



Northern Illinois  
University

# Northern Staff News

July 2020

[niu.edu/operating-staff-council](http://niu.edu/operating-staff-council) | [osc@niu.edu](mailto:osc@niu.edu)

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## 2020-21 OSC Officers

Natasha Johnson, President  
Jay Monteiro, Vice President  
Stacey Bivens, Secretary  
Cindy Kozumplik, Parliamentarian  
Linda Yates, Treasurer

**125**  
**YEARS**  
1895-2020

## President's Corner



Greetings Fellow Operating Staff,

As this will be my final installment of "President's Corner" for this term, it is also my distinct privilege to announce our next OSC president: Natasha Johnson. I've had the pleasure of serving with Natasha on University Council, OSC, as well as our Workplace Issues subcommittee. She has proven to be a positive contributor, a collaborative communicator and has established herself as a valuable addition to the council. This past year certainly wasn't easy, and I don't expect this upcoming year to be a breeze either, but I have the utmost confidence in Natasha's ability to lead and in each of our council member's ability to provide NIU staff with the best representation possible.

I'm exceedingly proud of everything the OSC has been able to accomplish this year, despite these unprecedented times. A couple final updates: on May 29, President Lisa Freeman acknowledged a resolution which was overwhelmingly passed by the OSC calling for the implementation of a voluntary pay deduction or furlough program to be implemented for all employees. [OSC Resolution 2020.1](#) was drafted in response to the COVID-19-related civil service layoffs and academic break reductions in hopes that if many employees volunteer to sacrifice a little, it may prevent a few from being forced to sacrifice a lot. In the time since, I am pleased to report that our counterparts on the SPS council unanimously adopted a similar resolution. Also, after nearly 18 months of collaboration, [new and updated grievance procedures](#) have finally been established for those faculty and staff who are not represented by collective bargaining. Lastly, I am disappointed to admit that it is simply unrealistic to hope for a traditional Civil Service Celebration event this year. Our PR/Activities subcommittee is currently brainstorming potential alternatives and welcomes any and all feedback, suggestions and ideas.

No matter one's beliefs or opinions, it's increasingly difficult not to feel like the walls of pandemic guidelines, social unrest, political polarization and financial uncertainty are caving in around us. Don't ever hesitate to prioritize your own health and well-being. [utilize the resources available to you](#), and don't ever forget that we're all in this together. Challenge yourself to be respectful, open-minded and understanding, especially amongst fellow Huskies. I will remain an active member of shared governance and will continue to be an outspoken advocate for all staff members at every opportunity, but I look forward to a bit of a reprieve and hope to make progress on some personal improvement goals. (Maybe finish my degree that I've been two classes short of completion for ... nine years.) I continue placing myself at your disposal, so please don't ever hesitate to reach out for any reason!

Ever Forward,

Jeffry Royce  
Grateful President | Operating Staff Council  
[jroyce@niu.edu](mailto:jroyce@niu.edu) | [osc@niu.edu](mailto:osc@niu.edu)

# Pandemic Hobby - Getting Started Gardening

Many of NIU's Operating Staff have taken up hobbies since working from home. One hobby in particular has been gardening. To help you be the best gardener — hobby or otherwise — we went to Melissa Burlingame, [NIU's Green Team](#) chairperson and a leader for the [NIU Communiversity Gardens](#).

Everywhere I turn (on the internet), it seems that I am reading more about the increase in gardening that is going on right now. I have to admit that I did get my home vegetable garden set up and looking rather nice for the season, and I have plans to do some additional landscaping. So, maybe there is some draw to nurturing our environment when we are limited in how we can spend our time.

If you too are one of the many who are trying out your green thumb, there are thousands of resources online to answer practically any question you might have. I like to start with the websites of university extension offices, as each state has dedicated resources to answer your gardening needs. NIU also hosts education sessions on some areas such as herb gardening or growing vegetables in planters.

Based on my own experiences with the [NIU Communiversity Gardens](#), and my home garden, here are some tips for sustainable gardening:

- **Start small** – If you have never gardened before, it is easy to underestimate the amount of maintenance it can take to keep your plants happy.

- **Select vegetables that you know you will eat** – Otherwise your harvest will likely go to waste (prior to this pandemic, I would have recommended that you share your bounty).

- **Keep an eye out for sales** – The end of the season is still an OK time to plant some larger perennial (come back each year) varieties to add some color and texture to your yard.

- **Water regularly** – This one is pretty easy to forget, and the best time of day is either early in the day or later in the evening.

- **Consider a house plant or two** – There are lots of easy-to-care-for varieties to add some greenery to your indoor space.

- **Accept that plants will die** – this is the cycle of life, and sometimes it is just better to let the plant go (I promise it will be OK and that you are not a failure).

