MINUTES OF THE TWO-HUNDRED-AND-THIRTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD – AUGUST 19, 2026

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

Illinois State University
718 W. College Avenue
Room NSB 209
Normal, IL

Northern Illinois University
Altgeld Hall, Room 203
DeKalb, IL

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

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

Call to Order and Roll Call – John Butler, Chair

Chair Butler called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.

Members present at the State Universities Civil Service System (University System or agency) and posted designated sites were: John Butler, Chair, Jose Alba, Barb Baurer (left at 3:45 pm), Carolyn Blackwell, Ramon Cepeda, Tami Craig Schilling (arrived at 1:15 pm), Jim Kvedaras, Robert Navarro, J. Todd Phillips, Jason Quiara, and John Simmons.

No members were absent.

Gail Schiesser, Executive Director; Maggie Miller, Legal Counsel; and Jennifer Miles, Secretary for the Merit Board, were also present.

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

Chair Butler stated that Mr. Quiara was unable to participate at one of the meeting locations due to a work commitment. As required by the Open Meetings Act, the Merit Board took action to allow him to participate at a non-public site.

Mr. Kvedaras moved to approve Mr. Quiara's participation in the meeting at a non-public site due to work commitments. Mr. Simmons seconded Mr. Kvedaras' 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. Kvedaras .....Aye
Dr. Navarro.....Aye
Mr. Phillips .....Aye

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

Welcome new Merit Board member from Western Illinois University, Jose Alba

Chair Butler welcomed Mr. Alba from the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees.

Approval of the Agenda for the 231st Meeting of the Merit Board – John Butler, Chair

Chair Butler asked for a motion to approve the agenda for August 19, 2026. Mr. Simmons moved to approve the agenda for the 231st 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
Mr. Alba.....Aye
Ms. Baurer.....Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye
Chair Butler .....Aye
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent
Mr. Kvedaras.....Aye
Dr. Navarro.....Aye
Mr. Phillips .....Aye
Mr. Quiara.....Aye

Consideration of the Minutes of the 230th Meeting of the Merit Board, March 10, 2026

Chair Butler asked for action to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2026, meeting. Mr. Simmons moved to approve the Minutes of the 230th Meeting of the University Civil Service 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
Mr. Alba.....Aye
Ms. Baurer.....Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye
Chair Butler .....Aye

Mr. Cepeda.....Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Absent
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye
Dr. Navarro.....Aye
Mr. Phillips .....Aye
Mr. Quiara.....Aye

Consideration of the Closed Minutes of the 230th Meeting of the Merit Board, March 10, 2026

Chair Butler asked for action to approve and release the closed minutes from the March 10, 2026, meeting. Mr. Simmons moved to approve and release the Closed Minutes of the 230th Meeting of the University Civil Service Merit Board. Mr. Quiara 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.....Abstain
Mr. Alba.....Aye
Ms. Baurer.....Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye
Chair Butler .....Aye
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye
Dr. Navarro.....Aye
Mr. Phillips .....Aye
Mr. Quiara.....Aye

Consideration of the Executive Committee Meeting of January 30, 2026

Chair Butler asked for action to approve the minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on January 30, 2026. Mr. Kvedaras moved to approve the Executive Committee Minutes of the University Civil Service Merit Board of January 30, 2026. Mr. Simmons seconded Mr. Kvedaras' 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. Kvedaras .....Aye
Dr. Navarro.....Aye
Mr. Phillips .....Aye
Mr. Quiara.....Aye
Mr. Simmons.....Abstain
Mr. Alba.....Aye
Ms. Baurer.....Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye
Chair Butler .....Aye
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye

Report of the Designated Employer Representative Group – Jami Painter, DER Representative for the University of Illinois System

Jami Painter, Senior Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer for the University of Illinois System, stated that as representatives of the Higher Education HR leadership community, it is a strong belief that the principles at the heart of the State Universities Civil Service System, merit, fairness, consistency, and transparency, remain as important today as when the system was established. Preserving those principles does not require preserving every process developed more than seven decades ago.

She urged the Board to consider how fundamentally the world of work has changed since the Act was adopted in 1952. The institutions now compete nationally and increasingly globally for talent. Candidates expect hiring processes that are digital, intuitive, responsive, and timely. Entire professions and highly specialized roles exist today that could not have been contemplated when many of these underlying processes were created. Yet many of the processes governing how we recruit, assess, refer, and hire employees remain rooted in a very different employment environment. This is no longer simply a question of administrative efficiency. It's becoming a question of institutional capacity. Every unnecessary step has a consequence. It can reduce the number of candidates willing to enter or remain in our process. It can increase candidate attrition. It consumes staff time, delays hiring, and, in highly competitive fields, can mean losing an exceptional candidate to another employer before universities can act. At the scale of Illinois public higher education, those consequences multiply quickly.

She further stated that alone, the U of I System has a $25 billion annual economic impact on Illinois and supports approximately 225,000 jobs statewide. Approximately 1.5 million patients visit the UI Health Clinical Enterprise each year, and the enterprise annually adds as many as 2,200 new healthcare professionals to the workforce. These numbers demonstrate both the impact and the extraordinary scale at which the U of I institutions operate. When thousands of hiring transactions move through processes that contain unnecessary steps, delays, or manual intervention, even seemingly modest inefficiencies can become substantial and affect our impact. They translate into thousands of hours of administrative work, extended vacancies, loss of productivity, increased technology and operating costs, and qualified candidates who simply move on. In some areas, the consequences are more serious than the costs or inconvenience. The U of I offers highly competitive positions in healthcare, technology, research, finance, data analytics, and cybersecurity. Other employers may be able to identify qualified candidates, assess them, and move quickly toward an offer. Our institutions need to navigate classifications, examinations, registers, referral requirements, residency requirements, and other prescribed processes before reaching that same point.

Consider healthcare, on average, it takes the U of I Health approximately 117 days to fill administrative, allied health, clerical, and technical positions, and approximately 67 days to fill nursing-related positions. She stated that those numbers should concern everyone. In a healthcare environment where staffing levels and patient-to-provider ratios can directly affect patient safety, access, employee workload, and the overall patient experience, a vacancy is not merely an HR transaction waiting to be completed. It is an operational need that goes unmet with

each additional day a position remains unfilled. That is why the need for modernization is not theoretical; it is immediate, and the window for addressing it is now.

The U of I system will soon undertake one of the largest administrative transformations in its history, a multi-year project with an anticipated investment of up to $350 million to implement a new enterprise resource planning system to support its $9 billion operation. This new ERP will be designed around automation, integration, analytics, standardization, and contemporary business processes. By the time our ERP is fully implemented, capabilities in artificial intelligence, automation, and agent-based technologies will have progressed beyond where they are today. This creates an enormous opportunity, but it also creates urgency. Technology cannot transform an organization if the underlying processes remain unchanged. If we take processes designed for another era and simply recreate them inside a modern ERP, we will not have transformed those processes. We will have digitized them, and that is an enormous difference.

She further stated that we now have an opportunity, before these systems and workflows are designed and configured, to ask which requirements continue to advance the principles of merit and fairness, and which have persisted simply because they have always been there. It is a once-in-a-generation business process transformation.

