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Correction

In the Service Awards section of the January newsletter: **Sara Finnegan** should be **Sara Finnigan**.

125 YEARS

1895-2020

President's Corner



Greetings Fellow Operating Staff,

I find myself reworking this letter to adequately include and reflect on the whirlwind of changes that have occurred since originally writing it a couple of weeks ago. Each of our work, home and family lives have been utterly upended; and in the spirit of confidence that we will all persevere and eventually return to a more familiar version of normal, I'd like to share my opening paragraph as it was originally written.

After hearing from my colleagues that I was a bit long-winded in my last President's Corner, I will endeavor to keep this one brief! As I write this on the first day of spring break, I find myself looking forward to nice weather and enjoying a short respite before gearing up for the madness which comes with springtime events at

the HSC. Keep an eye out for the 125th Anniversary events in particular — every one I've attended has been top-notch; a testament to all those involved in the planning and execution.

I can't help but chuckle at the fact that every single sentence in that paragraph became entirely inaccurate a mere two days later! Whether we are working remotely, engaging in professional development, still on the campus, or some combination thereof, our operating staff have truly let shine their versatility, adaptability and value to NIU these past couple of weeks. I have been extremely impressed with our administration's communication and dedication to keeping staff members whole as we continue to explore this uncharted territory. Surrounded by family and friends facing unemployment and lapses in health insurance, I am more grateful than ever to call myself a Huskie.

For my usual personal note: since my last President's Corner I've had the honor and privilege of performing both my sister's wedding ceremony down in Champaign, as well as my brother's wedding in Las Vegas. That makes four ceremonies for me in total, and they are each among the most rewarding experiences of my life. In fact, I am anxiously expecting a baby nephew from each couple any day now, and the thought of not being able to be present in person for either of them is surreal to say the least!

As we move forward, it is important to recognize that it is OK to be a proud and grateful Huskie while continuing to have questions, concerns, and doubts. Multiple resources for questions, guidance and advocacy remain available to you:

- OSC representatives and workplace issues subcommittee members.
- John Hulseberg, Operating Staff personnel advisor.
- Employee Assistance Program.
- Office of the Ombudsperson.

We want to hear from you.

Endure and persevere together,

Jeffrey Royce
President | Operating Staff Council
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Employee Position Descriptions

Patricia Gingrich

In January, representatives of the Workplace Issues Committee met with Celeste Latham and Dr. Beth Ingram. The primary purpose was to discuss position descriptions. We spoke about PeopleAdmin (Employment Administration Portal) and the discrepancy between the position description the hiring manager sees and the one the employee sees. The employee view did not provide a clear representation of duties and reporting line. Latham followed up at the end of January to share that People Admin had been updated.

Employees can log in to [PeopleAdmin](#) from the Human Resource Services website. Once logged in, go to the upper left corner of the screen, click on the three dots and select "Position Management." The ribbon across the screen will change from blue to orange. From the "Position Descriptions" drop down, select your classification (faculty, staff, extra-help or student positions). The position number and working title associated with your position description should be listed for you to click on to view in detail.

Workplace Issues Committee also suggested HRS adopt a process of encouraging supervisors to review position descriptions with their direct reports on an annual basis along with their performance review. This is something that can be done but is not an HRS official policy or process.

We further recommended that HRS create procedures (or how-tos) in order to clarify application of HRS policies to ensure consistency from department to department.

Ingram shared that HRS would be seeking input from campus with the goal of "making NIU a great place to work." A lean analysis will be conducted on HRS process and Ingram encouraged us to seek suggestions from OSC on processes that could be reevaluated. As you know, this process began in February 2020 with Focus Group and Open Forum discussions facilitated by NIU alumna, Audrey Southhard.

Confessions of a Rookie

Rookie: Julie Yarmolovych

Office Support Specialist, Department of History

Hire date: Feb. 17, 2020

This edition of Confessions has us speaking with a true newbie! Julie Yarmolovych is less than a week old at NIU. If you look up "NIU rookie" in the dictionary, it figuratively says "see Julie Yarmolovych"!

