



**MINUTES OF THE TWO-HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-EIGHTH  
MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD –  
AUGUST 19, 2025**

State Universities Civil Service System  
1717 Philo Road, Suite 24  
Urbana, IL

Northern Illinois University  
Altgeld Hall, Room 125  
DeKalb, IL

Chicago State University  
Gwendolyn Brooks Library  
Conference Room 352  
9501 South King Drive  
Chicago, IL

Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville  
School of Dental Medicine  
2800 College Ave.  
Alumni Conference Room, Room B273  
Alton, IL

Governors State University  
1 University Parkway  
Room C3322  
University Park, IL

University of Illinois at Chicago  
Discovery Partners Institute  
200 S Wacker Drive  
Conference Room 702  
Chicago, IL

Illinois State University  
718 W. College Avenue  
Room NSB 101A  
Normal, IL

*Also, via live stream at the following address: <https://multimedia.illinois.gov/sucss/sucss-live.html>*

**Call to Order and Roll Call – John Butler, Chair**

Chair Butler called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm.

Members present at the State Universities Civil Service System (University System) and posted designated sites were: John Butler, Chair, from the Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees; Barb Baurer from the Eastern Illinois University Board of Trustees; Carolyn Blackwell from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees; Ramon Cepeda from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees; Tami Craig Schilling from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees; Jim Kvedaras from the Governors State University Board of Trustees; Kisha Lang from the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees (joined at 1:45); J. Todd Phillips from the Northeastern Illinois University Board of Trustees; Jason Quiara from the Chicago State University Board of Trustees; and John Simmons from the Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees.

Member absent was Robert Navarro from the Illinois State University Board of Trustees.

Gail Schiesser, Executive Director; Maggie Miller, Legal Counsel; and Teresa Rademacher, Secretary for the Merit Board, were also present. Various other university employees and University System staff were also in attendance.

**Consideration of participation by other Merit Board Members not physically present at the meeting site**

All members were physically present at a designated meeting site.

**Approval of the Agenda for the 228<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Merit Board – John Butler, Chair**

Chair Butler asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the agenda for the 228<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Merit Board. Mr. Kvedaras seconded Mr. Simmons' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws and the Open Meetings Act, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Simmons .....	Aye
Ms. Baurer .....	Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....	Aye
Chair Butler .....	Aye
Mr. Cepeda .....	Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....	Aye
Mr. Kvedaras .....	Aye
Dr. Lang .....	Absent
Mr. Navarro .....	Absent
Mr. Phillips .....	Aye
Mr. Quiara .....	Aye

**Consideration of the Minutes of the 227<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Merit Board, April 22, 2025**

Mr. Simmons made a motion to approve the Minutes of the 227<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the University Civil Service Merit Board. Ms. Blackwell seconded Ms. Simmons' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws and the Open Meetings Act, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Simmons .....	Aye
Ms. Baurer .....	Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....	Aye
Chair Butler .....	Aye
Mr. Cepeda .....	Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....	Aye
Mr. Kvedaras .....	Aye
Mr. Navarro .....	Absent

Dr. Lang .....Absent  
Mr. Phillips .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara.....Aye

## **Public Comments**

Executive Director Schiesser stated the University System had received two requests for public comments: Nicholas Jones, Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Kevin Booker, Police Chief at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

### **Dr. Nicholas Jones, Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs**

Dr. Jones stated that he was asking for the Board's support in modernizing the civil service statutes, rules, and regulations to better reflect the realities of the modern workplace. The reality is that our employment rules and processes for the civil service workforce are governed by statutes that reflect a 1950s-era working environment.

He stated that the University of Illinois is the leader in developing cutting-edge technology such as Witness Netscape, the LED light, and the first supercomputer. He said that it seems impossible to move the needle on innovating changes to a 73-year-old set of rules and regulations.

Dr. Jones stated that last fall, the U of I system enrolled more than 97,000 students, representing a record for the university and an increase of 22% in the last decade. They enrolled 53% of the state's public university students, and they produce about 27,000 graduates every year. About 80% of the undergraduates are from the state of Illinois, contrasting with the Big Ten average of about 61%. The graduation rates consistently are higher than national averages at 76% system-wide, and three out of four graduates choose to stay in Illinois after graduation, contributing to the communities in numerous ways. Nationally, the university is anticipating a steep decline in high school graduates as the population demographics shift. He further stated that it still is clear that the universities simply cannot afford to continue with procedures that are dated and ineffective and he encourages the board to take the steps necessary to help sustain the level of success.

