



Table of Contents

President's Corner.....	1
NIU Celebrates 125 Years	2
Confessions of a Rookie.....	2
HRS Celebrated Homecoming in Style.....	2
Employment Changes.....	3
Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship.....	3
Call for Nominations: 2020 Outstanding Service Award.....	3
Huskie History: NIU Libraries.....	4
Service Awards.....	4

President's Corner

Happy New Year Fellow Operating Staff!

I hope everyone was able to enjoy a restful and festive holiday break. Even though many of us are classified as essential staff, or otherwise feel the need to bring our work home with us, it is important to remember that our offices and duties will inevitably survive without us while we utilize our benefit time to the fullest. My own holiday break certainly contained its ups and downs ranging from saying goodbye to a couple of beloved pets, to celebrating 12 years together with my girlfriend, Jessica. For those of you preparing yet another "put a ring on it already" comment: I guarantee I've heard them all. I am both energized to be back on campus yet struggling to get my feet going in the morning; the new HSC Starbucks right below my office is turning out to be both a blessing and a curse!

The fall semester ended with a number of successes rooted in shared governance including, but certainly not limited to:

- An expanded **Parental and Family Leave** benefit.
- The proclamation of the second Thursday of October to be **Ombuds Day**.
- Launching the **Huskies Give Back** program.
- The adoption of a new faculty collective bargaining agreement.

In my comments before the board of trustees congratulating them on this last point, I emphasized the fact that many employees on campus are not represented by collective bargaining, nor does each represented group enjoy the same scope of benefits, and that shared governance, together with the administration, must continue working toward narrowing these gaps.

Looking forward through the spring, there are several initiatives in which I will continue to be involved and promise to ensure the voice of the Operating Staff will continue to be heard. Perhaps the most important of these initiatives is a proposed change in the structure of shared governance here at NIU. My faculty counterpart, Professor Kendall Thu, has been spearheading an effort to transfer much of the academic and curricular authority away from University Council and award it to Faculty Senate. On this he has my full support, and I have continued to advocate for a joint resolution to redistribute University Council representation in a more equitable way as a result. I am pleased to say the other shared governance leaders and I have continued to have positive and gainful talks every step of the way. Other initiatives at the top of my priority list include updating grievance policies and procedures for non-represented employees, further expanding and clarifying the online Policy Library, and the resurrection of a business procedure manual on campus.

As ever, a couple of our council members will be meeting with senior Human Resource Services administrators in the coming days to discuss many of the topics and questions brought to us by our constituents. HRS is often the subject of ire, but in the heat of frustration please don't ever forget that they are NIU employees as well, many of them being Operating Staff, and that they experience the same difficulties the rest of us do.

I encourage all staff members to continue providing feedback and input whenever possible. Our council meetings are open to everyone, our subcommittee membership is open to all Operating Staff, and our council members are always here to be your advocates. Don't ever hesitate to reach out to me personally if you are unsure where to begin or who to speak to.

Together Forward,

Jeffrey Royce
President | Operating Staff Council
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125 YEARS

1895-2020

NIU Celebrates 125 Years

In 1895, Gov. John P. Altgeld founded the Northern Illinois State Normal School with a simple and important goal of producing more college-educated teachers. Now 125 years and a few name changes later, Northern Illinois University is recognized nationally and internationally as an engaged, public research institution with a bold vision of driving innovation, promoting intellectual growth and transforming our world by pursuing inclusive excellence in all aspects of our mission. Proof of our success lies in the more than 240,000 amazing alumni who educate, serve and inspire their communities and beyond because of the foundation they formed here.

That is cause for celebration.

Official festivities will begin at 3 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 30, with a kickoff in the Holmes Student Center, where I hope you will join us. It will be the first of many opportunities — including exhibitions, performances, lectures and events — for faculty, staff, students, alumni and members of our larger community to join together in celebration of NIU. A complete list of the [planned events](#) is available on the [anniversary site](#).

(Reprinted with permission from President Lisa C. Freeman)

Confessions of a Rookie

Rookie: Melissa Robles

Program Assistant, hire date: Dec 1, 2018

This afternoon we are talking with Melissa Robles, a program assistant in NIU's Center for Governmental Studies (CGS). Melissa started with NIU as a work study/student worker back in 2015. After graduating from NIU in 2018, she went full-time at CGS.

