

Illinois State University
Civil Service Council
January 23, 2007
Unapproved Minutes

Present: Barb Arbogast, Martha Burk, Jac Copes, Linda Klawitter, Andy Monninger, Melody Palm, Pat Schnitker, Nancy Spangler, HR, Jan Jolynn Staley, Ron Thompson, Kevin Wiand
Absent: Vicki Bryan, Pam Burress, Julie Caplinger, Jan Cook, Annuitants Representative, Sarita Cox, John Moss, Dave Turner, Jack Wylie
Guests: Educating Illinois Task Force members Mark Walbert, Leslie Sloan-Orr, and Trish Klass

Call to order – Melody called the meeting to order at 12:04.

The visiting Educating Illinois Task Force members, are conducting “walk-about” to solicit initial input toward the updating and rewriting of the Educating Illinois Plan. Mark Walbert posed four basic questions to Council members. These questions and the issues raised follow.

What is Illinois State doing well?

Fund raising is going well
Staff have a better understanding of how we each fit into the whole of the University
Quality of undergraduate students have improved significantly, e.g., GPA improvements
Improvements in student retention rates
National image of Illinois State University has improved considerably
Substantial increases in research awards by our faculty
University salaries overall are closer to the national average than they were before the first Educating Illinois commitment
Awareness of the University community has increased, within and outside of the University
Communications have improved between and across the diversity of units/groups
Shared Governance is working noticeably better than a few years ago
Focus on civic engagement

What could Illinois State be doing better?

There are still strong indicators that “turf wars” continue within the University
Possibly set up an “on-line-encyclopedia” of “everything-ISU” –Employees could share knowledge
Preferred reliance on the efficiency of electronic communications is having a detrimental effect on human communication and interactions effectiveness
Staff salaries – Many members of several employee groups have had to rely on overtime (OT) pay, or the potential for OT, all of which is now being halted. The net effect is essentially pay cuts for affected employees. At the same time ISU is getting more capital improvement funds from the state than any other state university. We understand that these are different pools of money, but the contrast and the regular media attention to the capital improvements has a negative emotional effect on civil service staff.
Staff morale is deteriorating and staff expectations of their work and retirement futures are less hopeful
Although we understood the need to double up on jobs and do more with less a few years ago,

staff members are becoming tired and this is affecting morale. This overwork is making it harder, or impossible for some to take classes, partake in Wellness, and participation University governance. Many staff members are unable to serve on the Council or to take on an officer's role due to being overextended at work. There is also a problem with some areas/supervisors discouraging participation.

Across academic units there is an unevenness in productivity of various units and in the quality of education provided to students. To continue the current momentum to improve academic quality this academic unevenness should be leveled.

Shared governance could still be improved. In particular, there should be more than one representative each for AP and Civil Service Staff on Academic Senate.

Could do a better job of showing appreciation for people

What are specific areas of concern for the University?

Fewer full-time employees are doing and being responsible for more and more

Student workers are replacing full-time staff positions

The impact of the expanding outreach of student housing into historically residential neighborhoods has a negative impact on University-Normal relations

Seek to improve Civil Service paychecks and expectations for financial security in retirement with the continued trend of doing more with fewer and less.

Identify and develop a Facilities work order system that provides compatibility between and with the diversity of mechanics/facilities units on campus (e.g., Housing/Dining vs.

Facilities) to improve timeliness for addressing building integrity needs.

What advice do you have for the Task Force?

Encourage positive communications and interactions between staff (e.g., BSWs and tradesmen) and students and administrative /clerical/academic staff with attention on effectiveness rather than efficiency.

Without sacrificing the current momentum of student/academic improvements, redirect some of the overall Educating Illinois initiatives focus toward improving internal interactions among and between support units and support staff

We could add value by creating a system for staff to mentor students. If we have any such service organizations on campus, most staff are unaware. If we do not have service organizations on campus to assist with this, we should create one.

Encourage support staff quality improvement, e.g., with the use of the tuition benefit available to employees, even (or especially) in the often considered "difficult-to-maintain-coverage" units

The Task Force reminded us that there will be additional opportunities for Council, its constituents,

and the University community to provide input during the latter stages of this revision and rewriting process as well. The Educating Illinois website,

<http://www.educatingillinois.ilstu.edu/>, has a "Contact us" information as well.

On-going:

- Council Officer Vacancy—Steve Lancaster's resignation from Council and the resulting vacancy in the Vice Chair position

-- After a review and discussion of the duties of the Vice Chair position it was

determined that the council member stepping into this role until the end of June will only be needed to fill in for the Chair when she is unavailable (which is seldom at best). The VP's duty to oversee the Openline is being covered by the editor, Pam Burress. In addition to his normal duties, Steve was serving on the Academic Senate. This representative position is currently being filled by Martha Burk. Official action on filling this executive position was tabled until the Feb. 6th meeting.

-- After review and discussion of the wording in the Civil Service Council Constitution and ByLaws, a motion was made (P.Schnitker/M.Burk) and carried that the Chair will inquire and assess the potential interest of the candidates who had received the next highest number of votes in recent years Group V elections. Melody will report the results of these inquiries back to Council at the Feb. 6th meeting.

- Annuitants Representative – no report
- Academic Senate/Campus Information – Senate meets tomorrow night, Wed., Jan. 24th
- OpenLine – Deadline for Feb. issue is Tues., Feb. 6th. No other report.
- Human Resources – PERKS cards may be extended to the Annuitants.
 - Benefits Choice period is coming up in May
 - Anyone who is eligible is encouraged to watch for and attend the various upcoming SURS sessions
 - Input on the “New Employee Orientation” process is being requested. If the process can /should be improved, now is the time to share insights with HR.
 - Ira Schoenfeld, AVP for Human Resources, has offered to update the Civil Service Council on HR issues and answer any questions we might have for him.

Reminders

- Deadline for next 2 OpenLines —February 6th and March 6th
- Founders Day and Sesquicentennial Kickoff – February 15th
- CSC meetings: February 6th (1st Tues., back to standard schedule in Spotlight Room)

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>

Motion to adjourn at 1:02 pm (M. Burk/ J. Copes) motion carried.

The next regular Civil Service Council meeting will be held Tuesday, February 6, at Noon in the Bone Student Center Spotlight Room