### **Mr. Kevin Booker, Chief of Police at the University of Illinois at Chicago**

Chief Booker stated that all the chiefs at the meeting have over 300 years of law enforcement experience, which includes recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers. He further stated that there had been no progress since the last meeting back in April and if there had been some, the chiefs were not aware of it. The Executive Director sent the Chiefs an email outlining her continued research and her staff shortage recently. Chief Booker said that the Chiefs understood staff shortages, but when they have staff shortages, it deals with the safety of people, the safety of their campus which is a huge priority.

He stated that the chiefs were looking to remove the oral boards, remove the written assessment, and make the exam a credential assessment and to work together in the process. Chief Booker said that as law enforcement has evolved over the years, that they have had to change. Chief Booker provided the Board with two examples. The first example was almost 30 years ago when he attended the Law Enforcement Academy and learned the use of force. They

even taught chokeholds back then. He said they taught the knee on the back, which is no longer the standard.

The second example was tattoos and facial hair. That when he first got into law enforcement you had to have long sleeves if you had a tattoo to cover it up. He also said that no one could have facial hair, had to be clean-shaven. He stated that when he rose through the ranks, he felt a certain way about it, but as a leader, it wasn't about me, it was about the good of the organization, the good of the process.

Her further stated that the chiefs understood that the process takes time, but they will continue to show up at the board meetings until progress is made. The chiefs feel that what they are proposing will enhance efficiency in the hiring and the recruitment process and save money hundreds of thousands of dollars that the Merit Board will save. The chiefs are trying to modernize the process to stay competitive in this world.

He concluded by saying that the Executive Director says she is conducting research, but chiefs and HR directors would not be privy to any of her research, and she is going to decide on how they move forward in our recruitment and hiring process. He further stated that he hopes the Merit Board reviews that information, the research that is being gathered, before they approve any police testing. He said that there is information from the DOJ and the federal government that highlights things, it's called recruitment retention for modern law enforcement agencies. Chief Booker said we shouldn't be writing paper tests, it should be computerized

Ms. Craig Schilling asked Chief Booker to describe the involvement or discussions that the chiefs have been involved in since the last meeting. Chief Booker stated that after the last Merit Board meeting, a meeting was called in Urbana. HR directors were also invited, and the chiefs outlined their proposals. Since that the meeting the only communication they had received was an email stating the University System was short-staffed and they were continuing research.

Ms. Blackwell asked for clarity on the plan for moving forward and making some progress on this topic. Executive Director Schiesser stated that the meeting was held in mid-May with the chiefs and the HR directors and the plan is to finish the research and then talk to the chiefs and the HR staff again. We will call another meeting with the chiefs and the HR directors and then present something to the Merit Board. Ms. Blackwell stated she would like to see progress before the next Merit Board meeting.

### **Report of the Designated Employer Representative Group – John Acardo, DER for the Northern Illinois University**

Mr. Acardo stated that he wanted to reaffirm the previously communicated ideas that have come up with for modernizing the program. They include expanding access by allowing out-of-state residents to pursue employment opportunities in Illinois, ensure better alignment of candidate skills and positions by removing the need to score experiences when they're not relevant, increase candidate opportunities by broadening the number of referred to hiring officials, modernizing extra help to provide greater agility for short-term hiring needs, developing opportunities for grant and project-funded employment to better support research and innovation. Again, these ideas remain central for the DER vision for a system that achieves the

aims of the civil service system by ensuring employment protections and by being responsive to the evolving needs of higher education. But within this framework, however, there is a clear and actionable opportunity to accelerate our shared modernized goals by simplifying routine processes, especially where unnecessary complexity slows down hiring and service delivery.

He recognizes that campuses are at different stages of automation, streamlining and enhancing these processes is essential to improving efficiency and responsiveness. At the same time, these efforts will reinforce compliance and procedural integrity, as highlighted by EAC, as an area needing attention. Additionally, focus on automating routine notifications and recurring reports, monthly, quarterly, and annual.

