

**Civil Service Council (CSC) Meeting**

September 5, 2006

**APPROVED**

Present: Barb Arbogast, Vicki Bryan, Martha Burk, Pam Burress, Jac Copes, Sarita Cox, Steve Lancaster, Andy Monninger, John Moss, Melody Palm, Pat Schnitker, Nancy Spangler, Jan Jolynn Staley, Ron Thompson, Dave Turner  
Absent: Julie Caplinger, Linda Klawitter, Jack Wylie  
Guests: Diane Ruch, Derek Story

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Melody called the meeting to order at 12:03.

Melody introduced Diane Ruch and Derek Story, representatives of Human Resources here to address questions and concerns re: ISU online application process.

Diane and Derek indicated they felt the best way to address the questions/comments which they had received in advance of the meeting, was to give a 'walk through' of the actual live site of the application process. Diane proceeded as if actually applying for a Civil Service Campus position as Derek commented on those previously noted concerns. Derek pointed out the 'applicant tutorial' and where to access the FAQs built into the system.

As Diane began the online application process and as she instinctively scrolled down in order to see more of the information available it was immediately noted that some current as well as prospective campus employees are not even familiar enough with computers to even know they must complete this simple procedure in order to proceed. In response to this comment, HR representatives indicated that courses are available for folks with little or no computer skills – such courses are available through Heartland Community College. Notes as well, was the option of a brief tutorial for applicants when they visit the HR office (provided the computer is not in use at the time, however, other computers are available for this purpose at Milner Library – but no one-on-one would be available other than at the HR office.)

While Diane proceeded with the online application process, she noted there is a buffer page which gives some additional information, especially for those not familiar with campus and campus procedures. Diane showed us how to sort available positions by the different classifications (Civil Service, AP, and student – Graduate Assistant positions will be added later this year). Although this was a relative simple step for Diane, it was noted that applicants with little or no computer experience may have difficulty completing this step and therefore spend a great deal of time reading through the entire list of available positions but not in his/her specific classification.

As we viewed a specific position, Jac noted the posting date and asked what the 'rules' are for posting such a position and the time line of such. Jac and others present, as well as feedback from co-workers indicate that some positions are posted only for a very short period of time – and how this may affect the job search for someone with limited computer access. When asked if there is a specific required posting time, neither HR representative seemed to have this information and indicated only that all positions must be posted. Council members noted that there seems to be inconsistency in the posting timeline for various positions on campus and this was true even when the positions were posted on paper.

Although the instructions/buffer page do not indicate as such, it is evident to those who have previously used the online application process that it is nearly impossible to proceed without having a resume, cover letter and other responses prepared in advance, as there is limited space for entering and no editing procedures available.

Are all position applicants required to submit resumes, cover letters, etc? Many otherwise qualified applicants do not have the computer skills to complete this portion of the online application. HR responded that the applicant should read through the entire online application and may find that some areas do not require a response (will be indicated with "No Response Required") but that this criteria might be gathered through the fairly new addition of an area called "supplemental questions". However, council members noted that "supplemental questions" is not a new addition and were also a requirement on the paper format application.

Other questions raised by council members were:

**Why is a driver's license a requirement for positions not involving travel/delivery/pick-up, such as some clerical positions?** *HR representatives indicated they do not know the reason for this – only that it may be assumed that some of these clerical positions will be required to make deliveries or pickups or even attend certain events on behalf of the department.*

**Is the online application available in any language other than English?** *“No, there is no difference in the previous paper formatted application other than it has been transferred to an online format.”*

**Will applicants eventually be able to save an uncompleted application and finish later?** Currently one cannot alter, change, spell check, etc. while in progress. *“Not sure.”*

Some suggestions that came about through the ensuing discussion were as follows:

- Need more assistance for applicants not fluent in English.
- “Supplemental Questions” have disqualified many otherwise qualified applicants.
- Need other options for interested applicants with no computer skills, no computer access.
- Although specific positions are no longer posted to bulletin boards and in the *Pantagraph*, perhaps it would be helpful to have flyers on bulletins and postings in the *Pantagraph* indicating how to search for campus positions – indicating the website and what kind of positions might be available. Bulletin board flyers could contain instructions for accessing the website, etc.
- “How To” information might be included for “bookmarking” the website for folks that are frequently checking for postings.
- Up front – before the applicant begins to attempt to complete the application, they could be informed to read through and perhaps find it helpful to print out some of the areas, such as supplemental questions, and work on his/her response (get into format of 150 words or less) and be prepared for this when they do the actual application (currently the applicant cannot leave the application and come back to it)