Since we just came back from break, I wonder what Melissa managed to do to? Any family traditions we can tap into, Melissa? *We make tamales every year. They are absolutely delicious! It takes up a full morning and then we patiently wait while the smell fills up my mom's house.*

Mmm! Tamales! They do sound delicious, don't they? I bet you enjoy them while watching TV? *I just got Disney+, and I am currently binge-watching all the classic Disney movies. Usually I rewatch "Grey's Anatomy" ... for the billionth time.*

Back from the holiday break, is there anything that surprises you about working for NIU? *The number of people who work here! Obviously, a university is a big operation, but it is amazing how many it takes and the role each person plays in keeping NIU running smoothly.*

That's true. NIU is a big operation. Speaking of which, as a program assistant, do you have a favorite way to get feedback about your work? *Feedback with examples are good. Seeing an example helps me identify areas of improvement for the future.*

Let's move on to some fun questions ... where is your favorite place in the world? *After Chicago, it's Houston. I have so much fun each time I go. It's the only place in the U.S. where I have family, so I cherish it very much.*

And if you were a crayon, what color would you be? *Probably a glitter crayon, like black glitter or maybe pink. I have a distant memory of having glitter crayons in preschool.*

Well, we don't have any glitter crayons, but you still get an A+ on this edition of Confessions of a Rookie.

Thanks, Melissa!

If you would like to be in a future installment of Confessions of a Rookie, please email Rave at RMeyer@niu.edu with your name, title, and hire date.

HRS Celebrated Homecoming Week in Style

Although Human Resource Services is located on the outskirts of campus, this Homecoming they really got fully into the Huskie spirit to celebrate the 113th Homecoming "Play, paws, rewind." To break up their ever busy work week, HRS staff participated in a week of fun dress days including Twin Day, '80s Day, PJ Day (complete with yummy breakfast spread and homemade waffles), and Xtreme Huskie Pride!

Celeste Latham, associate VP of HRS, said it was fun to see the excitement on everyone's faces. The best part of the week was the participation in the passing of "Secret Cheerleader" notes. These were notes that were passed anonymously between coworkers with encouraging messages of support or a positive note about just how awesome someone is to work with! These notes really helped to foster a positive work environment and created a lot of smiles! This just goes to show that HRS has some great Huskie Pride!



Employment Changes

November 2019

Welcome New Employees:

Alamgir Bashir, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services

Michelle Crayton, Procurement Officer – Procurement and Strategic Sourcing

Nadine Cruz Saubert, Child Development Supervisor – Child Development and Family Center

Nathan Dehn, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services

Lorry Ekstrom, Food Court/Snack Bar Supervisor – Campus Dining Services

Giovanni Esparza, Building Service Worker – Building Services

Deborah Gory, Senior Quality Specialist – School of Interdisciplinary Health Professions

Drew Halstead, Building Service Worker – Building Services

Cody Hunt, Food Court/Snack Bar Supervisor – Campus Dining Services

Robin Kenney, Accounting Associate – Development Administration

Robert Kerschke Jr., Food service Manager – Campus Dining Services

Rebekah Kohli, Program Adviser – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Garry Lafever Jr., Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services

Brenden Lennergard, Building Service Worker – Building Services

Susanne Logsdon, Training and Development Specialist I – Chief Diversity Officer

Jeanette Maldonado, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services

Christopher Manning, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety

Katie Markley, Customer Service Assistant – Bursar

Cristy Munos, Immigration Specialist – International Student and Faculty Office

Latisha Newman, Business/Administrative Associate – Holmes Student Center

Brooke Patrick, Human Resource Assistant – Human Resource Services

Joshua Reynolds Jr., Building Service Worker – Building Services

Nicholas Smith, Bowling and Billiard Center Attendant – Holmes Student Center

Trina Stramka, Food Court/Snack Bar Supervisor – Campus Dining Services

Jessica Tabacchini, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services

Maribeth Voss, Immigration Specialist – Vice President International Affairs

Retirements:

Stacy Morse, Office Manager – Educational Technology Research and Assessment

Separations:

Diane Biggs, Office Administrator – College of Engineering and Engineering Technology

Matthew Birtell, Program Assistant – Intercollegiate Athletics

Nicholas Bourke, Office Support Specialist – Orientation and Family Connections

Collin Bruning, Business/Administrative Associate – Convocation Center

Eileen Chapuis, Office Manager – Political Science

Sharon Duchaj, Procurement Officer Supervisor – Procurement and Strategic Sourcing

Tia France, Business/Administrative Associate – Illinois Board of Examiners

Leah Freeman, Office Support Associate – Admission Tours and Events

John Freewalt, Food Service Manager – Campus Dining Services

Tatiana Hamilton, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services

Brian Heinrich, Building Service Worker – Building Services

Jeffrey Johnson, Office Manager – History

Leslie Lantow, Human Resource Assistant

Manager – Human Resource Services

Kuen Lee, Information Technology Associate Director – Financial Aid and Scholarship Office

Shelley Mikkelson, Office Support Associate – Conferences Event Management

Jaraiya Morris, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services

Kassandra Neuberger, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services

Brooke Patrick, Human Resource Assistant – Human Resource Services

Thomas Schmauch, IT Technical Associate – Infrastructure Services

Shevonne Shannon, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety

Trina Stramka, Food Court/Snack Bar Supervisor – Campus Dining Services

Jessica Whalen, Office Support Specialist – Heating Plant

December 2019

Welcome New Employees:

