

**STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY MEETING**

*Wednesday, October 22, 2025*

*12:00 p.m.*

*Engbretson Hall*

*Governors State University*

*1 University Pkwy, University Park, IL 60484*

**Chair Odom called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.**

**Present:** Andy Harpst, Brad Green, Chris Doe, Christa Lawhun, Elizabeth Cheek, Heidi Skiles, Jacqueline Pointer, Jemila Burton, Jill Odom, John Evans, Layla Campos, Michael Robinson, Patty Meyer (approved meeting location), Shauna Bishop, Tenea Harris, Sheryl Jones-Harper

**Absent:** Aaron Ketchum, Andrea Hoskinson

**Guests:** SUCSAC      Brian Miller (online), Mary Serio (online)

SUCSS Staff      Gail Schiesser, Executive Director  
Brett Wawrzynk, HR Representative  
Maggie Miller, Legal Representative

GSU Staff      Susie Morris, Lachina Fuller, Bobby Stuart, Brenda Moore, Chanel Kennedy  
Bertandt, Monica Holden, Markita Alexander, Lester Moore

CSU Staff      Toni McKoy-Smith, James McGee, Wynona Haner, Sharahn Grant, Kelvin Avilez

**Public Comments:** None

**Review of Correspondence:** None

**Action Item:**

Approval of July 2025 Quarterly Meeting minutes

**Motion:** To approve July 2025 Quarterly Meeting minutes as amended

**Made by:** Elizabeth Cheek, **Seconded by:** Chris Doe

**Roll Call Vote**

Name	Aye	Nay	Name	Aye	Nay
Andy Harpst	X		Jill Odom	X	
Brad Green	X		John Evans	X	
Chris Doe	X		Layla Campos	X	
Christa Lawhun	X		Michael Robinson	X	
Elizabeth Cheek	X		Patty Meyer	X	
Heidi Skiles	X		Shauna Bishop	X	
Jacqueline Pointer	X		Sheryl Jones-Harper	X	
Jemila Burton	X		Tenea Harris	X	

**Motion Carried**

**Report of Chair:**

Chair Odom did not have a prewritten report, so she gave a short and sweet report. She recapped the last Merit Board meeting on August 19<sup>th</sup> where her report and the DER Director's report aligned on the issue of a more collaborative relationship between EAC, the DER group and the System Office. She had a meeting with Executive Director Schiesser and John Archado from NIU, where they discussed options for collaboration. EAC may begin meeting with a few members of the DER group, but details are not finalized. The next Merit Board meeting is scheduled for December 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Report of Executive Committee:**

Chair Pointer recapped activity since the last EAC meeting. The Executive Committee met on July 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss questions for our uniform Civil Service survey, to be sent out on each campus represented. They met again on August 8<sup>th</sup> to revisit the questions based on concerns raised by EAC. She acknowledged that we all have competing priorities and that has pushed back the rollout date of the survey, but we are still committed to getting the survey out as soon as possible. They will assess campus readiness when they meet tomorrow.

During discussion, there was confusion expressed surrounding the final survey format. Chair Pointer made note of the additional comments and again expressed they would iron out the details in their meeting tomorrow.

**Report of Legislative Committee:**

See attached

Change in Survivor Notification was a positive one because the survivor now has 6 months from notification from SURS to make a benefit decision instead of 6 months from time of death.

**Report of the Election Committee:**

6 Universities had open seats this fall and will be or are conducting elections.

UIUC holding election 27 October 2025 (three candidates)

UIC holding elections 11 November 2025 (two candidates)

SIU-C holding elections on 17 November 2025

GSU—No election needed. Only one candidate submitted a petition (Stephanie Juarez-Contreras).

NEIU—No election needed. Only one candidate submitted a petition (Mary Serio)

UIS—Starting election process this week

There were some questions raised about who is eligible to sign candidate petitions, so they plan to discuss that topic in their next meeting.

**Report of SUCSS Executive Director**

We continued discussion on what our role is and how to effectively communicate with the Merit Board.

The State Universities Civil Service System Office oversees employment based on merit and fitness.

EAC's role is to advise the Merit Board. As a reminder, we decided to focus on Open & Continuous Testing, Extra-Help Appointments, Salary & Compensation, and Register Maintenance.

Open & Continuous testing; fill positions ASAP for business continuation, provides broadest opportunity for applicants, efficiency in time and cost. Consistency is the key to making this rule work, but each university has put procedures in place that impedes the process. We discussed how to make these issues a

relevant matter to the Merit Board, and we participated in mock meetings to help us feel more comfortable approaching them. During this exercise, some of the most convincing points presented to the Merit Board member were stating the deficiencies in the system, clarifying the ask which is simply enforcement of the rules, stating why you joined EAC and informing that these issues are statewide.