She stated that this is why they continue to advocate for several practical reforms: 1) remove the residency requirement, 2) expand the rule of three, 3) modernize the assessment process, 4) expand extra help hours, and 5) create an appropriate classification or employment mechanism for grant or soft-funded positions.

She stated that these proposals are not an argument against merit. They are an argument for ensuring that a merit system remains effective. A modern merit system should protect fairness without creating unnecessary delay, and it should promote transparency without sacrificing agility. Done thoughtfully, modernization strengthens the process. There is a cost to maintaining the status quo, measured by vacancies that remain open longer than necessary. It's measured by the number of candidates we lose and the hours of administrative work that could be automated or eliminated.

She stated that they are not asking the civil service system to abandon the principles established more than seven decades ago; they are asking it to modernize so those principles can continue to succeed in 2026 and for decades to come.

We recognize that meaningful change requires partnership among the Merit Board, University System, universities, employees, labor organizations, HR leaders, and other stakeholders. We respect that responsibility, and we stand ready to help identify solutions, pilot new approaches, measure outcomes, and build a civil service system that remains firmly grounded in merit, fairness, consistency, and transparency while becoming more efficient, responsive, flexible, and competitive. Our institutions are evolving. Technology is advancing at an unprecedented pace. The workforce and the way work is performed are being reshaped in real time. Our civil service system must evolve with them. We have an extraordinary opportunity before us to modernize thoughtfully, collaboratively, and responsibly. We should not allow that opportunity to pass.

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

Jill Odom, with Andy Harpst, members of EAC, commented that there are three items of concern and importance to civil service employees across the universities.

First, regarding the agency's rules and procedures, it has been repeatedly stated that the system is antiquated and needs modernization. While EAC agrees that today's workforce has evolved in many ways from the workplace of 1952, the value of a hiring process based on merit and fitness is just as crucial today as it was then. Our skilled and knowledgeable employees are essential to our universities, and a sound, fair, and equitable process ensures that both employees and employers have the best opportunity for success.

Ms. Odom commented that it has been stated that the hiring process also takes too long, sometimes three to six months, to find and hire qualified applicants. It's been stated that private industry can hire without the constraints of this system. However, there are universities within the system that routinely follow these procedures and have demonstrated that using open, continuous testing, maintaining active registers, and certifying from those registers reduces time to hire and increases opportunities for both the employee and the employer.

When asked at a previous Merit Board meeting whether internal processes were increasing the steps in the hiring process, the answer was vague. EAC understands that while some of our universities have a few unique needs related to the recruitment and hiring of certain positions, the growing use of varying internal processes has led to a significant shift in how the civil service policies and procedures are interpreted and applied. These inconsistencies, dependent on circumstances or administrative preferences, lead to inconsistent applications across the state, raising concerns about fairness, transparency, and equitable treatment.

EAC's concern is that those internal processes have increased the complexity and length of the process rather than produced a better process. EAC's request to the Merit Board is to reach out to their respective university and obtain a breakdown of their processes, noting which steps are required by the agency and which steps are additional internal processes. Once they have received that information, EAC requests that they share it with them so they can all better understand the source of the delay and identify opportunities for improvement. Addressing this issue should be a priority to restore trust, accountability, and consistency.

Second, EAC remains concerned about the decline of open and continuous testing and the maintenance of active registers. Open and continuous testing is stated in the Act. This mandates that all appointments, promotions, and personnel actions are based solely on merit and fitness as assessed through examinations. Open and continuous testing ensures employees have ongoing access to examinations, maintaining fairness and compliance with statutory requirements. There are currently 868 active job classes across the 16 occupational areas, and nearly every position the universities use can be found on this extensive list.

Processes for filling these positions are outlined in the Act and the procedure manual, and, when necessary, amendments have been adopted to ensure that our employees' rights and protections align with the needs of our workforce and universities. An example of such a change was the shift from written tests to credential assessment. After a great deal of discussion between the agency, EAC, and the universities, a positive change was made.

The credential assessment remains the test referenced in the procedures, and that the score is required for placement on the register. EAC is concerned that many of our universities have moved away from open and continuous testing and maintaining active registers. Instead, test or credential assessments occur only when there's an open position, and a register is created for that specific position. This means that instead of using an active register of candidates who have already been assessed and scored, the university starts the process anew each time, adding steps that extend the hiring timeline.

Current civil service procedures allow the university to certify an existing register and immediately contact the top three candidates for consideration for the position, significantly speeding up the process. The benefits of active registers are that candidates can apply for and be considered for multiple positions rather than just the open position in a specific unit or college.

EAC noted that maintaining active registers provides hiring units with an established applicant pool of assessed and qualified applicants from which to interview and select candidates. Register maintenance is addressed in the procedures and rules, which outline the process for regularly reviewing registers, and candidates can be removed from a register only for specific reasons. For instance, an original entry register typically lasts for two consecutive years from the last examination date. A candidate's name may be removed early if they have refused four referrals from that register, fail to respond to a notice in time, or request voluntary removal. Maintaining active registers provides an early start in helping units fill open positions, benefiting the incumbent, the unit, and the university.

With the technological advances in human resource platforms and business processes, many of these steps can be automated. EAC is concerned that civil service procedures and rules may not be fully adhered to and that internal processes are delaying hiring. As mentioned earlier, EAC requests that the Merit Board reach out to the universities to obtain a breakdown of their processes, including the steps required by the system and any additional internal steps they use.

EAC believes that everyone would benefit from a better understanding of the internal processes being utilized. EAC's ultimate request is to see open, continuous testing restored to create active registers for civil service classifications and to provide the greatest opportunity for employees and employers. This is within the Merit Board's purview as described under the powers and duties of the Merit Board of the Act, Section 36d(6), which states to authorize the continuous recruitment of personnel and to that end to delegate to the executive director and their staff the power and the duty to conduct open and continuous competitive examinations for all classifications of employment.

EAC's third concern is collaboration among the Merit Board, the agency, human resource leadership, and EAC. Invitations for the Merit Board to attend the EAC meeting at the system office to collaborate and engage, and for the HR Directors to meet at their respective universities, demonstrate their eagerness to move forward in building these relationships. EAC appreciates the Merit Board's participation and engagement and looks forward to continuing these discussions whenever the Board is available to ensure universities have the best possible opportunity to succeed in a fair and equitable manner that supports and encourages our employees.

Ms. Odom further stated that the October meeting will be held at Eastern Illinois University. She further stated that they are grateful for the commitment that Director Schiesser and her staff have made to support them with their knowledge and time, as well as to our DERs.

She stated that it has been suggested that a meeting involving all three groups would provide valuable opportunities to share information, address concerns, and develop solutions that benefit employees and universities alike. EAC is eager for this to occur and offers its assistance in scheduling it.

Public Comments

Chair Butler stated that there were three requests for public comments.