He further stated that we should prioritize reducing specialty factors requests, salary range updates, and even extensions for extra help, areas that have become increasingly cumbersome. By simplifying these steps, the universities could deliver faster, more flexible service without compromising compliance. He concluded that he proposes a small working group to collaborate with the University System and EAC, comprised of DER, University System, and EAC members to identify friction points, to develop standard templates and decision criteria, and then to pilot improvements with the University System

Chair Butler asked if there was a good basis for support within the DER group for the work that Mr. Acardo had described. Mr. Acardo stated there was an opportunity for them to work together on some of the smaller items, which are creating efficiencies within our system that respect compliance and integrity, but also improve efficiency. He said he had spoken with NIU's EAC representative and Executive Director Schiesser and that there is an opportunity to begin having broader conversations collectively with these three groups to be able to talk about some of the ways in which we can collaborate where we have agreement and move forward in some of the broader and more complex changes once those have been facilitated.

Executive Director Schiesser commented the University System welcomes the opportunity to enter a meaningful dialogue with the DERs regarding ways to improve the University System.

### **Report of the State Universities Employee Advisory Committee – Jill Odom, Chair**

Ms. Odom stated EAC is made up of 20 individuals who represent each of the universities and the State Universities Retirement System. Twenty individuals from varying civil service classifications bring unique perspectives that only a civil service employee can provide. She stated that EAC represents over 30,000 Civil Service Employees across the state, and each of them takes their duty and responsibility very seriously.

Ms. Odom said the committee meets quarterly throughout the year at various locations around the state to discuss and work on matters related to civil service employment. The January meeting has always been held at the University System. Executive Director Schiesser continues to provide the committee with knowledge and insight into their goals, challenges, and successes. Three times a year, the committee rotates their meetings across the state, giving them the opportunity to gain knowledge and insight into unique characteristics of each of the institutions and the civil service employees they represent. It's an opportunity for each institution to spotlight their campus and to hear directly from that DER, and/or leadership. It also gives the Merit Board

the opportunity to join them when they meet. These opportunities are important for continuing collaboration between EAC, the Merit Board, and the universities.

She stated that open and continuous testing, extra help, salary and compensation, and register maintenance are main concerns. These topics are of great importance to the civil service employees and have always been a goal to find solutions that benefit employees without diminishing their rights or protections.

The committee would like to resume meeting with the HR Directors to continue working towards finding solutions. Change can be good, but never at the expense of fitness and merit, at the expense of civil service protections, or at the expense of timely hiring, promotional opportunities, and retention.

The committee's next meeting is at Governors State University on October 22 and 23. She invited Chair Butler and Merit Board members to join. Each of your EAC Representatives has examples of how internal practices at each of our universities have hampered processes. Civil Service rules are in place to protect employee rights, to provide for a fair and equitable hiring process, and to ensure that the universities have the personnel resources that they need to fulfill their missions. EAC believes that we can and will find solutions that achieve all of our goals and build stronger relationships.

### **Consideration of Two Discharge Proceedings**

#### **Introduction of Discharge Proceeding Number ISAC-25-1, Illinois Student Assistance Commission v. Shumika Mobley**

Chair Butler asked Ms. Miller to provide a statement for both of the discharge cases on the agenda before the Merit Board took action to go into close session.

Ms. Miller stated that the Illinois Student Assistant Commission (ISAC) filed Written Charges for Discharge against Shumika Mobley on February 27, 2025. Ms. Mobley timely submitted a request for a hearing on March 11, 2025, and later waived her right to have a hearing within the 45-day requirement. The hearing took place on April 10, 2025, under Hearing Officer Lorna Geiler. Ms. Mobley began her employment at ISAC on January 17, 2023, as a Financial Aid Representative and remained in that classification throughout her tenure at ISAC.

Ms. Mobley was primarily assigned to the Applicant Services Division, but due to staffing needs, she was also assigned at the time of her hire to assist in the call center. Since Ms. Mobley's duties encompassed what were typically two separate roles, ISAC provided her with a schedule outlining which tasks she was expected to do at which time of day throughout the workday.

