

STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
October 23 & 24, 2024

Chair Odom called the meeting to order at 12:24pm on October 23, 2024. Roll was taken and a quorum was present.

Present: Aaron Ketchum, Andy Harpst, Angie Ross, Chris Doe, Christa Lawhun, Elizabeth Cheek, Jacqueline Pointer, Jill Odom, Layla Campos, Michael Pulley, Patty Meyer (12:48pm), Shauna Bishop, Sheryl Jones-Harper, Tenea Harris, Thomas Oliver Rosner, Vee Steward (3:19pm)

Absent: Andrea Hoskinson, Lindsay Partlow, Mary Serio

Introduction of Guests: Noel Rowe, Nick Nedeadu – State Universities Civil Service System, Dr. John Butler – Universities Civil Service Merit Board Chair

Public Comments: None

Review of Correspondence: None

Approval of July 18 & 19, 2024 Quarterly Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve July 18 & 19 meeting minutes.
Made by Aaron Ketchum, seconded by Thomas Rosner

		Aye/Nay			Aye/Nay
Aaron	Ketchum	Aye	Jill	Odom	Aye
Andy	Harpst	Aye	Layla	Campos	Aye
Angie	Ross	Aye	Michael	Pulley	Aye
Chris	Doe	Aye	Shauna	Bishop	Aye
Christa	Lawhun	Aye	Sheryl	Jones-Harper	Aye
Elizabeth	Cheek	Aye	Tenea	Harris	Aye
Jacqueline	Pointer	Aye	Thomas	Rosner	Aye

Motion carried.

Report of Chair:

See attached

Chair Odom invited Noel Rowe to offer additional information pertaining to audits and HRDAC meetings. Noel repeated what was explained to the Merit Board; an acknowledgement that the System Office is behind on audits, their plan to get caught up, and their plans to update the schedule. She mentioned that the May 2024 HRDAC meeting was cancelled due to a lack of agenda items. The next one is scheduled for November 14, 2024, and they are closed meetings.

Report of the Executive Committee:

Report postponed until October 24, 2024, at the request of Vice Chair Pointer.

Report of the Legislative Committee:

See attached

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Report of the Election committee:

Elections results are as follows:

UIC Regular Election (Former Steward): 3 candidates, Kareda D. Carmichael winner

SURS Election (Former vacant): 1 candidate, Michael Robinson

EIU Election (Former Partlow): 1 candidate, Brad Green

UIUC Election (Former Harris): set for 11/13, first one had no candidates

SIUE Election (Former Pulley): set for 12/11, first one had no candidates

UIC Special Election (Former Ross, ending Dec 2025); set for 12/17

Schedule of elections for 2025:

UIC, SIUC, NEIU, GSU, UIS, and UIUC (3-yr term). If Rosner leaves, then WIU will need to hold a special election.

Report of SUCSS Executive Director

Report postponed until October 24, 2024, to allow time for training session.

Approve 2025 Quarterly Meeting Schedule

Motion to approve 2025 Quarterly Meeting Schedule as presented.

Made by Chris Doe, seconded by Andy Harpst

- January Quarterly Meeting with Merit Board meeting
 - State Universities Civil Service System Office
1/22 & 1/23
- April Quarterly Meeting with President’s Luncheon
 - UI HR – Wolfram Building
4/15 – 4/17
- July Quarterly Meeting with Merit Board meeting
 - Chicago State University
7/22 & 7/23
- October Quarterly Meeting with Council of Councils
 - Governor’s State University or University of Illinois Springfield (TBD)
10/22 – 10/24

		Aye/Nay			Aye/Nay
Aaron	Ketchum	Aye	Layla	Campos	Aye
Andy	Harpst	Aye	Michael	Pulley	Aye
Angie	Ross	Aye	Patty	Meyer	Aye
Chris	Doe	Aye	Shauna	Bishop	Aye
Christa	Lawhun	Aye	Sheryl	Jones-Harper	Aye
Elizabeth	Cheek	Aye	Tenea	Harris	Aye
Jacqueline	Pointer	Aye	Thomas	Rosner	Abstain
Jill	Odom	Aye			

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Motion carried.