Chief Woodruff from Illinois State University stated that the police hiring process and the difficulties they continue to experience when working with the agency. The university police chiefs have discussed previously that recruiting and retaining police officers remains an ongoing challenge. Prior to 2020, many departments typically worked from an eligibility list containing more than 30 qualified candidates, often providing enough applicants for up to two years of hiring. Today, they have received registers listing one to three names and must test multiple times each year to maintain staffing levels. For that reason, they have repeatedly requested a more streamlined hiring process. Since 2020, they have asked Executive Director Schiesser whether the oral board component could be eliminated to help expedite the hiring. Executive Director Schiesser has declined to remove any portion of the examination process and has directed us to the broader effort to revise the examination, a process the Board is well aware of and that remains unresolved.

The oral board process requires significant coordination, including recruiting volunteer assessors from other agencies and campus partners, who must then be approved by the agency no later than two weeks before the interview. This effort is repeated across all the state university police departments, despite our own staffing shortages and time constraints. All this effort is undertaken so the assessors can ask each candidate five questions. It is a time-consuming process, and the effectiveness of evaluating a candidate's qualifications is questionable. After the oral boards, the department still must complete its own interviews, extensive background investigations, psychological evaluations, and medical screenings, which are required by law and cannot be expedited.

These timelines are especially important because police academies are offered only three times each year, and candidate paperwork must be submitted well in advance. Missing an academy class can delay hiring for several months and compound the staffing issues they are already facing.

Chief Woodruff said that he brought this up because of a recent issue. In January 2026, their department began a standard hiring process to fill four vacancies. By the time those positions were filled in May, our eligibility and lists had been exhausted, and we knew there would be additional vacancies after July 1st. There was insufficient time to complete the standard hiring process again before the candidate's names needed to be submitted by the first week of August for an upcoming August 30th date. To help address situations like this, the agency has long

maintained an alternative hiring process known as the intern program, formerly known as the learner program.

This process has existed for more than 25 years and has been successfully used by our department numerous times, including the hiring of two officers in 2023. They use it sparingly, only when operational needs and hiring timelines require it. The agency's procedure manual specifically states it can be used when "operating needs warrant ongoing training to supplement staffing recruitment efforts." Intern programs may be established to address circumstances in which critical 24-7 positions have been difficult to fill, such as the Police Officer Series.

On June 12, 2026, ISU's HR department submitted a formal request to Executive Director Schiesser seeking approval to hire up the two Police Officers through the Intern Program. The request included the required program information and was not materially different from requests previously approved in other years. After weeks without any response, a follow-up request was submitted on July 9, 2026. Executive Director Schiesser apologized for the delay and indicated she would respond soon, but she did not. On July 29, 2026, another status update was requested. Executive Director Schiesser officially responded, denying the request 47 days after it had initially been submitted. When asked for the basis of denial, Executive Director Schiesser quoted the following language from the procedure manual, which stated that it did not include "a predetermined and scheduled program of development, training, or experience that had been established and approved for the candidate."

Executive Director Schiesser was then asked what additional information was required. After three additional emails seeking clarification, Executive Director Schiesser responded on August 10, 2026, with what appeared to be an entirely new form that had never been required. Rather than collaborate with ISU as previously requested by members of this board, Executive Director Schiesser delays, denies, and continues to obstruct our hiring efforts. In this instance, she prevented ISU from filling two very important vacancies using the same program, rules, and procedures that she had previously approved and successfully used.

At a time when University Police Departments continue to face significant staffing challenges, they need communication, transparency, flexibility, and timely decision-making from the University System. Instead, they continue to encounter barriers that delay hiring, hinder recruitment efforts, and make it more difficult to provide the level of public safety the campuses deserve. Chief Woodruff respectfully asked the Board to review these practices and consider whether they are serving the needs of the universities, the departments charged with protecting them, and the students, faculty, and staff who depend on them.

Mr. Phillips asked what the specific role of the Board is in these situations. Chair Butler stated that some of the matters raised by the DER group representative can only be resolved by the state legislature through the public policy process. Some matters can be managed through rule changes within the Board's control. The establishment of an internship program is fairly limited by the agency's rules, as it is a mechanism by which a successful intern can essentially move into a status position after completing the internship, thereby exempting the intern from a competitive search through the normal hiring process. There's concern about timing, but that would not be a normal process of hiring a sworn officer. He stated the Board could change the rules.

Mr. Phillips asked if a policy is determined to be within our purview, how does one present it and, ultimately, get it changed? Chief Woodruff clarified that he was not asking for any policy change. The process for the intern program has been in place for many years. The current procedure was last updated in 2012 and is online for public knowledge. An intern classification posting is published the same way as all of the other Police Officer testing processes. The process is very similar; the only difference is that there is no written examination or oral board. They still have to take an agility test before going to an academy, go through an interview process, undergo psychological and medical exams, and undergo a very extensive background check. But because there is no written exam or oral board, it shaves about a month off of the testing process, which has been part of the ongoing issues. In this particular case, ISU requested that the Intern Program be approved, ideally within a couple of weeks of submission, so they could move quickly and fill two positions before the August 30, 2026, academy date.

Mr. Cepeda stated that the Chief's comments were very concerning and that the agency was making it very difficult for Chief Woodruff to accomplish one of the Board's goals. The Board is charged with educating kids and keeping them safe, and if this system is preventing it from doing either, it needs to make a change.

Executive Director Schiesser stated that an internship has to be approved by the agency. Information was sent to the university in March about our willingness and ability to entertain an internship program. The internship request that came in was substantially different from that, and the agency did not require a new form, but one was provided to clarify for the HR staff exactly what the agency would like to see in the form of a predetermined development program. After the information is completed and submitted to the agency, the agency can approve the program. Once an employee is hired and completes the process, they are hired as a status employee, without competition and without examination. The agency takes great care with these, and stated that the process has changed over the past couple of years.

Legal Counsel Miller replied to Mr. Phillips' comments, stating that it depends on the mechanism used to change these items. The briefest answer is that it depends on where the process itself is codified. The Intern Program, in particular, is discussed in the agency’s procedure manual but is derived from the administrative rule. To change when an Internship Program is appropriate and when someone can become a status employee through an Internship Program, the Board would need to amend the administrative rule regarding the Intern Program through the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR).

Ms. Miller explained the JCAR process. The JCAR process is an administrative rule published by JCAR itself and related laws published by the legislature. Anyone can submit a proposed rule to the Board for consideration by bringing draft language either to the agency or directly to the Merit Board during Board meetings.

Ms. Craig-Schilling asked the Chief Woodruff to clarify if this was a workaround to ensure they could get candidates into the academy. Chief Woodruff stated that the Intern Program process was used and that it has limitations, as only a limited number of people can be approved within a specific time period. The procedure is available online for police positions. This is exactly why it's in the rules so that they can make these hirings. Also, to clarify, it was a competitive process,

or it is when they are allowed to do it, because when they post it out there. So, anyone who applies gets interviewed, and then they move forward with the process. Chief Woodruff stated that they are not asking anyone to change rules or procedures or to go to JCAR, just asking that the rules already in place be followed. He further stated that he was asking for accountability from the agency and their timeliness to ensure they're approving these in a timely manner so they can do their hiring in the ways they've approved in the past. If the agency is going to make changes, they should communicate them earlier rather than wait 60 days before reaching the process they want to change, by which time the window has passed. He further stated that they are still waiting to learn whether they will receive approval for two intern positions.