ISAC filed four charges, three of which stem from the core allegation that Ms. Mobley did not adhere to the schedule which she was to be working at which times. ISAC charts show that Ms. Mobley repeatedly took breaks longer than the policy permitted, that she repeatedly missed calls when she was expected to be assisting the call center, and that she repeatedly arrived at work after her scheduled start time. ISAC presented data generated by the call center software and the testimony of two supervisors who oversaw Ms. Mobley in her dual role.

ISAC also presented evidence of progressive discipline related to Ms. Mobley's adherence to her task schedule in the form of an oral warning, a written warning, and an unpaid suspension. Ms. Mobley did not refute the majority of ISAC's evidence. Instead, she testified to the efforts she made to perform tasks as directed and to ensure she was at her workstation as expected. ISAC's fourth charge alleged that Ms. Mobley fell asleep during a staff meeting, and Ms. Mobley did not deny this, but testified that at that time, staff meetings were monotone and lecture-like.

The hearing officer found that ISAC sustained its burden of proof via credible un rebutted testimony on three of the four charges for discharge, particularly noting with regards to the charge that Ms. Mobley repeatedly arrived to work after her scheduled start time, that the employer presented evidence that showed Ms. Mobley repeatedly logged into the system late, but did not present evidence regarding the time at which Ms. Mobley arrived at work. Since the evidence presented did not support the charge as written, the hearing officer found the employer did not sustain the burden of proof on that charge.

### **Introduction of Discharge Proceeding Number UIUC-25-8, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign v. Robert King**

Chair Butler asked Ms. Miller to present a summary of the Robert King discharge.

Ms. Miller stated that the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, or UIUC, filed written charges for discharge against Robert King on April 25, 2025. Mr. King submitted his request for a hearing on May 1, 2025, and the hearing was convened on May 29, 2025, by purview of Hearing Officer Harriet Parker.

Mr. King began his employment at UIUC on April 16, 2023, as a Building Service Worker. He remained in that classification throughout his tenure at UIUC. The university submitted three charges for events that occurred in a six-week period between February and March 2025. These charges include taking an unauthorized break in an unauthorized area, being found in a non-alert position, and failing to complete a job task. During the hearing, the parties reached 10 stipulations regarding the underlying events and the university's approach to progressive discipline. Given their stipulations, there appears to be no significant dispute as to the underlying events, but the parties differ as to their tone, characterization, and context of those events, and ultimately, as to whether the events amount to just cause for discharge. In summary of their respective positions, Mr. King testified to health conditions that he and his wife experienced during the time period at issue and the impact that those conditions had on his work performance. He also spoke about the medical treatment he sought and the efforts he made to communicate his treatment plan to the university. The university submitted evidence of management's efforts to remind Mr. King of their expectations throughout the time period at issue and argued in summary that, though they were sympathetic to Mr. King's situation, his behaviors became a pattern that would justify discharge, and they have an obligation to preserve public funds and ensure that employees are held to a standard of accountability.

Absent a dispute as to the underlying facts, the hearing officer, Harriet Parker, found that the university sustained its burden of proof on each charge.

### **Closed Session**

Mr. Philips made a motion that the Merit Board go into Closed Session to discuss the two discharge cases. Mr. Simmons seconded Mr. Phillips' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws and Open Meetings Act, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Phillips .....	Aye
Mr. Quiara .....	Aye
Mr. Simmons .....	Aye
Ms. Baurer .....	Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....	Aye
Chair Butler .....	Aye
Mr. Cepeda .....	Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....	Aye
Mr. Kvedaras .....	Aye
Dr. Lang .....	Aye
Mr. Navarro .....	Absent

The Merit Board went into a Closed Session at 1:55 pm.

### **Return to Open Session**

The Merit Board returned to Open Session at 2:57 pm.

### **Consideration of Discharge Proceeding Number ISAC-25-1, Illinois Student Assistance Commission v. Shumika Mobley**

Chair Butler stated that the Merit Board needed to adopt a Decision and Order regarding the Mobley discharge case.

Mr. Kvedaras made a motion to discharge Shumika Mobley. Ms. Craig Schilling seconded Mr. Kvedaras' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws and Open Meetings Act, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Kvedaras .....	Aye
Dr. Lang .....	Abstain
Mr. Navarro .....	Absent
Mr. Phillips .....	Aye
Mr. Quiara .....	Aye
Mr. Simmons .....	Aye
Ms. Baurer .....	Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....	Aye
Chair Butler .....	Aye
Mr. Cepeda .....	Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....	Aye



Therefore, the following Decision and Order of the University Civil Service Merit Board was adopted.