Other comments by council members:

- It seems the registers are being cleared every 2 years – unless employee specifically requests to remain on the roster, he/she is dropped after 2 years and the employee is no longer informed of this in advance of being dropped.
- As employees are dropped from the register(s) without notification, some employees may have missed out on a well-deserved promotion/change – we may be leaving behind an excellent worker, (perhaps eliminating “the best” painter, mower, etc.)
- One council member commented that he feels the online procedure is in fact easier than the paper version – we should encourage co-workers and other applicants to seek help if they are not familiar with the online procedures -- encourage folks to speak with HR if they do not have access to a terminal – help is available
- Might give more guidance as to methods available such as ‘pdf’ vs ‘word’ for uploading documents
- Give more instructions on how to sort specific classifications
- Give more/better instructions for log-on procedures

### Comments from HR representatives:

- HR has equipment and assistance if/when needed – applicants need to ask
- In response to “advertising” – ISU is trying to eliminate paper waste – not trying to make it difficult for applicants
- There is a ‘viewing screen’ – applicants can see exactly what the hiring manager is going to see -- it CAN be removed and reloaded – this is available only BEFORE you submit!
- Since receiving feedback from our group, HR is forming a list of items to discuss with program provider and does acknowledge that the system is not perfect – steps will be taken to make it better
- Derek indicated that HR is grateful for our comments and counting on groups such as ours to help get this process to the point where it needs to be. While ISU is not the leader in using this technology, HR feels it is important to that ISU not be the last to conform and most local companies/corporations (State Farm, COUNTRY, CAT, etc) currently use an online application process
- With an online application process it is assumed that everyone has the same opportunity to seek employment – there is no ‘backdoor’ for submitting applications after the deadline or adding documents after the application has been submitted – all applications are handled equally -- every application is processed and submitted in the same method
- Derek and Diane agreed that some of our more specific questions (re: rules on posting, etc) would best be suited to other HR personnel –

Melody noted that we were now out of time and asked Diane and Derek for any final comments – to which Derek and Diane replied that some of our more specific questions, such as rules for posting positions, etc, might best be directed to other HR personnel in a future session. Nancy Spangler noted that many of the comments and questions raised in our discussion will be valuable and useful as HR continues to improve upon the application process.

Both Diane and Derek thanked us for allowing them to attend our meeting and giving them the opportunity to help us better understand the online application process. Melody then thanked them for their time and attendance.

Since we were out of time it was suggested and agreed that all regular business could be postponed until the next regular meeting with the exception of information from the Scholarship committee and Picnic committee.

Re: Scholarship Awards -- Martha reported that the committee had met and is proposing a total of nine (9) scholarships be awarded -- four (4) awards will be made from Foundation funds and five (5) from our own funds. Motion was made and seconded to move \$500 from Operational funds to Scholarship funds within our CU account and proceed with awarding the nine scholarships – Jac/Ron; motion carried.

Re: Annual Picnic -- Chairman Steve asked that folks contact him as to number of tickets sold and money for tickets should be submitted to Pat. Steve suggested and all agreed that he would email council members with final details for the picnic.

With a reminder that articles for the OpenLine are due today, Melody called for a motion to adjourn at 1:15 p.m. Ron/Jan Jolynn; motion carried.

### **Web Sites—**

- State Universities Civil Service System: <http://www.sucss.state.il.us>
- SUCSS Classification Status Notices: <http://www.sucss.state.il.us/cpm.asp>
- Annuitants: <http://www.annuitants.ilstu.edu>
- Civil Service Council: <http://www.cscouncil.ilstu.edu>
- A/P Council: <http://www.apcouncil.ilstu.edu>
- Academic Senate: <http://www.academicssenate.ilstu.edu>
- Human Resources: <http://www.hr.ilstu.edu>