Chair Butler commented that the Board needs to consider differing opinions on what constitutes fulfillment of the requirements, particularly with respect to a predetermined, scheduled program, and that this is not the right place to have that discussion. Still, he urged everyone to consider that even if things are submitted in a timely manner, there may be a moment when the agency determines that the submitted documents do not provide sufficient information to approve the request.

Ms. Craig-Schilling stated that this is a very important issue and asked if this request didn't meet all the requirements when the Police Chief was notified?

Mr. Phillips commented that the Police Chief came to express concern about the delay in the hiring process. As a result, ISU was unable to fill important positions, which could put people on campus at risk. He's pointed out specific challenges with the process as it exists, and he interprets his public comment to be a request for help, whether that's a change to a policy, a waiver, or any other solution, some creative solution, asking for help. He further stated that it was unclear how he would obtain the help and what the Board's role is in ensuring he receives it.

Mr. Cepeda asked whether the agency could approve a change without changing the rule. Chair Butler commented that approval of the request is not within the Board's purview; it's a determination by the Executive Director. Once the Executive Director is satisfied that the criteria are met, she can then approve them.

Ms. Baurer stated that she would like a timely report from the Executive Director on her approval process and on whether these processes have been improved. If not, why not? Even though the window may now be in January, the Board needs to keep up the pressure to reach a decision in a timely manner. Ms. Baurer expressed disappointment with the timeframe that's been discussed here regarding the matter.
Executive Director Schiesser commented that the information will be provided to the Board.

Radhika Monga, University of Illinois Chicago Hospital and Clinics, Associate Chief Clinical Operating Officer, stated that she oversees imaging and diagnostic services, in which many positions are highly specialized and increasingly difficult to fill. She further stated that they are competing with private hospitals for the same time and the same limited workforce, but we do not always have the same flexibility or speed in hiring, and not about lowering standards. It is about ensuring our MAQs reflect current clinical practice, recognizing credentials, and reflecting today's healthcare workforce. When they cannot recruit, it does not remain an HR issue. It impacts their existing staff, their capacity, and ultimately their patients.

Ms. Monga gave an example, in ultrasound, where MAQs need both specificity and flexibility; our general ultrasound requires ARDMS but does not allow for the specificity of the specialty. They need the ability to specify ARDMS AB when that is the competency required for the position. Recently, their justification for a Specialty Factor was denied, thereby disqualifying candidates who lack credentials for our body of work.

At the same time, ARRT sonography is another recognized certification, but it is not recognized by the agency. The university has lost qualified candidates because they hold ARRT sonography rather than the credential currently identified by the agency. The issue is not competency. The issue is whether the MAQ recognizes the appropriate credentialing pathway available in the profession today. Similarly, in the Cath lab and interventional radiology, probably one of the university's biggest recruitment challenges, it requires a post-primary credential beyond the ARRT RT. The reality is that many experienced Cath lab techs in the market do not hold those certifications, as many organizations do not require them.

She further stated that the university recently had two candidates who were lead techs at their current hospitals, but they could not hire them because they could not provide the level of the job they needed due to the additional required certification. The university's option was to request a lower-level position; however, the lead techs have not shown any interest in leaving their current positions for a lower classification. She further explained another situation regarding the vascular tech certification required as a post-primary certification, and that this is not an industry norm.

She further stated that within radiation therapy, there have been recent discussions with the agency about considering soon-to-be graduates and licensed radiation therapists relocating from other states. Currently, there's no allocation for that, but there's been some movement and dialogue in that sphere, and for that, they are very thankful and appreciate it.

Another area under her purview is pulmonary function testing, which has a clear pathway to certification after hire. The concern is the six-month timeframe. In the past year, they have lost a candidate who had taken the position but was unable to obtain the certification within the six-month timeframe. When speaking to that employee's feedback, what they learned was that a new employee must learn the specialty, prepare for the certification exam, and pass within that period; if they do not pass, there is a waiting period before they can retest. One piece of feedback was that a one-year period would be much more realistic.

She stated that the examples look different, but they raise the same question: whether our current MAQs are unintentionally eliminating qualifying candidates when private entities can recruit them. When they cannot recruit, vacancies remain open, existing employees absorb additional workload, burnout increases, and retention becomes harder. She further stated that they are asking that the standards be lowered.

Mr. Phillips asked if this request was within the Board's purview. In addition, what process should Ms. Monga follow to have these changes made, and how would she know about it?

Chair Butler stated that this is a very common process with interactions between the universities and the agency. Executive Director Schiesser commented that this is a question for the agency and that it's part of our everyday work. The minimum acceptable qualifications for these classifications were developed in conjunction with their users: UI Hospital and Clinics, and one of the other hospitals and clinics. UI hospitals and clinics had a great deal of input in the minimum acceptable qualifications. If there is a change in the marketplace that the agency knows about, then she would expect UI Hospital and Clinic to notify the agency. The UI Hospital and Clinic are familiar with this process.

Ms. Monga commented that, specifically for the IR and the Cat Lab for the MAQs, the request was made over a year ago, and the timeframe for such a request is unknown. Executive Director Schiesser commented that the agency has 187 pending requests for classification and three people in our class and exam groups, and this will be moved to the top of the list.

Paul Burmeister, Council for Northeastern Illinois University, along with Abby Murray, Associate Vice President of Human Resources for NEIU, provided comments. Mr. Burmeister stated that NEIU takes its commitment to its students and employees seriously, and NEIU is seeking the separation of Derek Ansong for cause. There's a large record in this matter, and the hearing officer, Kelly Navarro, agreed with NEIU that there was cause for separation. He further stated that Mr. Ansong filed objections to the Hearing Officer's Findings of Fact. NEIU responded in writing and found no reason to disturb any of Ms. Navarro's Findings of Fact. NEIU stands by its decision-making process regarding Mr. Ansong's separation from employment.

In this case, NEIU's board was provided with a draft of complaints from recent students and student employees concerning Mr. Ansong and his interactions with them, both as students and as student employees, following his return from a 30-day suspension. That 30-day suspension was neither brought before the Board nor appealed by Mr. Ansong. The complaints were turned over to an independent outside investigator who reviewed them and identified those that appeared relevant and timely to the allegations involving Mr. Ansong. It was revealed during that investigation, in coordination with Ms. Murray, that many of the complaints were substantiated. NEIU's recommendation today is for the separation or termination of Mr. Ansong's employment.

Finally, pursuant to the civil service regulations, NEIU followed progressive discipline. Mr. Ansong was suspended for 30 days following an altercation with a student. Ms. Murray meets with employees to reintroduce them to the workforce and equip them with the tools they need to succeed. In this instance, upon Mr. Ansong's return, he was neither interested in receiving any assistance in working with students and student employees, nor did he want to hear any other advice or work from HR. For those reasons, NEIU respectfully asks the Board to consider separation in this instance.

Consideration of Discharge Matters

Ms. Miller provided a summary of all three discharge matters.