*Break 1:45 p.m-2:05 p.m.*

The CS System provides opportunities based on merit and fitness, and the issues we've raised are impeding the process. We need them to understand the Civil Service employees run the university and need support to fulfill their duties. To do this, we need to build personal relationships with Merit Board members. We need to supply the information they need to understand how the system works so they can ask clarifying questions when DER representatives speak to the barriers they face with the CS system. For instance, HR reps consistently argue that registers are stale, and the candidates are no longer interested. If the MB understood registers, they would ask the HR rep to explain their certainty in the claim and/or provide evidence to support it.

*Break 3:15 p.m-3:38 p.m.*

Extra-Help Appointments: non-status employees, no discharge protection, no bumping rights, not required to test, 900-hour maximum, circumventing status appointments, which is the stated desire of the legislature, impedes merit and fitness, impedes opportunity, internal policies are causing barriers.

*Recess 4:41p.m.*

**STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY MEETING**

*Thursday, October 23, 2025*

*11:00 a.m.*

*Engbretson Hall*

*Governors State University*

*1 University Pkwy, University Park, IL 60484*

*Reconvene 11:03 a.m.*

**Present:** Andy Harpst, Brad Green, Chris Doe, Christa Lawhun, Elizabeth Cheek, Heidi Skiles, Jacqueline Pointer, Jill Odom, John Evans, Layla Campos, Michael Robinson, Patty Meyer (approved meeting location), Shauna Bishop, Tenea Harris, Sheryl Jones-Harper

**Absent:** Aaron Ketchum, Andrea Hoskinson, Mary Serio

**Guests:** SUCSAC      Brian Miller (online), Jemila Burton (online)

SUCSS Staff      Gail Schiesser, Executive Director  
Brett Wawrzynk, HR Representative  
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CSU Staff      Toni McKoy-Smith, James McGee, Wynona Haner, Sharahn Grant, Kelvin  
Avilez

**Executive Committee follow-up:**

Chair Pointer assessed the readiness of each campus to send out the Civil Service survey. There were a few questions raised about the final version, so she stated she would send out a clean copy today. We are hoping to send them out on 11/10, being open for 2 weeks. She will follow up with those that are not ready after 10/31.

**Report of SUCSS Executive Director continued:**

These exercises that Executive Director Schiesser has been taking us through have helped give us direction on approaching Merit Board members, and not just the ones that come from our individual campuses. We can certainly ask to speak at their meetings, but we need to go beyond that and build personal relationships. Several of them have expressed a desire to engage with EAC. We were asked to write down our plan to interact with the Merit Board and be prepared to share after lunch. It can be an individual meeting or a group meeting, if there is a meeting notice posted. Some EAC members expressed intimidation approaching the Merit Board, simply because they are viewed as authority figures. However, we need to get past that fear and just do it.

*Lunch 12:12 p.m.-1:32 p.m.*

Just start by introducing yourself and begin the conversation. Executive Director Schiesser offered to be the conduit between us. They need to know we are involved; we care, this is important to us, and it matters. Establishing a personal relationship requires work and intention, consistent effort. We should

lean on each other for support and confirmation. Here is a simple request that we can ask of the Merit Board; After stating our concern, please take this information back to your home boards and HR. It is reasonable to think that the Merit Board can ask the DER group how they help their universities operate in compliance with the Civil Service rules.

**Action Item:**

Approve 2026 Quarterly Meeting Schedule as presented

- January Quarterly Meeting
  - State Universities Civil Service System Office  
1/22-1/23 or 1/29-1/30, dependent on schedule of Mr. Jim Kvedaras and Dr. John Butler
- April Quarterly Meeting
  - Illinois State University  
4/23-4/24, possible joint meeting with DER group
- July Quarterly Meeting
  - State Universities Civil Service System Office and designated meeting locations  
7/22-7/23
- October Quarterly Meeting with Council of Councils
  - University of Illinois Springfield  
10/21-10/23

**Motion:** To approve July 2025 Quarterly Meeting minutes as amended

**Made by:** Christa Lawhun, **Seconded by:** Heidi Skiles

**Roll Call Vote**

Name	Aye	Nay	Name	Aye	Nay
Andy Harpst	X		Jill Odom	X	
Brad Green	X		John Evans	X	
Chris Doe	X		Layla Campos	X	
Christa Lawhun	X		Michael Robinson	X	
Elizabeth Cheek	X		Patty Meyer	X	
Heidi Skiles	X		Shauna Bishop	X	
Jacqueline Pointer	X		Sheryl Jones-Harper	X	
Jemila Burton	X		Tenea Harris	X	

**Motion Carried**

We were reminded that we need to consider being more open to meeting virtually. This was a request made by the HRDAC group. After discussion, we agreed that honoring this request would be a great way to open the doors to greater collaboration. We only need to post a notice at the System Office, which is the main location. Each designated meeting location must be accessible to the public and have technology required to access the meeting virtually. The total number of representatives at the SUCSS office and designated meeting locations will count towards the quorum.