**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM**

<b>ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION, )</b>	<b>BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE</b>
<b>Employer, )</b>	<b>MERIT BOARD</b>
<b>v. )</b>	
<b>SHUMIKA MOBLEY, )</b>	<b>DISCHARGE PROCEEDING</b>
<b>Employee. )</b>	<b>No. ISAC-25-1</b>

**DECISION AND ORDER OF THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD**

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

Discharge proceedings have been commenced by **ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**, employer, against **SHUMIKA MOBLEY**, employee, by service of Written Charges for Discharge by overnight service, on February 27, 2025, and the employee, **SHUMIKA MOBLEY**, has filed a timely written request for a Hearing. A Hearing was duly convened, held, and concluded on April 10, 2025, in conformity with the procedures set forth in Section 250.110(f) of the Illinois Administrative Code (Code) (80 Ill. Adm. Code §250.110(f)). The complete Hearing Record has been certified and placed on file in this cause.

**FINDINGS**

The University Civil Service Merit Board has examined and reviewed the Hearing Record, as supplemented, which includes the following:

1. Written Charges for Discharge, dated February 27, 2025
2. Suspension Notice Pending Discharge, dated February 27, 2025
3. Employee's Request for Hearing, received on March 11, 2025
4. Acknowledgement of Hearing Request, dated March 13, 2025
5. Notice of Appointment as Hearing Officer and Notice of Convening of Hearing to the Hearing Officer, dated March 21, 2025
6. Notice of Convening of Hearing to the parties of record, dated March 21, 2025
7. Order Regarding Procedures for Remote Hearing, dated March 24, 2025
8. Employer's Entry of Appearance, received April 5, 2025
9. Transcript, April 10, 2025, Hearing

10. Exhibits admitted into Record at Hearing, April 10, 2025
11. Request for Findings of Fact from Hearing Officer, dated May 15, 2025
12. Findings of Fact rendered by Hearing Officer, dated May 21, 2025

Now being fully advised of the matters contained in the Hearing Record, as supplemented, and based solely on the matters contained in the Hearing Record, as supplemented, the University Civil Service Merit Board makes the following jurisdictional and factual findings and issues the following Decision and Order:

**DECISION AND ORDER**

**WHEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

1. The Findings of Fact of the Hearing Officer, attached hereto, are approved and certified to the employer, **ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANT COMMISSION**, to the extent not inconsistent with the findings made herein.
2. The employee, **SHUMIKA MOBLEY**, is hereby separated from the service of her employer, **ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANT COMMISSION**, and the effective date of her discharge shall be August 19, 2025.
3. This Order is FINAL and is subject to the Administrative Review Law. Section 250 of Title 80 of the Illinois Administrative Code does not authorize the Merit Board to hear any motion or request for reconsideration.
4. The names of the Hearing Officer and each of the parties is as follows:

**Hearing Officer**

Ms. Kathryn Cataldo  
Attorney at Law

Ms. Lisa Murphy-Coveny  
Attorney at Law

**Parties of Record**

Ms. Shumika Mobley  
Employee

**DATED AND ENTERED** this 19<sup>th</sup> day of August 2025.

**UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD**

By: /s/John Butler  
John Butler, Chair  
University Civil Service Merit Board

ATTEST:

/s/ Teresa Rademacher

Teresa Rademacher

Secretary for the Merit Board

**Consideration of Discharge Proceedings Number UIUC-25-8, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign v. Robert King**

Chair Butler stated that the Merit Board needed to adopt a Decision and Order regarding the King discharge case.

Mr. Phillips made a motion to reinstate Robert King. Mr. Simmons seconded Mr. Phillips' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws and Open Meetings Act, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Mr. Phillips .....Aye  
Mr. Quiara .....Aye  
Mr. Simmons .....Aye  
Ms. Baurer .....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....No  
Chair Butler .....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda .....No  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....No  
Mr. Kvedaras .....Abstain  
Dr. Lang .....Aye  
Mr. Navarro .....Absent

Therefore, the following Decision and Order of the University Civil Service Merit Board was adopted.