Break 2:00-2:30pm

Guest Speaker – Dr. John Butler, Universities Civil Service Merit Board Chair

Dr. Butler introduced himself and gave a brief bio. He expressed interest in hearing issues we are experiencing on our respective campuses. The committee discussed several issues surrounding testing on a broad level, classification registers, and the rule of 3. Dr. Butler suggested we explain our issues in writing, such as we did with our position statement on the UI System HR request to become a separate place of employment and ask the Merit Board what can be done to address the issue. He stressed the importance that we come across as one voice, which carries more weight. He suggested that we use our position statement on the residency requirement as a conversation starter or bargaining tool, to continue talks with HRDAC. Starting with small initiatives helps to build trust and momentum. He expressed the OEIG has power to accept and enforce a Corrective Action Plan (CAP), which the Merit Board does not have, so that may be another option to explore. He also suggested having annual meetings with Presidents or campus leaders outside of HRDAC, at the same time reminding us that meaningful policy change takes time.

Recess at 4:50pm

Reconvene 10:58am on 10/24/2024

Roll was taken with one absence noted, Andy Harpst

Report of the Executive Committee:

See attached

Vice Chair Pointer also discussed a first reading to election schedule change in the constitution and bylaws Article D where the 3-5 years will now say no more than 4 years.

Lunch Break 12:15-1:15pm

Report of SUCSS Executive Director:

Noel Rowe presenting on behalf of the Executive Director. She provided a staff update on the System Office. They've hired 3 new staff since May and look forward to adding 2 more in 2025. She provided a classification update. She demonstrated how to find class updates and changes on the website. She explained that HR can request a Compensatory Qualification when a candidate does meet all the MAQ's but has relevant experience. She further explained that a candidate can request a rescoring of their exam by the System Office and that decision is binding. She provided an update on audits and demonstrated where to find audit findings on the website. She reiterated that the System Office is committed to clearing the backlog of audits by February 2025 and how they are looking at ways to improve that process.

She then provided training on the broader Civil Service System scope, beginning with how it was created and what it encompasses. She offered to provide more in-depth training at our quarterly meetings, based on the committee's needs. She also mentioned the next training for new members will be in February 2025.

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Vice Chair Pointer suggested we review our responsibilities and purpose which include, reporting, research and recommendations to the Merit Board, familiarizing ourselves with Merit Board authority, and creating a form for committee members to express their ideas.

Other Items as Presented

Discussion on the logistics on the evening activities, which include a bus trip to the National Mexican Museum of Art and a group dinner.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 3:15pm

Made by Tenea Harris, seconded by Patty Meyer

Respectfully submitted November 15,2024



Tenea Harris
Secretary



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 25th and 26th 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 18th and Friday, July 19th. 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 (DROP) During the period of the DROP member's participation in the DROP (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 DROP member, an amount equal to the monthly amount of retirement annuity the DROP member would otherwise be eligible to receive if the DROP 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

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Executive Committee Chair Report

The Executive Committee of the State Universities Civil Service Employee Advisory Committee met on April 26th, 2024, at SIU-School of Medicine. During the meeting we discussed amending our Constitution and Bylaws to include attendance at the Merit board meeting. Some EAC representatives have reported push back or difficulty obtaining approval to attend merit board meetings. The Membership Manual encourages attendance of the Merit Board meetings, but the statute is silent on attendance.

Other discussions include proposed changes to Section 1 of the Constitution and Bylaws- SUCSAC Membership. The Executive Committee is considering revising language surrounding the consistency of how the membership totals are written as well as the language surrounding how “places of employment” is written.

We also discussed whether 4 years was an appropriate term length. Considering that we only meet 4 times a year for regular meetings and the amount of information that a member must learn and understand, it was agreed that anything less than 4 years would not be sufficient. There was a general consensus that due to the commitment level required to serve as an EAC representative anything more than 4 years would be too long.

The Executive Committee did not meet during the July Meeting due to a lack of a quorum. However, on August 14th, 2024, the Executive Committee met via Zoom. The approval of the April 2024 minutes were tabled until the October meeting. The committee discussed Article C, Section 1, 1.4 of the Constitution and Bylaws, Election Schedule imbalance. Proposed changes to the language will be presented to the full body.