



**CLOSED MINUTES OF THE TWO-HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-THIRD
MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD –
NOVEMBER 30, 2023**

**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

Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville
East St. Louis Center
601 James R. Thompson Blvd.
Building B, Room 2074
East St. Louis, IL

Governor State University
1 University Parkway
Room D34093
University Park, 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

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

Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

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; John Butler from the Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees; Ramon Cepeda from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees; Tami Craig Schilling from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees; and Jim Kvedaras from the Governors State University.

Members absent were: Jason Quiara from the Chicago State University Board of Trustees; John Simmons from the Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees; and 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.

Executive Director Schiesser stated that the purpose of the Closed Session Meeting was to discuss matters relating to discharge proceedings Number UIUC-23-4 against Jameson Fradkin by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The Merit Board discussed the case in detail. The Merit Board expressed concern about whether there was a demonstrated pattern of progressive discipline. Also, the work performance letter was issued on April 6, 2023, and the second infraction was on April 7, 2023. The record indicated the institution's position is that this is a repeated performance and, therefore, warrants termination. Some board members believed this was a situation that warrants discharge and others did not. There is a recognition within the institution that someone with a substance use disorder would be given an opportunity to correct the situation. The record also reflects that the employee accepted responsibility for her actions and was seeking an opportunity for the board to reconsider the circumstances due to the university position being so inflexible.

A discussion was held if the Merit Board could or could not support discharge.

Discussion was held regarding the case where an employee was in crisis, sought assistance, and was amenable to recovery. Some board members had an issue with the April 6 and April 7, 2023, incidents as well as the length of time to act on the first incident. Casual conversations are not necessarily progressive discipline, specifically when someone is in the health condition the employee was in. The employee has worked for the university for 12 years and has a good record up until this point. The employee did go to the employer to inform them that she had a problem and try to make them aware of the issues. She did the work and wants an opportunity to show she did the work toward her recovery.

Executive Director Schiesser advised that the Merit Board of the three options available to them:

- find just cause for discharge and discharge the employee today;
- find a lack of just cause for discharge and return the employee to service without loss of any pay or benefits; or
- reinstate the employee with a suspension of between 3 and 120 days.

Executive Director Schiesser advised that the Merit Board that if they went with the reinstatement and 120-day suspension, the employee would be put back on payroll effective October 14, 2023.

Further discussion was held regarding the options.

Executive Director Schiesser stated that the Merit Board does not have to offer advice to employers. As a governing board, a letter can be written to all the Human Resource Directors offering a position that the board expects to see a clear record of progressive discipline written and presented in the hearing record. Chair Jones added that if the board wants to see progressive discipline in the record, it is time to write a letter. This has been discussed previously and in open session, but it has not been sent to Human Resource Directors as a directive and an expectation of the Merit Board.

Discussion what held on how long an employer could give a suspension for. Executive Director Schiesser stated that the employer can give up to a 30-day disciplinary suspension without pay. This is not a one-off; this could be done a number of times. The Merit Board would need to decide at what point this became inappropriate.

A board member commented that if there has been a progressive discipline record it might have included something like that prior to coming to us. If that was the case, some board members felt the employee could have been discharged. This appears that the unit no longer wishes to work with the employee and is taking the maximum option of discharge.

Mr. Kvedaras made a motion that the Merit Board return to Open Session. Ms. Baurer seconded Mr. Kvedaras' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. KvedarasAye
Mr. QuiaraAbsent
Mr. SimmonsAbsent
Mr. WiseAbsent
Ms. BaurerAye
Dr. ButlerAye
Mr. CepedaAye
Ms. Craig SchillingAye
Chair JonesAye

The Merit Board returned to Open Session at 2:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Teresa Rademacher

Teresa Rademacher
Secretary for the Merit Board

APPROVED:

/s/ Julie Jones

Julie Jones, Chair
University Civil Service Merit Board

March 14, 2024

Date