**Motion to Adjourn: Shauna Bishop Seconded by: Christa Lawhun**

*A roll call vote was taken, and all were in favor.*

*Adjourned @ 3:30 p.m.*

**Respectfully submitted,**



Tenea Harris  
Secretary

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Jill Odom  
Chair

**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*

**Report of Legislative Committee**

ILGA back in session as of 10/14/25.

HB4111 - Amends Public Higher Ed Act - Requires each public institution of higher education in the State to adopt a policy that authorizes a student to withdraw from the public institution of higher education under extenuating circumstances, which shall include a provision to refund a student for tuition and fees and room and board costs paid by the student or the student's family, to be prorated, for the semester during which the student withdraws. Rules committee 10/15/25.

HB4097/4118 - Amends Public Higher Ed Act - Provides that a resident of the State who is not lawfully present in the U.S. is not eligible, on the basis of residence within the State, for any postsecondary educational benefit unless a citizen or national of the U.S. is eligible for such a benefit without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident. Provides that any benefit conferred to a nonresident of the State who is lawfully present in the U.S. may not be lesser in amount, duration, or scope than the benefit conferred to a State resident who is unlawfully present in the U.S. Rules committee 10/15/25.

HB4164 - Prohibits a public institution of higher education from entering into the federal Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education. Rules committee 10/16/25.

SB0243 - Amends Open Meetings Act - Public body may not hold/schedule meeting on an election day. Amends FOIA - electronic requests for public records must appear in their entirety within the body of the electronic submission and that no public body shall be required to open electronically attached files or hyperlinks to view or access the details of such a request. Allows, within 5 business days after its receipt of the request, a public body that has a reasonable belief that a request was not submitted by a person to require the requester to verify orally or in writing that the requester is a person. Effective 1/1/26 if passed. Passed both houses 10/15/25.

PA104-0043 (HB1149) - 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. Effective 1/1/26.

PA 104-0268 (HB3046) - University Civil Service Employee Rights - Nothing in Act prevents provisions that enhance employee rights. Effective 8/15/25.

PA 104-0284 (HB3193) - SURS Earnings - (1) requires every retirement system and pension fund to indemnify and protect trustees and staff against all damage claims and suits, including the defense thereof, when damages are sought for negligent or wrongful acts alleged to have been committed in the scope of employment or under the direction of the trustees (currently, such indemnification is permissive); (2) allows every retirement system and pension fund to indemnify and protect its consultants against all damage claims and suits, including the defense thereof, when damages are sought for negligent or wrongful acts alleged to have been committed in the scope of employment or under the direction of the trustees (currently, such indemnification is permissive); (3) provides that a survivors insurance beneficiary or their representative may waive the right to receive survivorship benefits within 6 months after SURS notifies the person of the benefits payable (instead of 6 months after the death of the participant to annuitant); (4) makes technical changes related to the SURS Tier II final average salary to reflect the corresponding provisions of Article 1 of the Illinois Pension Code; (5) requires SURS employers to pay any 6% bill within 7 years (instead of 3 years) after the employer's receipt of the bill; and (6) provides that an employer that is liable for aggregate affected annuitant contributions in excess of \$300,000 for employing the same affected annuitant during academic years 2021, 2022, and 2023 must receive a credit for said contributions made by the employer against future contributions or penalties owed to SURS to by the employer. Effective 8/15/25 for some provisions and 1/1/26 for others.

PA 104-0303 (HB3385) - Each Public College or University shall provide at least 3 licensed mental health professionals either in a part-time, on-campus capacity or a full-time, on or off-campus capacity. Effective 1/1/26.

PA 104-0433 (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 includes 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 8/22/25.

PA 104-0376 (SB1376) - Creates the Historical Cost of Attendance Disclosure Act. Requires each public or private college or university to post its cost of attendance on its website for each of the 10 academic years immediately preceding the effective date of the Act and for every academic year thereafter. Effective 1/1/26.

PA 104-0380 (SB1475) - Amends Board of Higher Ed Act and Public Community College Act - Student members who serve on Board of Higher Ed or IL Community College Board shall receive scholarship of \$500 for each semester in which student member is enrolled and serving. Effective 1/1/26.

PA 104-0402 (SB1958) - Credit Transfer Reform - Enhances transfer of academic credits between Community Colleges and State Universities. Effective 8/15/25.