Let's get this game started, shall we? Okay Julie, what is your favorite place in the world? ? *It's hard to decide my favorite place because I love to travel. Favorites can change. Right now, it's Prague in the Czech Republic. This city is filled with coziness and warmth, tiny streets, good food, amazing beer, open people and unforgettable experiences!*

You make that sound so inviting, Julie. Tell me, have you done anything crazy there? Or anywhere else? *The craziest thing I've ever done is leave my settled life and family to move across the globe by myself. It is quite scary and adventurous! I am genuinely happy I did it.*

That does take courage. You must be brave like a superhero! Speaking

of superheroes, do you have a least favorite one? *Batman. He's creepy, too sad, and dramatic!*

Got it. So, no sadness or drama for Julie. Let's be a little tamer then. Have you read any good books lately? *Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot. I really enjoy reading and I read it over the weekend. If you ask me next week, the answer could be different.*

We might just do that! In the meantime, name three people, living or not, with whom you would like to share a meal. *Arthur Conan Doyle and we would have shepherd's pie. Jane Austen where we must have Beef Wellington. And lastly, Angela Merkel for some simple schnitzel.*

Wow, I can feel my waistline growing already!

Well, that's it for this edition of Confessions of a Rookie. If you would like to be featured in a future edition, please contact Rave at RMeyer@niu.edu with your name, title and hire date.

Advice from the Employee Assistance Program

Many of us are getting ready to start another week of working from home. You may have been challenged as you set up new workspaces, figured out technological issues remotely and adjusted to having new "co-workers" (i.e., family members and especially pets) who are trying to make sense of why we are home all the time.

You may have found yourself feeling lonely and missing your colleagues. Have you found a way to stay in contact with each other? Supervisors, have you scheduled regular virtual meetings to see not just how projects from home are going, but how your team is handling the time apart?

For many of our colleagues, work may be their only connection with others, and working from home can be difficult. If you haven't already done so, take time during a break or after your work is done to reach out to a colleague and see how they are doing. You'll both feel better afterward.

Employment Changes

January 2020

Welcome New Employees:

Asontawa Cleveland, Police Officer – Public Safety
Serena Davenport, Facility Operations Coordinator – Regional Center Operations
Allyn Davis, Office Support Specialist – Housing and Residential Services
Nicholas Gough, Multimedia Technician – Holmes Student Center
Nicole Mertens, Police Officer – Public Safety
Jose Rabelo, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services
Yvette Wright, Human Resource Assistant – Human Resource Services

Retirements:

Emilia Gamino, Food Service Sanitation Laborer – Campus Dining Services
Mary Kain, Administrative Aide – Nursing
Ena Lundberg, Culinary Worker I – Campus Dining Services
Willa MacVenn, Office Support Specialist – Giorgi Law Clinic
Leslie Scarpace, IT Technical Associate – DoIT-Admin-Business-Finance

Separations:

Darla Cook, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Mary Evans, Program Coordinator – Nursing
Nicholas Bourke, Office Support Specialist – Orientation and Family Connections
Curtis Grimes, Information Technology Assistant Manager – Housing and Residential Services
Joanne King, Grounds Worker – Grounds
Kristen Lash, Senior Library Specialist – Libraries
Rachelle Wilson, Anthropology Curator III – Anthropology

February 2020

Welcome New Employees:

Karina Degaetano, Events Coordinator – Registration Services
Ashely Flesher, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services
Alexandra Galindo, Business/Administrative Associate – Center for Governmental Studies
Melanie Griegoliet, Program Assistant – Orientation and Family Connections
Mitchell Huftalin, Program Assistant – Orientation and Family Connections
Yakisha Merritt, Human Resource Assistant – Human Resource Services
Randall Moore, IT Technical Associate – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Sarah Moskal, Health Education Coordinator – University Recreation and Wellness
Katie O'Brien, Office Manager – Educational Technology Resource and Assessment
Marcel Rice, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services
Catherine Schaff, Program Coordinator – Educator Licensure and Preparation
Jennifer Simenson, Collection Assistant Manager – Bursar
Niti Srivastava, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Julie Yarmolovych, Office Support Specialist – History

Death:

Kenneth Wiese, Procurement Officer – Materials Management

Retirements:

Tammy Shelton, Business Manager II – P-20 Center
Carl Simonson, Resident Hall Attendant – Public Safety

Separations:

Tiena Bialis, Admissions/Records Representative – Admissions and Records
Tyler Christopher, Campus Planner I – Architectural and Engineering Services
Mark Framke, Food Service Administrator IV – Campus Dining Services
Joseph Garcia, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services
Nathaniel Gravin, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Jonathan Krengel, Police Officer – Public Safety
Amanda Mitchell, Office Manager – College of Education
Ivan Rodriguez, Financial Aid Adviser – Financial Aid and Scholarship Office

Notice from the Office of the Ombudsperson

The Office of the Ombudsperson is OPEN!

