President’s Corner

Happy New Year!

If your resolution in 2019 is to get more involved at NIU, we have plenty of opportunities for you! You can join a university committee (go.niu.edu/university-committees) to represent civil service employees in shared governance. Operating Staff Council has several committees as well that are open to any civil service staff, including the Civil Service Celebration planning committee, Workplace Issues committee and Employee Morale committee. You can see a full list and access the Committee Interest Form at go.niu.edu/OSC-committees. OSC’s member election is coming up later this spring – we hope you’ll consider running for a place on council as well.

You can also make your voice heard by sharing your ideas to improve NIU services, processes and programs through the virtual suggestion box at go.niu.edu/suggestions or letting another NIU employee know they are appreciated through the Applaud a Colleague program at go.niu.edu/applause. Or, even better, nominate a co-worker who goes above and beyond for an Outstanding Service Award (go.niu.edu/service-award).

At the end of the month, watch for a survey regarding an update to NIU’s mission. A committee, which I am co-chairing, was formed by President Freeman and tasked with freshening up the mission, vision and value statements. We will be releasing a draft to campus by February and would appreciate and value your input. Updates will be made available at go.niu.edu/mission.

Professional development opportunities abound here as well. Watch the Monday Morning Announcement emails and NIU Today for seminars and brown bag workshops to attend. You can now get help with career planning and explore your educational opportunities through the Employee Assistance Program’s new Career and Education Development Services – call 753-5802 to talk with the training and development specialist, Susan Swegle.

I hope you are able to make the most of this new year, and that you have a fulfilling and happy spring semester.

Holly Nicholson, president
Operating Staff Council, 2018-2019

HURRY! Operating Staff Dependent Endowed Scholarship Deadline is Jan. 31

The window of opportunity for your dependent to apply for scholarships is closing at the end of January! It is so easy to apply for scholarships now – just go to go.niu.edu/y14bse and complete the general application. The system will match your dependent to appropriate, available scholarships universitywide. When applying for the Operating Staff Dependent Endowed Scholarship, the dependent will need to enter their parent’s name and department where they work. Last year the Operating Staff Council awarded three $1,000 scholarships to dependents! It only take a few minutes to apply – please encourage your Huskie dependent to do it.
Huskie History

Williston Hall has the unique distinction of being NIU’s first residence hall. According to Glen A. Gildemeister’s *Castle on a Hill*, construction began on June 3, 1914, and the building housed some 119 women students when it opened in September 1915. According to Gildemeister, women could serve as waitresses in the dining room to reduce the cost of their living expenses.

The building was named after NIU’s first president, John Williston Cook, who served from 1899-1919. Gildemeister writes that, “Trustees used President Cook’s middle name … because Illinois State had already named a building Cook Hall in his honor.” According to the NIU webpage, “Cook organized the structure of the school, hired the faculty, established a two year curriculum and secured the training method for teachers based on the educational philosophy of Charles A. McMurry.”

“Awesome Workday” Questionnaire Results

In the last Northern Staff Newsletter, we asked for feedback on how your office celebrates each other, or ways you (or your department) have created to enhance your work environment. We are excited to report that we have received several responses. We will begin sharing these responses in each issue of the newsletter. More feedback is welcome, so please keep your stories and ideas coming.

This issue spotlights the Department of English:

Angie Gasero shares that the English department has always been a very good group of employees who respect each other as individuals no matter what their individual jobs are. The faculty consider the office staff invaluable, which makes them feel appreciated, and in turn helps them to enjoy working in English. They feel that the work they do is truly a team effort.

They make a point to celebrate birthdays for the administrators and the clerical staff. They bring in goodies and share them with anyone who comes into the office for their mail or copying. They also have a table in their main office where they share goodies. In the summer, they have even had people bring in vegetables from their garden to share.

They decorate the office for every season/holiday. It makes the department feel like a homier and more comfortable place to visit and feel welcome. When things slow down, and the students are gone, they find time to gather the staff for a lunch together and sometimes play Scrabble, which everyone loves because they all love words.