Mr. Simmons moved that the Merit Board go into Closed Session to discuss both discharge cases on the agenda. Mr. Kvedaras seconded Mr. Simmons' 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. Simmons.....Aye
Mr. Alba.....Aye
Ms. Baurer.....Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye
Chair Butler .....Aye
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye
Mr. Kvedaras .....Aye
Dr. Navarro.....Aye
Mr. Phillips .....Aye
Mr. Quiara.....Aye

The Merit Board went into closed session at 2:51 pm.

The Merit Board returned to open session at 3:51 pm.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign v. Thaddeus Brown, UIUC-26-1

Ms. Miller provided a summary of the discharge case, stating that the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) filed Written Charges for Discharge against Thaddeus Brown on February 5, 2026. Mr. Brown submitted a timely request for a hearing on February 7, 2026, and the hearing was convened within 45 days, on March 12, 2026, before Hearing Officer Michael Dudek.

Mr. Brown began his employment as a Building Service Worker at UIUC on October 1, 2023. In October 2025, Mr. Brown was placed on Administrative Leave. When that leave ended, he was scheduled to return to work and instructed to report to a new department. Mr. Brown raised questions about his new assignment via email, but ultimately did not return to work when his Administrative Leave ended.

After Mr. Brown missed six workdays without authorization, the UIUC began pursuing discharge on a single charge: "Attendance – unexcused and unauthorized absences along with failure to follow call-in procedures." The Hearing Officer found that UIUC met its burden of proof on the charge because there was no dispute that Mr. Brown failed to report to work as scheduled.

In support of the charge, UIUC presented the testimony of two witnesses, documentary evidence of progressive discipline against Mr. Brown, and some of the written correspondence exchanged between Mr. Brown and the two witnesses. Relevant to the charge, the progressive discipline included two performance improvement discussions with Mr. Brown about failing to follow call-in procedures.

In his defense, Mr. Brown testified that he had questions about his new assignment that he hoped to discuss with his new foreman before starting the new role. Mr. Brown explained that he

expected his foreman to call him when he didn't show up for work because each of his previous foremen had called him when he was running late, and he thought this was standard procedure.

After the hearing concluded, Mr. Brown filed a timely motion to supplement the hearing record. The employer did not respond, and Mr. Brown's unopposed motion remains pending before the Merit Board for a ruling before it disposes of the underlying discharge matter.

Chair Butler asked for a motion to consider the post-certification request for Mr. Brown to supplement the record and admit additional information into the Hearing Record. Chair Butler commented that he senses that the Board should grant the motion because it was timely filed and was unopposed. Mr. Brown's email dated June 30, along with the four attachments, should also be admitted into the Hearing Record. Admitting the materials will not substantially change the matter, but will reduce confusion for the individual involved.

Mr. Cepeda asked for confirmation that there was no objection to the submission of this information. Along with confirmation that UIUC also had an opportunity to respond to the information, submit additional information, or otherwise address the materials. Legal Counsel Miller stated that UIUC had notice of Mr. Brown's filing and had an opportunity to respond, but chose not to do so. Mr. Brown's filing was submitted timely, and it's unopposed.

Ms. Baurer asked for confirmation that the information was not presented during the hearing, but was filed after the fact within the appropriate timeframe. Legal Counsel Miller stated that the civil service rule 250.110(f)(6)(j) invite filings from the parties within a particular timeframe to supplement the record with additional information, and this was filed and was filed pursuant to the rule.

Ms. Baurer moved to admit the additional information into the Hearing Record. Ms. Craig Schilling seconded Ms. Baurer's 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:

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

Mr. Kvedaras moved to discharge Thaddeus Brown. Ms. Baurer 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. Navarro.....Aye
Mr. Phillips .....Aye
Mr. Quiara.....Aye
Mr. Simmons.....Aye
Mr. Alba.....Aye
Ms. Baurer.....Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye
Chair Butler .....No
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

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, Employer, v. THADDEUS BROWN, Employee.	**)**	**BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD** **DISCHARGE PROCEEDING No. UIUC-26-1**

DECISION AND ORDER OF THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

This discharge proceeding was commenced by the **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**, Employer, against **Thaddeus Brown**, Employee, by service of Written Charges for Discharge by **overnight delivery** on **February 5, 2026**. The Employee, **Thaddeus Brown**, filed a timely written request for a Hearing. A Hearing was duly convened, held, and concluded on **March 12, 2026**, in conformity with the procedures set forth in Civil Service Rule Section 250.110(f) (80 Ill. Adm. Code §250.110(f)). The complete Hearing Record has been certified and placed on file in this cause.

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 5, 2026**
2. Suspension Notice Pending Discharge, dated **February 5, 2026**

3. Employee's Request for Hearing, received on **February 9, 2026**
4. Acknowledgment of Hearing Request, dated **February 11, 2026**
5. Notice of Appointment as Hearing Officer and Notice of Convening of Hearing to Hearing Officer Dudek, dated **February 17, 2026**
6. Notice of Convening of Hearing to the parties of record, dated **February 17, 2026**
7. Order Regarding Procedures for Remote Hearing, dated **February 18, 2026**
8. Employee Exhibits, submitted **March 3, 2026**
9. Employer Exhibits and Witness List, submitted **March 6, 2026**
10. Employee Motion for Continuance, dated **March 11, 2026**
11. Order regarding Employee's Motion for Continuance, dated **March 11, 2026**
12. Transcript of Hearing, **March 12, 2026**
13. Exhibits admitted into Record at Hearing, **March 12, 2026**
14. Request for Findings of Fact from Hearing Officer Dudek, dated **April 30, 2026**
15. Findings of Fact rendered by Hearing Officer Dudek, dated **June 17, 2026**
16. Employee Motion to Supplement the Record (including proposed Exhibits and Witness List), dated **June 30, 2026**

DECISION AND ORDER

Now being fully advised of the matters contained in the hearing record, and based solely on the hearing record, the University Civil Service Merit Board makes the following jurisdictional and factual findings in support of this Decision and Order, and hereby **ORDERS AS FOLLOWS**:

1. The Findings of Fact of the Hearing Officer, attached hereto, are approved and incorporated herein, to the extent not inconsistent with this Order.

2. The Employee, **Thaddeus Brown**, is hereby separated from the service of their Employer, **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**, and the effective date of their discharge shall be **August 19, 2026**.

3. This Order is FINAL and is subject to the Illinois Administrative Review Law. Civil Service Rule 250.110 does not authorize the Merit Board to hear any motion or request for reconsideration.

4. The name of the Hearing Officer and the name and contact information for each of the parties are as follows:

Hearing Officer
Mr. Michael Dudek
1717 Philo Road, Suite 24
Urbana, IL 61802

Employer
Mr. Seth Baker
Assistant University Counsel
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
258 Henry Administration Building
506 South Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801
Baker41@illinois.edu

Employee
Mr. Thaddeus Brown
1223 Mason Circle
Urbana, IL 61802
thaddeusb444@fastmail.com

Dated August 19, 2026
University Civil Service Merit Board

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

ATTEST:
By: /s/ Jennifer Miles
Jennifer Miles
Secretary for the Merit Board

University of Illinois at Chicago Hospital and Clinics v. Alecha Beemon, UICHC-26-1

Ms. Miller provided a summary of the discharge case, stating that the University of Illinois Chicago Hospitals and Clinics (UICHC) filed Written Charges for Discharge against Alecha Beemon on March 20, 2026. Ms. Beemon submitted a timely request for a hearing on March 31, 2026, and the hearing was convened on April 30th and May 26, 2026, before Hearing Officer Andrea Waintroob.