**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM**

<b>UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT</b>	)	<b>BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE</b>
<b>URBANA-CHAMPAIGN,</b>	)	<b>MERIT BOARD</b>
<b>Employer,</b>	)	
<b>v.</b>	)	
<b>ROBERT KING,</b>	)	<b>DISCHARGE PROCEEDING</b>
<b>Employee.</b>	)	<b>No. UIUC-25-8</b>

**DECISION AND ORDER OF THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD**

### **PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

Discharge proceedings have been commenced by the **UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**, employer, against **ROBERT KING**, employee, by service of Written Charges for Discharge by overnight service, on April 25, 2025, and the employee, **ROBERT KING**, has filed a timely written request for a Hearing. A Hearing was duly convened, held, and concluded on May 29, 2025, in conformity with the procedures set forth in Section 250.110(f) of the Illinois Administrative Code (Code) (80 Ill. Adm. Code §250.110(f)). The complete Hearing Record has been certified and placed on file in this cause.

### **FINDINGS**

The University Civil Service Merit Board has examined and reviewed the Hearing Record, as supplemented, which includes the following:

1. Written Charges for Discharge, dated April 25, 2025
2. Suspension Notice Pending Discharge, dated April 25, 2025
3. Employee's Request for Hearing, received on May 1, 2025
4. Acknowledgement of Hearing Request, dated May 7, 2025
5. Notice of Appointment as Hearing Officer and Notice of Convening of Hearing to the Hearing Officer, dated May 12, 2025
6. Notice of Convening of Hearing to the parties of record, dated May 12, 2025
7. Order Regarding Procedures for Remote Hearing, dated May 15, 2025
8. Transcript, May 29, 2025, Hearing
9. Exhibits admitted into Record at Hearing, May 29, 2025
10. Request for Findings of Fact from Hearing Officer, dated June 24, 2025
11. Findings of Fact rendered by Hearing Officer, dated July 9, 2025

Now being fully advised of the matters contained in the Hearing Record, as supplemented, and based solely on the matters contained in the Hearing Record, as supplemented, the University Civil Service Merit Board makes the following jurisdictional and factual findings and issues the following Decision and Order:

1. That this discharge proceeding has been commenced and conducted in compliance with Section 250.110(f) of the Code and all applicable State and

Federal Laws and that the University Civil Service Merit Board has jurisdiction of the parties and subject matter thereof.

2. That the Hearing Record, as supplemented, does not support and sustain one or more of the charges of the employer, **UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**, against the employee, **ROBERT KING**, and/or the charges as proven by said employer, fail to establish just cause for discharge.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

#### **WHEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

1. The Findings of Fact of the Hearing Officer, attached hereto, are approved and certified to the employer, **UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**, to the extent not inconsistent with the findings made herein.
2. The employee, **ROBERT KING**, shall immediately be reassigned to perform the duties in a position in his classification without loss of compensation.
3. This Order is FINAL and is subject to the Administrative Review Law. Section 250 of Title 80 of the Illinois Administrative Code does not authorize the Merit Board to hear any motion or request for reconsideration.
4. The names of the Hearing Officer and each of the parties is as follows:

#### **Hearing Officer**

Mr. Seth Baker  
Attorney at Law

#### **Parties of Record**

Mr. Robert King  
Employee

**DATED AND ENTERED** this 19<sup>th</sup> day of August 2025.

#### **UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD**

By: /s/John Butler  
John Butler, Chair  
University Civil Service Merit Board

ATTEST:  
/s/ Teresa Rademacher  
Teresa Rademacher  
Secretary for the Merit Board

## **Consideration of the FY 2027 Budget Recommendation for the State Universities Civil Service System**

Executive Director Schiesser stated the budgeting process in the Illinois higher education community begins with submitting the agency's budget proposal to the Illinois Board of Higher Education by October 15. During the agency's testimony before the Appropriation Committee in the Spring of 2025, members of the Appropriation Committee felt two things. First, our agency was seriously understaffed, and second, the salaries for our employees in the Compliance and Classification, Examination, and Compensation divisions were significantly below market wages. In the time since those hearings, the agency has been researching salaries for comparably placed employees, and as a result, the agency will be adjusting our salary ranges for those groups. The agency also made substantial adjustments to the salaries for the employees in these areas to better reflect current market conditions. In addition, the agency is seeking to add another full-time staff member to our classification and examination group, as well as refilling a recently vacated position for FY 2026.