In the Know…?

As we become enveloped in our day-to-day jobs, we sometimes forget about our available benefits and services; policies and procedures; expectations; and how to go about finding resources when we need them.

Here are some important links to get you started:

- State University Civil Service System (SUCCS) website: sucss.illinois.gov/
- State University Retirement System (SURS) website: surs.com/
- NIU Annuitants Association: niu.edu/annuitants
- Human Resources: hr.niu.edu
- IT Tech Skills Hub: go.niu.edu/techskills
- Administrative Professionals Advisory Council (APAC): niu.edu/apac
  - Complimentary office supplies list
  - List of campus notary publics
  - Who to call
  - Special offerings
**November 2018**

**Welcome New Employees**
Zachary Birch, Housing Administrator — Housing and Residential Services
Maya Crosslow, Housekeeping Supervisor — Holmes Student Center
Allyn Davis, Building Service Worker — Building Services
Stephanie Horgan, Program Adviser — Management
Kuen Lee, Information Technical Associate — Operation Services
Stephen Samuels, Program Adviser — College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
Stephen Swed, Storekeeper II — Chemistry and Biochemistry
Kamariah Wilkerson, Culinary Worker II — Campus Dining Services
Melody Winter, Office Support Specialist — Mathematical Sciences
Linda Yates, Laboratory Manager — Biological Sciences

**Retirements**
Deborah Albion, Culinary Worker I — Campus Dining Services
Mark Scott, Furniture Restorer — Materials Management
Mary Vonzellen, Culinary Worker II — Campus Dining Services
Charles Whittaker, Building Service Worker — Building Services

**Separations**
Shea Bernard, Housing Representative — Housing and Residential Services
Kathi Gehrke, Program Adviser — Nursing
Taylor Honeyman, Admissions/Records Officer — Graduate School
Keith Lessert, Information Technology Director — Operation Services
Maribel Montelongo, Office Support Specialist — English
Karen Pickett, Grants and Contracts Associate — Sponsored Programs Administration
Phylicia Williams, Residence Hall Attendant — Public Safety

**Service Awards**

**December 2018**

**Welcome New Employees**
Courtney Cochrane, Food Service Area Supervisor — Conferences Event Management
Heather Hastings, Office Support Associate — Chemistry and Biochemistry
Sandra Jakubiak, Human Resource Assistant — Human Resource Services
Kevin Meyer, Media Writer/Producer/Announcer II — Integrated Media Technologies
Regina Parnell, Program Services Specialist — Center for Child Welfare and Education
Melissa Robles, Program Assistant — Center for Governmental Studies
Francesca Ruscetti, Program Assistant — School of Intradisciplinary Health Professions
Shelby Savory, Chief Clerk — Family Violence and Sexual Assault Center
Erica Schermerhorn, Account Technician II — Bursar
Anthony Solorio, Multimeda Technician — Holmes Student Center
Kenneth Wiese, Procurement Officer — Materials Management

**Retirements**
Candace Buie, Administrative Aide — Registration and Records
James Latimer, Maintenance Equipment Operator — Grounds
Colleen Leonard, Publicity Promotion Specialist — Alumni Services
Charlotte Marx, Locksmith Foreman — Physical Plant
William Nixon, Mailing Services Supervisor I — Integrated Media Technologies
David Rogers, Furniture Restorer — Materials Management
Tammy Stevens, Business/Administrative Associate — College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

**Separations**
Omobola Balogun, Business Administrative/Associate — Development Administration
Kristopher Bishop, Resident Hall Attendant — Public Safety
Vanessa Charles, Transportation Clerk — Transportation
Brian Haynes, Senior Events Administrator — Convocation Center
Jason Hayward, Program Adviser — Curriculum and Instruction
Jamie Kenney, Child Development Supervisor — Family and Consumer Sciences
Kazim Mohammed, IT Technical Associate — Report Cards
Manoj Mukkamala, IT Technical Associate — Report Cards
Joyce Psateri, Administrative Assistant — Human Resource Services