Ms. Beemon began her employment at UICHC via a staffing agency approximately five years ago, and she was appointed to the classification of Customer Service Assistant on August 19, 2024.

In October 2025, Ms. Beemon took a medical leave of absence. Because she had been on medical leave, UICHC required her to be cleared by the University Health services before she could come

back to work. On December 4, 2025, University Health cleared Ms. Beemon to return to work and instructed her to coordinate her return to work with her supervisor and Human Resources.

Ms. Beemon sent multiple emails to Human Resources, her supervisor, and upper management, in which she raised questions about her return to work, focusing on workplace conditions she wanted addressed before she returned. Human Resources and upper management indicated that Ms. Beemon would need to return before these matters could be addressed, and sent Ms. Beemon two orders to return to work. Ultimately, Ms. Beemon continued to email questions but did not report back to work; and UI Health filed three charges for discharge against her, including: 1) Job abandonment, 2) Continued unexcused absences, and 3) Conduct violative of or inconsistent with Department, UI Health, and University policies and procedures.

The Hearing Officer found UICHC sustained its burden of proof on all charges.

Ms. Baurer moved to discharge Alecha Beemon. Mr. Navarro seconded Ms. Baurer's 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:

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

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

STATE OF ILLINOIS
STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO HOSPITAL AND CLINICS, Employer, v. ALECHA BEEMON, Employee.	**)**	**BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD** **DISCHARGE PROCEEDING No. UICHC-26-5**

DECISION AND ORDER OF THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

This discharge proceeding was commenced by the **University of Illinois Chicago Hospital and Clinics**, Employer, against **Alecha Beemon**, Employee, by service of Written Charges for Discharge by **overnight delivery** on **March 20, 2026**. The Employee, **Alecha Beemon**, filed a timely written request for a Hearing. A Hearing was duly convened on **April 30, 2026**, and reconvened and concluded on **May 26, 2026**, in conformity with the procedures set forth in Civil Service Rule Section 250.110(f) (80 Ill. Adm. Code §250.110(f)). The complete Hearing Record has been certified and placed on file in this cause.

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 **March 20, 2026**
2. Suspension Notice Pending Discharge, dated **March 20, 2026**
3. Employee's Request for Hearing, received on **March 31, 2026**
4. Acknowledgment of Hearing Request, dated **April 1, 2026**
5. Notice of Appointment as Hearing Officer and Notice of Convening of Hearing to Hearing Officer Waintroob, dated **April 2, 2026**
6. Notice of Convening of Hearing to the parties of record, dated **April 2, 2026**
7. Order Regarding Procedures for Remote Hearing, dated **April 6, 2026**
8. Employer Exhibits and Witness List, submitted **April 23, 2026**
9. Employee Exhibits and Witness List, submitted **April 23, 2026**
10. Employee Request to Submit Supplemental Statement, submitted **April 29, 2026**
11. Transcript of Hearing, Volume 1, **April 30, 2026**
12. Exhibits admitted into Record at Hearing, **April 30, 2026**
13. Notice of Re-Convening of Hearing to Hearing Officer Waintroob, dated **May 4, 2026**
14. Notice of Convening of Hearing to the parties of record, dated **May 4, 2026**
15. Transcript of Hearing, Volume 2, **May 26, 2026**
16. Request for Findings of Fact from Hearing Officer Waintroob, dated **June 15, 2026**
17. Findings of Fact rendered by Hearing Officer Waintroob, dated **June 18, 2026**

DECISION AND ORDER

Now being fully advised of the matters contained in the hearing record, and based solely on the hearing record, the University Civil Service Merit Board makes the following jurisdictional and factual findings in support of this Decision and Order, and hereby **ORDERS AS FOLLOWS**:

1. The Findings of Fact of the Hearing Officer, attached hereto, are approved and incorporated herein, to the extent not inconsistent with this Order.

2. The Employee, **Alecha Beemon**, is hereby separated from the service of their Employer, **University of Illinois Chicago Hospital and Clinics**, and the effective date of their discharge shall be **August 19, 2026**.

3. This Order is FINAL and is subject to the Illinois Administrative Review Law. Civil Service Rule 250.110 does not authorize the Merit Board to hear any motion or request for reconsideration.

5. The name of the Hearing Officer and the name and contact information for each of the parties are as follows:

Hearing Officer
Ms. Andrea Waintroob
1717 Philo Road, Suite 24
Urbana, IL 61802

Employer
Mr. Matthew Jones
Associate University Counsel
University of Illinois System
405 Administration Office Building
1737 W. Polk. St.
Chicago, IL 60612
mgjones@uillinois.edu

Employee
Ms. Alecha Beemon
9660 South Luella Ave
Chicago, IL 60617
abeemon87@gmail.com
alechabeemon@gmail.com

Dated August 19, 2026
University Civil Service Merit Board

By: */s/ John Butler*
John Butler, Chair

University Civil Service Merit Board

ATTEST:
By: /s/ Jennifer Miles
Jennifer Miles
Secretary for the Merit Board

Northeastern Illinois University v. Derek Ansong, NEIU-26-1

Ms. Miller provided a summary of the discharge case, stating that Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) filed Written Charges for Discharge against Derek Ansong on March 17, 2026. Mr. Ansong submitted a timely request for a hearing on March 18, 2026, and the hearing was convened on April 27, 2026, before Hearing Officer Kelly Navarro.

Ms. Ansong began his employment at NEIU as a Campus Recreation Coordinator on January 4, 2022. On March 17, 2026, NEIU filed Written Charges for Discharge against Mr. Ansong. He requested a hearing the next day, and the hearing was convened on April 27, 2026, before Hearing Officer Kelly Navarro.

NEIU filed a single charge against Mr. Ansong, which stated: "On 12/10/25, Mr. Ansong was served a 30-day suspension for inciting or instigating physical violence and violating NEIU's Workplace Conduct policy. Upon his reinstatement, many reports of other incidents were received. An investigation concluded Mr. Ansong violated the NEIU Workplace Conduct policy and violated the State Universities Civil Service System guidelines of immoral or indecent conduct that violates common decency or morality, including conduct that is a clear departure from ordinary standards of honesty, good morals, justice, or ethics to cause shock to the moral sense of the community."

In support of this charge, NEIU presented the testimony of five witnesses, two investigative reports, the allegations it received, and its policy regarding workplace conduct.

In his defense, Mr. Ansong testified on his own behalf and presented the testimony of three coworkers regarding his management style and his interactions with students and employees.

The Hearing Officer found that NEIU sustained its burden of proof.