Jennifer Gohring, Child Development Supervisor – Child Development and Family Center

Christine Morelle, Procurement Officer – Procurement and Strategic Sourcing

Lorraine Pickens, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services

Suzanne Tennant, Senior Photographer – Office of Institutional Communication

Separations:

Jeffrey Irvin, Procurement Officer Supervisor – Procurement and Strategic Sourcing

Niti Srivastava, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards

Rajasekar Srivastava, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards

Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship

MyScholarships makes applying for scholarships easy! The Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship is included in the system, and all students need to do is complete and submit one general scholarship application to be considered for this and many other opportunities. The system will be open in mid-November through January 2020 for the following academic year. To apply and for more information, visit go.niu.edu/scholarships.

Call for Nominations: 2020 Outstanding Service Award

The annual NIU Outstanding Service Award recognizes individual civil service employees who demonstrate outstanding service and make significant contributions to the university and community. Up to four awards of \$1,500 are presented at the spring awards luncheon. More details are available on the [OSC nomination page](#). The complete nomination package (nomination form, one nomination letter and two letters of support) must be received all at once – if incomplete, the nomination will not be considered. Send or deliver to Human Resource Services, ATTN: Outstanding Service Awards Selection Committee. Deadline for nominations is 4:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 28, 2020.



Haish Library



Jacob Haish

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Huskie History: NIU Libraries

When most people think of NIU's founders, they most likely think of Joseph Glidden or Isaac Ellwood, who are probably the best known of NIU's four founders. However, equally important to the creation of NIU, and particularly its library, was DeKalb businessman Jacob Haish. Haish was born near Baden, Germany in 1826, came to America when he was 9, settled in Naperville, Illinois at 19, and arrived in DeKalb around 1853. In DeKalb he ran his own lumber business and would gain notoriety as a carpenter, architect and inventor of an early form of barbed wire.

Haish donated \$10,000 toward the creation of NIU's first library, which was used to acquire almost 6,000 books during the library's first year. Despite not having a formal education himself, Haish valued reading and education. In eulogizing Haish after his death in 1926, the DeKalb Daily Chronicle wrote, "Mr. Haish was a lover of books and wished others to realize the same joy. In giving the money for a library at the college he realized that he would afford students the opportunity of using books that they might not otherwise have been able to secure."

The two-room Haish Library (one room for reading, and one for the book collection) located in Altgeld Hall, served the students well for NIU's first 50 years. The library collection grew, and the need arose for a new library. Construction began in 1949 on Swen Franklin Parson Hall and the building opened as the new library in 1952. In one of NIU's most memorable photo ops, then-president Leslie A. Holmes led a parade of 2,000 student volunteers in hand-carrying the Haish Library collection into the new Swen Parson Library on "M-Day" — moving day — on Dec. 8, 1952. According to Glen A. Gildemeister's book *Castle on a Hill*, in a single day "this makeshift army moved 83,000 books weighing 85 tons, and they downed 110 gallons of coffee and 250 dozen donuts (provided by the Dames Club) in the process".

Swen Parson Hall saw the addition of a north and south wing during the 1960s. The library's collections again outgrew its space. Construction began on the current Founders Memorial Library in 1973, and doors opened to students on Jan. 2, 1977. The 300,000 square-foot building cost \$13.5 million and featured what many fondly remember as the wildest, most dizzying carpet pattern possible on its main floor.

Recently, a missing piece from the Founders Memorial Library came home to rest on Oct. 9, 2018: a portrait of the man who made NIU's first library possible, Jacob Haish. The portrait now joins those of Glidden, Ellwood, and Clinton Rosette in the building collectively named for them.

Service Awards

November 2019

5 Years

Thomas Hapeman – Infrastructure Services
Dirk Happ – Materials Management
Natasha Johnson – University Recreation and Wellness
Stephen Weiss – Bursar
Adam West – Infrastructure Services

10 Years

William Hertzner – Libraries
Brandon Lagana – Career Services
Leslie Shive – International Training Office

15 years

William Crase – Physical Plant
Edward Murphy – Integrated Media Technologies
Mark Papka – Intercollegiate Athletics
Christopher Samples – Facilities Management

20 Years

Keenon Darlinger – Materials Management
Tammy Klavenga – Housing and Residential Services
Michael Olenek – Application Services
Lynn Retherford – Music
Erwin Whittke – Campus Dining Services

25 Years

Darren Mitchell – Public Safety
Susan Stephens – Northern Public Radio

December 2019

5 Years

Sara Finnegan – Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development Division Administration

15 Years

Scheryl Decker – Building Services
Kristin Schulz – Child Development and Family Center

20 Years

Katherine Dempsey – Integrated Media Technologies
Marcy Kalvelage – Bursar
Jennifer Ridge – College of Health and Human Sciences
Ellen Smith – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Mary Strub – Center for Governmental Studies