legislative Statute and is empowered through the University Civil Service Merit Board to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and efficient program of

human resource administration for the higher education community, specifically related to the employment and employment relationship with their auxiliary and support staff positions. In accomplishing this task, the University System has developed a comprehensive set of Administrative Rules and Procedures which effectively facilitate the administration of many aspects of the employment relationship.

The University System was created as a separate entity of the State of Illinois by the 67th General Assembly and became operative on January 1, 1952. The State Universities Civil Service Act (Act) is presently codified at 110 ILCS 70/36b et seq. and the University System Administrative Rules (Administrative Rules) are presently codified in the Illinois Administrative Code (Code) at 80 Ill. Adm. Code 250.

Dr. Manering stated that she felt some confusion regarding agency policies. The University System office is in the process of putting together a handbook, which will be available at a later date for Merit Board members to review.

### ***Merit Board Dynamics***

Mr. Morelock spoke regarding the Merit Board being the final appeal authority in review decisions and employee discharge cases, which are both governed by Illinois regulatory procedures. The review decision process is outlined in section 250.130 of the Code, and discharge procedures in section 250.110 of the Code. Merit Board members were given flow charts that outlined some of the timeline requirements for these types of cases.

Mr. Morelock also spoke about the current trend regarding presentations (or requests for public appearances) at Merit Board meetings. He stated that over the last four to five years, there have been an increase number of requests for public appearances to speak at Merit Board meetings, of which the Merit Board has been open to hearing. There is no administrative rule governing these types of requests. Mr. Morelock told Merit Board members to “look for a rule change from the University System Office” regarding this topic. Mr. Morelock noted that public conduct is outlined in the Bylaws for the University Civil Service Merit Board.

Ms. Martinelli spoke mainly regarding the Bylaws of the University Civil Service Merit Board, and how they directly affect Merit Board members, regarding communications with one another and the general public, and statutory obligations of public governing bodies. The Bylaws for the University Civil Service Merit Board can be amended at any time; they can be modified to accommodate needed changes.

Ms. Martinelli also spoke to the group regarding the Open Meetings Act. She highlighted the major provisions of the act, and its implications in regard to Merit Board meetings. Ms. Martinelli also spoke to the Merit Board regarding voting options at Merit Board meetings.

Ms. Martinelli spoke to the group about the Freedom of Information Act, and spoke in detail about its implications as it applies to Merit Board business. Any information that members have regarding Merit Board issues is public information. This information, whether in written or oral form can be considered public information and available to the public.

Mr. Morelock spoke to the Merit Board regarding ex-parte communications. His main concern for gathering information from outside sources is that it may not be accurate, nor is the same information available to all Merit Board members at the same time.

### ***Agency Overview***

Ms. Neitzel spoke to the group regarding a class plan management overview. She explained that each class specification has an exam; there are over 1100 classifications. The University System office works with employers and subject matter experts to create classifications and examinations.

Mr. Morelock spoke to the Merit Board group about the agency's Audit Program. He explained the process in which audits are conducted and spoke about how a position is determined as civil service or exempt. Ms. Neitzel also spoke on this subject and outlined the audit cycle.

Mr. Curry discussed the University System office's new website; it is faster, has better content, and is more user friendly. The University System office is also hoping to get most examinations to E-test in the future.

There are some system-wide challenges that face the University System. There is some confusion regarding what the University System office does and does not do. The University System office does not control the hiring process of employees. The University System office is involved from a regulatory standpoint of determining whether a position is exempt and the processing of applicants (testing).

Mr. Morelock spoke to the group regarding basic employment protocols and the steps in which universities perform in order to hire an employee.

### ***Goal Review and Development***

Due to time constraints, it was decided to postpone the discussion of goals and expectations until the November Merit Board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Teresa M. Rademacher*

Teresa M. Rademacher  
Secretary for the Merit Board

APPROVED:

*/s/ James Montgomery*

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University Civil Service Merit Board

February 25, 2015

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Date