Most of the increase the agency is seeking for FY 2027 is to maintain salary improvements and build our skilled staff. Other increases are market adjustments for consumables and services that the agency uses. The agency asked the Merit Board to approve the budget proposal of \$1,745,000 for FY 2027, which will allow us to continue to respond to the pointed feedback the agency received from legislatures in the Spring 2025 and to better fulfill our legislative mission.

Ms. Baurer stated she had concerns regarding the size of the increase of 15.6% and wanted more discussion about the need for that amount of an increase. Executive Director Schiesser responded that 15% of our budget is substantially different from 15% of any of the universities' budgets. The agency is looking for an increase of \$245,000. A similar percentage increase at any of the universities would be markedly more than that. In addition, the agency has been underfunded in the past. Our appropriations did not keep pace with the increases in percentage that the universities. Our current budget is around \$1,500,000, that's substantially lower than any similarly placed regulatory agency in the state. As to additional staffing, the agency intends to fill two positions in the Classification, Examination, and Compensation division. This will be writing job specifications, position specifications, examinations, and test rubrics. The positions that they're in are currently in our HR line and the agency is working on a different class series because the Human Resource series doesn't reflect what the Classification, Examination, and Compensation division does. We're working on a regulatory line that will better reflect the work of these employees.

Mr. Phillips asked for an explanation about how additional resources will help the University System. Executive Director Schiesser stated this is a qualitative change, more work rather than the same work more quickly. For example, right now the agency has three people in the Classification, Examination, and Compensation division; they can accommodate two classifications at one time, with an additional two, which will double their capacity once they're

oriented. The agency presently has 874 classifications in the class plan, with a current request for modification or new classifications of over 100 classes.

Executive Director Schiesser stated that the agency's appropriation has been a lump sum budget for the past several years.

Mr. Kvedaras made a motion to approve the budget request FY 2027 budget request of \$1,745,500. Mr. Simmons 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. Kvedaras .....	Aye
Dr. Lang .....	Aye
Mr. Navarro.....	Absent
Mr. Phillips .....	Aye
Mr. Quiara .....	Aye
Mr. Simmons.....	Aye
Ms. Baurer.....	Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....	Aye
Chair Butler .....	Aye
Mr. Cepeda.....	Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....	Aye

### **Consideration to increase the fee for a Hearing Officer for the services of Discharge/Demotion Hearings**

Executive Director Schiesser stated that Hearing officers are paid far below market scale for their services. A typical payment for a hearing day or a day where a hearing officer would prepare findings of fact would be something closer to the neighborhood of \$2,500 or \$3,000.

The Merit Board passed a set of criteria where hearing officers have to be experienced as a neutral, either a mediator or an arbitrator, or a hearing officer in labor matters, and a member of an arbitration board. We're required to convene a hearing within 45 days of the service of the written charges for discharge, sometimes, that will impose restrictions on who's available to serve at the hearing for us.

Mr. Kvedaras made a motion to approve the increase of the fee for hearing officers to \$1,200 per hearing day, with a maximum of \$3,600 for the entire hearing or \$750 for hearings that settle or are otherwise canceled within five days of the scheduled hearing date. Mr. Simmons 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. Kvedaras .....	Aye
Dr. Lang .....	Aye
Mr. Navarro.....	Absent
Mr. Phillips .....	Aye

Mr. Quiara .....Aye  
Mr. Simmons .....Aye  
Ms. Baurer .....Aye  
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye  
Chair Butler .....Aye  
Mr. Cepeda .....Aye  
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye

**Classification, Examination, and Compensation review of recent activities and Governance, Risk, and Compliance Audit Program review of recent activities – Liz Borman**

Ms. Borman stated that the University System had prioritized research on industry standards and proven practices regarding pre-employment examinations of law enforcement. The agency is completing their research and will share their findings once their review is complete.

The agency is focusing on systematically reviewing classifications that have been identified for revision and requests for new classes. Currently, they have approximately 100 classifications on this list for further analysis. The team is also revising two classification series and developing a new series for a total of 10 classifications in the process of revision or development.