Chair Butler stated that Mr. Ansong filed five objections to the Findings of Fact, along with submitting additional images he would like added to the record. NEIU filed a response in opposition to those objections, and the objections remain pending before the Merit Board for a ruling before it disposes of the underlying discharge matter.

Chair Butler asked for a motion to consider the post-certification request for Mr. Ansong to supplement the record and admit additional information to the hearing record, noting that NEIU objected to the admission of additional information.

Chair Butler clarified that to sustain the objections will make clear that it will evaluate the record as a whole with respect for, but not blind deference to, the Findings of Fact, and we will accept the additional images.

Chair Butler moved to sustain the objections and accept the additional images. Mr. Navarro seconded Dr. Butler's 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:

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

Mr. Kvedaras moved to discharge Derek Ansong. Mr. Navarro 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. Navarro.....Aye
Mr. Phillips .....Aye
Mr. Quiara.....Aye
Mr. Simmons.....Aye
Mr. Alba.....Aye
Ms. Baurer.....Aye
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye
Chair Butler .....Aye
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye

STATE OF ILLINOIS
STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSSITY,	**)**	**BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE**
Employer,	**)**	**MERIT BOARD**
v.	**)**	
DEREK ANSONG,	**)**	**DISCHARGE PROCEEDING**
Employee.	**)**	**No. NEIU-26-1**

DECISION AND ORDER OF THE UNIVERSITY CIVIL SERVICE MERIT BOARD

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

This discharge proceeding was commenced by **Northeastern Illinois University**, Employer, against **Derek Ansong**, Employee, by service of Written Charges for Discharge by **overnight delivery** on **March 17, 2026**. The Employee, **Derek Ansong**, filed a timely written request for a Hearing. A Hearing was duly convened and concluded on **April 27, 2026**, in conformity with the procedures set forth in Civil Service Rule 250.110(f) (80 Ill. Adm. Code §250.110(f)). The complete Hearing Record has been certified and placed on file in this cause.

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 March 17, 2026
2. Suspension Notice Pending Discharge, dated March 17, 2026
3. Employee's Request for Hearing, received on March 18, 2026
4. Acknowledgment of Hearing Request, dated March 20, 2026
5. Notice of Appointment as Hearing Officer and Notice of Convening of Hearing to Hearing Officer Slagley, dated March 23, 2026
6. Notice of Convening of Hearing to the parties of record, dated March 23, 2026
7. Order Regarding Procedures for Remote Hearing, dated March 26, 2026
8. Employer Exhibits and Witness List, submitted April 20, 2026
9. Employee Exhibits and Witness List, submitted April 20, 2026
10. Withdrawal of Hearing Officer Slagley, dated April 20, 2026
11. Notice of Appointment as Hearing Officer and Notice of Convening of Hearing to Hearing Officer Navarro, dated April 21, 2026
12. Transcript of Hearing, April 27, 2026
13. Exhibits admitted into Record at Hearing, April 27, 2026
14. Request for Findings of Fact from Hearing Officer Navarro, dated May 13, 2026
15. Findings of Fact rendered by Hearing Officer Navarro, dated May 28, 2026
16. Employee Objections to Certified Hearing Record, dated June 24, 2026
17. Employer Motion to Make Oral Argument to the Merit Board or, in the alternative, Request to Speak in Public Comment, dated June 29, 2026
18. Order regarding the Disposition of Motions Filed in Response to the Certified Hearing Record, dated July 1, 2026
19. Employer's Response to Employee's Objections to Certified Hearing Record, dated July 6, 2026

20. Order regarding the Amended Disposition of Motions Filed in Response to the Certified Hearing Record, dated July 28, 2026
21. Order regarding the Corrected Amended Disposition of Motions Filed in Response to the Certified Hearing Record, dated July 29, 2026

DECISION AND ORDER

Now being fully advised of the matters contained in the hearing record, and based solely on the hearing record, the University Civil Service Merit Board makes the following jurisdictional and factual findings in support of this Decision and Order, and hereby **ORDERS AS FOLLOWS**:

1. The Findings of Fact of the Hearing Officer, attached hereto, are approved and incorporated herein, to the extent not inconsistent with this Order.

2. The Employee, **Derek Ansong**, is hereby separated from the service of their Employer, **Northeastern Illinois University**, and the effective date of their discharge shall be **August 19, 2026**.

3. This Order is FINAL and is subject to the Illinois Administrative Review Law. Civil Service Rule 250.110 does not authorize the Merit Board to hear any motion or request for reconsideration.

4. The name of the Hearing Officer and the name and contact information for each of the parties are as follows:

   Hearing Officer
   Ms. Kelly Navaro
   1717 Philo Road, Suite 24
   Urbana, IL 61802

   Employer
   Mr. Paul H. Burmeister
   Davis & Campbell LLC
   333 S. Wabash Ave., 27th Floor
   Chicago, IL 60604
   phburmeister@dcamplaw.com

   Employee
   Mr. Derek Ansong
   590 N. Kenmore Ave., Apt. B-11
   Chicago, IL 60660
   derekansong56@yahoo.com

Dated August 19, 2026
University Civil Service Merit Board

By: */s/ John Butler*
John Butler, Chair

University Civil Service Merit Board

ATTEST:
By: /s/ Jennifer Miles
Jennifer Miles
Secretary for the Merit Board

Consideration of the FY 2028 Budget Recommendation for the State Universities Civil Service System

Executive Director Schiesser stated that the University System was requesting that the Merit Board approve a lump-sum budget of $1,863,000 or an increase of $281,600 (17.8%) over the current FY 2027 appropriation.

Ms. Schiesser stated that this year's appropriation allows for the hiring of four new employees in the Classification, Examination, and Compensation Division and the Compliance Services Division. These new hires will speed up and improve our classifications, modernize the agency's class specifications and MAQs, and update the agency's examinations and scoring rubrics. One legal assistant to work with the agency's Legal Counsel to manage discharge matters, move procedures to rule as required by JCAR, and move forward on any new rules and policies that seem appropriate and prudent. Also, one new Office Support Specialist to assist in the Administrative Division.

The FY 2028 request includes filling two additional positions, likely split between the Classification, Examination, and Compensation and Compliance divisions. The increase provides a 3% salary adjustment for current staff and a market-based adjustment to the cost of goods and services for purchases. The agency requests approval to recommend this budget request to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

Mr. Phillips questioned whether one of the positions would be filled in the Classification, Examination, and Compensation Division. He further stated that earlier, it was said there were 187 requests pending. To what extent does this budget help reduce the backlog and ultimately achieve a more reasonable service level? Executive Director Schiesser stated that this alone would not suffice; an additional six people would be needed to do so. She stated that the agency estimates that the legislature wouldn't accommodate that request, but this will certainly help.

Mr. Phillips asked what the plan was to work down that queue and get it to a more manageable state. Executive Director Schiesser stated that the plan changes the way the agency will address the revision and review of classifications and specifications. The agency has developed a plan to speed up that process significantly. The process will speed up now that the groundwork has been laid out. With four people, or with two additional people in that group this year and another person next year, the agency believes it will be on its way to addressing both new class problems and the backlog.