Due to the stay-at-home order restrictions, we are working remotely. However, you can either call (815-753-1414) or email ombuds@niu.edu and we will get back to you promptly.

If you need a confidential, neutral, informal and independent resource to help you navigate all things NIU (general conflict, grade concerns, personal interactions, policy concerns, executive coaching, etc.), please reach out.

We look forward to talking with you!



Celine Neptune.
1920



Celine Neptune and
Wilma DeLassus.
1937



Neptune Hall under construction.
1955

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March — Women’s History Month

One key female figure in our history from 1918-1947 was Celine Neptune, who joined NISNS as an assistant instructor in domestic science and taught in both the elementary and high school classes at the training school in McMurry Hall. After NISNS became Northern Illinois State Teacher’s College in 1921, Neptune became department chair of the newly formed Home Economics Department, which offered several four-year programs. During Neptune’s 26-year tenure as department chair, she expanded the program to include “teaching, dietetics, nutrition and courses that fit the changing tempos of the day.” As a result, our Home Economics department earned a reputation as “one of the most progressive in the Midwest.”

Neptune’s younger sister Katharine came to NISTC in 1926 and served students as a librarian until 1945. According to the 1929-1930 and 1930-1931 faculty-student directory, the sisters shared an apartment at 336 Augusta Avenue. Celine died Jan. 7, 1949, at age 62, and found eternal rest at Maple Lawn Cemetery in her hometown of Thorntown, Indiana. President Leslie Holmes eulogized Neptune’s impact: “Miss Celine Neptune... was dearly loved by students as well as faculty. Her dedication and philosophy made her an outstanding person.”

In the 1950s, a new “Residence Hall Complex for Women” was named after Celine Neptune. Construction began on Neptune North Jan. 8, 1954, almost exactly five years after Neptune’s death, and opened to students in September 1955. Construction began on Neptune West, East and Central in May 1958. West opened in September 1959, while East and Central opened in February 1960. Each section of the complex is 70,000 to 83,000 square feet in size, and in total, the complex cost nearly \$5 million.

As further proof of Neptune’s lasting impact on students, alumna from the Class of 1931 created a plaque in her memory that has been prominently displayed in Neptune Hall since Oct. 25, 1974.

Special thanks to the Regional History Center for research assistance, and to those who have made digital copies of the Norther (NIU yearbooks) available online.

Service Awards

January 2020

5 Years

Matthew Cabrera – Enrollment Management,
Marketing and Communications
Damien Cavazos – Campus Dining Services
Michael Cobert – EIGERLab
Thomas Handschuh – Building Services
Stuart Henn – Art Museum
Matthew Hook – Grounds
Tina Leombruni – EIGERLab
James Lopez – Building Services
Michael Lyle – Building Services
Jeffrey Metters – EIGERLab
Jeffrey Schmerbach – Physical Plant

10 Years

Kurtis Lassard – Lorado Taft Operations
Virginia Meo – Student Affairs
Arielle Sherman – Psychology

15 years

Denise Franklin – Campus Dining Services
Daksha Patek – Biological Sciences

20 Years

Mary Chepulis – Center for Child Welfare and
Education
Stephanie Kruienza – Human Resource
Services
Brain Timms – Physical Plant

25 Years

Michael Reynolds – College of Engineering and
Engineering Technology
Marcus Roccaforte – Public Safety
Derrick Smith – Center for Black Studies
Richard Twombly – Physical Plant

February 2020

5 Years

Leanne Kulchawik – University Recreation and
Wellness
Mary Riggs – Housing and Residential Services
Elizabeth Squires – Health Studies

10 Years

Adam Baie – Heating Plant

15 Years

James Barker – Integrated Media Technologies
Christopher Becker – Physical Plant
Diane Fitzhugh – Center for Child Welfare and
Education
Jennifer Howard – Faculty Development
Daniel Mojica – Public Safety
Mercedita Sawyer – Building Services

20 Years

Tammie Pulak – Building Services

25 Years

Patricia Adams – DoIT-Administration-
Business-Finance
James DeForest – Building Services