The agency is also giving attention to methods to improve how they craft examination questions and scoring rubrics. The Classification, Examination, and Compensation division has also been training and modifying processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Since the last Merit Board meeting, the division has processed five intern appointments, four contract appointments, 10 requests for compensatory qualifications, 70 student appointments, five requests for extra help extensions, nine requests for rescores and rechecks of examinations, one request for a courtesy score, and 38 requests for specialty factors, with 26 approved and 12 denied.

Ms. Borman reported that the Compliance Team has been working to extensively revamp the audit process. The agency has been conducting extensive staff training, including reviewing and revising the pending audit reports. The team has also reviewed the topics they will be examining and the records that will be requested from employers and reviewed during the audit process. This will allow for objective reports that provide useful information to the employers.

The team will begin using a new software for the agency called SuraLink. This is a cloud-based audit platform. This technology will provide a system to streamline data transfer and improve collaboration between this agency and the employers being audited. The team has been configuring SuraLink. This process has included developing new templates for initial data requests, which will allow the team to efficiently identify samples for further examination for compliance with the Act, rules, and procedures. The division is looking forward to launching the next round of audits soon.



## **Report of the Executive Director – Gail Schiesser**

Executive Director Schiesser stated that the Classification, Examination, and Compensation division was down two members. One is on a long-term leave of absence and another employee resigned to take a higher-paying job at another state agency. For FY 2025, the agency lapsed approximately \$290,000. \$100,000 of that was money that had been appropriated for police testing. The agency has currently expended \$127,566 in the FY 2026 budget.

The agency is still conducting research on police testing regarding current practices and industry standards and once this has been completed, we will communicate with both the Chiefs, HR, and the Merit Board.

## **Report of Legal Counsel – Maggie Miller**

Ms. Miller stated that there is one pending administrative review court case. In the matter of Vincent Bradford vs. Merit Board, case number 2021CH261 in Cook County. On December 10, 2020, the Merit Board discharged Mr. Bradford from his employment at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Mr. Bradford filed a complaint for administrative review in the Circuit Court of Cook County, which was ultimately dismissed on July 7, 2023, for failure to name and serve all necessary parties. Mr. Bradford appealed the dismissal of his complaint and on May 14, 2025, the Appellate Court entered an order affirming the trial court's dismissal of Mr. Bradford's second amended complaint.

On June 11, 2025, Mr. Bradford filed a petition for rehearing and on June 27, the Appellate Court denied his request for rehearing for lack of jurisdiction. On July 24, Mr. Bradford wrote a letter to the Supreme Court of Illinois requesting a reversal of the Appellate Court's most recent order and on August 18, 2025, the University System received a new motion for Mr. Bradford filed before the Supreme Court of Illinois requesting leave to appeal.

The University has not received anything from the Supreme Court or any other party to this matter responsive to Mr. Bradford's recent filings. The Office of the Illinois Attorney General will continue to represent the Merit Board and the University System in this matter.

Also, for FY 2025, 45 written charges for discharge that were served on employees from the various universities and agencies. Of those 45, eight requests for a hearing were received. Following is a breakdown of the actions:

- 2 *Employee Resigned before the Hearing – (UIUC v. Strayn; UIC v. Mallin)*
- 1 *Settlement Agreements during the Hearing – (CSU v. Bush)*
- 4 *Discharged – (GSU v. Denault, EIU v. Janosik, UIUC v. Wyatt – failure to appear at hearing; ISAC v. Mobley)*
- 1 *Reinstated – (UIUC v. King)*

### **Other Items as presented**

Chair Butler stated that the next meeting of the board is scheduled for November 4, 2025.

Ms. Blackwell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Lang seconded Ms. Blackwell's motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

Ms. Blackwell .....	Aye
Chair Butler .....	Aye
Mr. Cepeda.....	Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....	Aye
Mr. Kvedaras .....	Aye
Dr. Lang .....	Aye
Mr. Navarro.....	Absent
Mr. Phillips .....	Aye
Mr. Quiara .....	Aye
Mr. Simmons .....	Aye
Ms. Baurer.....	Aye

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Teresa Rademacher*

Teresa Rademacher  
Secretary for the Merit Board

APPROVED:

*/s/ John Butler*

John Butler, Chair  
University Civil Service Merit Board

December 9, 2025

Date