Mr. Phillips asked if there was a date by which the 187 pending requests would be reduced to a number much smaller than that. Executive Director Schiesser commented that numerous things

must happen when the agency looks at a classification, such as an employer must ask us to review it because they're having problems with it. Once the agency has that information, they open the classification up. The agency needs to review and then revise the examination and the scoring rubric, as this all takes more time than the one MAQ problem that was originally brought to the agency's attention. She stated that the plan was not to simply address all the MAQs that need to be revised, but it doesn't really address the examination problem that the universities have also expressed. At the end of FY 2028, she said she would love to say that, yes, this backlog will be addressed, but this backlog is a decade old.

Mr. Phillips commented that the Board's role is to be good shepherds of taxpayer dollars, and part of that includes finding creative solutions to some of these problems. The Board heard from the Chief of Police and Ms. Monga at UI Health, and they are waiting. Adding one person will help, but it won't clear the backlog. He further stated that he had not heard anything about leveraging other creative solutions, such as AI or anything else. The point is that the budget should contemplate solutions to the problem and a plan to implement them. The level of specificity or strategy does not appear to be on the table yet.

Ms. Craig Schilling agreed with Mr. Phillips and commented that the agency should be looking at AI and other ways and processes. This is nearly a $300,000 increase over last year's appropriation, and that is a significant number compared to where we've been from an increase perspective. She further stated that she would prefer to see a line-item budget, rather than a lump-sum amount.

Executive Director Schiesser replied that the agency is looking into AI. And have been looking at many resources to speed up the process. She stated that she felt they were working and the processes were speeding up. Ms. Schiesser says that the agency can provide the Board with details broken down by line item in a budget. She further stated that we have requested a lump-sum budget from the state due to the logistical challenges of moving funds between lines.

Mr. Simmons commented that he would also like to see the line-item details.

Mr. Simmons stated that it is frustrating for him when the ISU's Chief of Police is frustrated, and it's somehow this committee's fault. He said he did not want the Police to be frustrated with the Board, and that we need to help these people move things forward, but it seems like we've become an issue ourselves.

Ms. Craig Schilling commented that she really appreciates Executive Director Scheisser's comments and the fact that you inherited these problems. One of the best ways the board could support the agency is by providing a dashboard that shows the major pain points and/or the causes of delays. Because those are things we can advocate for as well in support of what you're trying to accomplish.

Mr. Kvedaras moved to approve a lump-sum budget request for $1,863,000. Mr. Alba 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. Navarro.....Aye
Mr. Phillips .....Aye
Mr. Quiara.....Aye
Mr. Simmons.....Aye
Mr. Alba.....Aye
Ms. Baurer.....Absent
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye
Chair Butler .....Aye
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye

Consideration to increase the fee of a Hearing Officer for the service of Discharge/Demotion Hearings

Executive Director Schiesser stated that the Merit Board has been asked every year to revisit the compensation for Hearing Officers. Hearing officers are currently paid $1,200 per hearing day, which includes writing the Findings of Fact. If a hearing is canceled fewer than five workdays before the scheduled hearing date, the Hearing Officer is paid $750 for the scheduled hearing date.

The proposed changes would increase the pay rate for Hearing Officers while maintaining the current daily rate of $1,200. The proposal would provide an additional hearing-day rate of $1,200 for preparing the Findings of Fact, which are detailed and require significant time to complete. The proposal would also increase the fee from $750 to $850 when a hearing is canceled fewer than five workdays before the scheduled hearing date.

Mr. Kvedaras moved to approve the fee increase for a Hearing Officer. Ms. Blackwell 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. Navarro.....No
Mr. Phillips .....Aye
Mr. Quiara.....Aye
Mr. Simmons.....Aye
Mr. Alba.....Aye
Ms. Baurer.....Absent
Ms. Blackwell .....Aye
Chair Butler .....Aye
Mr. Cepeda.....Aye
Ms. Craig Schilling .....Aye

Review of Recent Activities of Audit Division – Brett Wawrzynek

Mr. Wawrzynek stated that the audit team is currently conducting fieldwork at nine places of employment. Fieldwork is the process of actively collecting data, reviewing documents, and

conducting interviews. Audits have been formally launched for another 15 places of employment, but active fieldwork has not yet started there. An additional 13 places of employment are scheduled to launch in FY 2027. Several of these places of employment are small and associated with the University of Illinois. Currently, the audit covers up to 42 months in the past.

Review of Recent Activities of Classification, Examination, and Compensation Division – Liz Borman

Ms. Borman noted that the class and exam team are actively revising the following classifications and series. The Electroencephalographic Series, Institutional Compliance Examiner Series, Member Services Representative Series, Phlebotomist, and the Radiation Therapist Series.

Currently, the University System is accepting feedback on proposals to delete six classifications. After reviewing headcounts and examinations for these classes, it was found that system employers had not used those 6 classifications for a significant period of time. The deletion process is being approached in a manner intended to impose the least burden on employers.

We have also identified an opportunity to increase efficiency with the Police Sergeant testing process. Instructions have been created to enable HR to conduct Police Sergeant exams on their campuses as needed. The University System appreciates the collaboration and support from the various police departments in conducting the recent Police Sergeant exam and for serving as assessors.

Report of the Executive Director – Gail Schiesser

Executive Director Schiesser stated recently that the office has had some staff changes. Since we last met, the agency has hired two HR Representatives. One of those individuals failed probation and was dismissed in July 2026. The second person resigned during her probationary period in August 2026.

The final 2026 fiscal year closed with expenditures totaling $1,339,981.10. The funds allocated for the Police Series testing were returned to the state. The total amount unexpended for FY 26 was $170,018.90, of which $90,000 was delegated for police testing. That same $90,000 is built into the Fiscal 27 budget. The governor signed the FY 27 budget, and our lump-sum appropriations are $1,581,400, a $71,400 increase over FY 26.

Regarding police testing, the State Procurement Office uses the BidBuy system for state procurement. Vendors that can provide the required examinations must be registered in BidBuy and associated with the appropriate NIPG commodity code. When the initial BidBuy search was conducted to identify potential vendors, the results included a vendor that was not acceptable to the police departments. The issues were identified by the Equity Office and brought to State Procurement's attention. State Procurement is working to correct the coding issue. The agency cannot proceed with issuing a “Request for Proposal” (RFP) at this time until the issue has been resolved. Once the agency has received confirmation that the issue has been corrected, the RFP will be issued. After proposals are received, a committee will be formed to review and evaluate them in coordination with the police departments and HR, if permitted by law.

Report of Legal Counsel – Maggie Miller

Ms. Miller stated that in FY 26, 71 Written Charges for Discharge were filed by the employers and served on employees, with thirteen requests for hearing received.

There is still one administrative review matter pending in the Circuit Court of Cook County and the agency is in the middle of a briefing schedule on motions to dismiss.

Other Items as presented

Chair Butler stated that the next meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2026.

Mr. Simmons moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Craig Schilling seconded Mr. Simmons' motion. In accordance with the Merit Board Bylaws, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with the following vote:

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

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Jennifer Miles
Jennifer Miles
Secretary for the Merit Board

APPROVED:

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

November 17, 2026
Date