**December 2018**

**Service Awards**

**November 2018**

10 Years
Dean Coyle — Infrastructure Services
Craig Fritz — Application Services
Katie Schnorr — Building Services
Lisa Vargen — Latino Resource Center
Mark Whitely — Convocation Center

15 Years
Diana Caldwell — Admissions Tours and Events
Derek Carter — Building Services
William Kenney — Building Services
Alexander McConachie — Northern Public Radio
Leslie Schoo — Visual and Performing Arts External Programming
Randy Skinner — Heating Plant

20 Years
John Alamia — Integrated Media Technologies
Russell Andres — Grounds
Cara Carlson — Vice President Research and Innovative Partnerships
Rebecca Ferrante — Development Operations

25 Years
Constance Rhoton — School of Art and Design
Victoria Wren — University Libraries

30 Years
Marjorie Holiday — Psychology
Donald Kozlowski — Campus Dining Services
Alan Tody — Infrastructure Services

45 Years
Connie Weaver — College of Business

5 Years
Jason Stieglitz — Grounds

10 Years
Johnathon Foster — Heating Plant
Paul Wrezinski — Housing and Residential Services

15 Years
Douglas Moore — Building Services

20 Years
Vanseng Geisler — Health Studies
Jin Wenjun — Application Services
Project Offering Free Hearing Tests and Compensation for Research Testing

Charles Pudrith, NIU assistant audiology professor, wants to find out if genetic variants explain susceptibility to acquired hearing loss and he needs your help – especially if you’re a musician.

Pudrith is overseeing the new NIU Hearing Conservation Center, which has two components: service and research. The center is offering free hearing tests to all NIU students, faculty and staff, as well as collecting data for the research project.

Any NIU student, faculty or staff member may set up an appointment for a 20-minute hearing test that includes answering a few demographic questions, a check for wax, a middle ear screening, and then a pure-tone test where participants press a button when they hear a beep.

After the tests, which are conducted by NIU audiology students, the results are discussed. Hearing conservation efforts, like limiting noise exposure or a referral to a clinic for further testing could be some of the recommendations.

Pudrith encourages musicians and music students in particular to get tested.

“Early signs of hearing loss are hard to detect without a test. Musicians are particularly susceptible because their high noise exposure, plus their advanced listening skills hide the early warning signs,” Pudrith said.

To support research, those between ages 18 and 25 years old can undergo an additional 20-minute test and receive $10 or a pair of musician’s ear buds. This test will gather research data.

“We will use that data to look at advanced techniques that detect hearing loss early,” Pudrith said. “We’re trying to identify genetic variants that could explain susceptibility to acquired hearing loss, and getting an idea of how the biology really works. If you have hearing loss at early age, you may have one of these genetic variants,” Pudrith said.

As well as providing a great asset to the university and the DeKalb communities, NIU students also benefit, said Sherrill Morris, chair of the NIU School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders.

“Students in the Doctor of Audiology program will expand their knowledge in hearing assessment and conservation under the guidance of Dr. Pudrith, while increasing public awareness of the impact of repetitive noise exposure on hearing acuity,” Morris said. “Musicians will be particularly interested in the ongoing research of the center that focuses on the susceptibility of acquired hearing loss in that population.”

Tests are conducted from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Wednesdays and Fridays, Wirtz Hall, Room 314. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are prioritized. To schedule a hearing test, or to participate in the research study, visit go.niu.edu/hearingconserve or call 815-753-6533 or email hcc@niu.edu.

Save the Date

The NIU 2019 Health and Wellness Fair, sponsored by Employee Assistance and Training Center will be held Wednesday, April 3, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Holmes Student Center in the Duke Ellington Ballroom and Capitol Room. All faculty, staff, students, dependents and community members are invited to attend and enjoy over 50 exhibits featuring a dimension of wellness. This is a free event. Release time is given for employees to attend to allow enough time to participate in the many screenings, massages, assessments and educational activities provided by participating vendors.