Whether gardening is a coping mechanism during this pandemic, something that has been a lifelong hobby or a newfound passion/hobby/learning opportunity, any start is a good start when it comes to gardening.

Happy planting!

## Confessions of a Rookie

### Rookie: Kathleen Hughes

Office of Undergraduate Admissions

Hire date: April 20, 2020

Hi Kathleen, why don't we start with you telling us what you do at NIU?

*I'm an Office Administrator in the Office of Admissions.*

Woah, that's some alliteration! Let's move on to something a bit less formal, more instrumental... what was the best concert you've ever attended?

*It is a tie for me between Cher and a pretty small punk band called Diet Cig. Cher was magic, and Diet Cig was at a small venue in Chicago, 100 degrees, very little A/C, and fun and full of energy. I'm not sure how that would be a tie...I'm pretty addicted to my air conditioner.*

Thinking of things to do in air conditioning, what was the last book you read?

*"It Ended Badly" by Jennifer Wright. It's a book about historical break ups, but it's a lot more fun than it sounds. It's a great bit of comedy that I definitely needed during the last few months.*

I can respect that. Humor is a necessity these days. Something tells me you have a great idea of fun and silly- care to tell me about the craziest thing you've ever done?

*When I was 22, I got a tattoo because I lost a bet.*

That must have been some bet!

*I also have shaved my head twice- once was an undercut that I had for years, and more recently being in quarantine I shaved the sides of my head just to see what it would look like. It's fun but growing it out is a pain.*

I think I'm seeing a pattern here... Alright, how about your favorite place in the world?

*London! I have had the massive privilege of visiting twice. I really can't wait to go back. My partner and I were meant to go in March, but... pandemic. We were gutted to not be able to go (and so were our wallets). Now we're planning to go in five years when it'll be safer to fly!*

Oh London! It's beautiful there. I've seen... the inside of the airport. Moving on...Let's end this confession with a confession — what is your secret talent that no one knows about?

*I can play three instruments! I have a ukulele, a guitar, and a banjo. I'm pretty good at the ukulele, still learning guitar, and I can play a few songs on the banjo. I can also build Ikea furniture perfectly after reading the instructions only once.*

I think half of campus just hired you as their furniture assembler!

And there you have it folks — this edition's Confessions of a Rookie. If you've been at NIU fewer than five years and want to be the next rookie, email Rave Meyer at [RMeyer@niu.edu](mailto:RMeyer@niu.edu). Also, if you have suggestions of candidates, please have them reach out to me.

# Employment Changes

## May 2020

### Welcome New Employees:

**Michael Calhoun**, Building Service Worker – Building Services  
**Katelyn Carbonell**, Business/Administrative Associate – Development Administration  
**Harshit Choudhary**, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards  
**Bhuwaneshwari Iyer**, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards  
**Amy Ogden**, Events Administrator Associate – Alumni Services  
**Swetha Palakoti**, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards  
**Matthew Stark**, Program Coordinator – Health Studies  
**Venkata Tota**, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards  
**Gireshababu Yemparala**, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards

### Retirements:

**Jerilyn Faivre**, Culinary Worker I – Campus Dining Services  
**Amelia Gould**, Office Support Specialist – Leadership, Educational Psychology and Foundations  
**April Johnson**, Account Technician II – Accounts Payable and Travel  
**Krista Jones**, IT Technical Associate – Application Services  
**Virginia Meo**, Budget Analyst III – Student Affairs

### Separations:

**Tessa Gallentine**, Office Support Specialist – Campus Parking  
**Rachael Jones**, Grants and Contracts Associate – Sponsored Programs Administration  
**Mekhi Marshall**, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety  
**Randall Moore**, IT Technical Associate – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
**Amy Scoville**, Office Support Specialist – School of Interdisciplinary Health Professions  
**Alexandra Tudor**, Child Development Supervisor – Child Development and Family Center

## June 2020

### Welcome New Employees:

**Neshay Curtis**, Building Service Worker – Building Services  
**Hardik Jain**, IT Technical Associate – Registration and Records  
**Teri O'Connell**, Building Service Worker – Building Services  
**Jane Pappas**, Program Assistant – Chief Diversity Officer  
**Juanpablo Ramirez**, Radio TV Producer Announcer – Northern Public Radio

### Death:

**Peter Poterek**, Collection Specialist – Bursar

### Retirements:

**Sandy Carey**, Food Service Administrator II – Campus Dining Services  
**Randy Darling**, Culinary Worker I – Campus Dining Services  
**Bonni Feltz**, Office Support Specialist – Graduate School  
**Shelley Harold**, Office Administrator – School of Art and Design  
**Donald Kozlowski Jr.**, Food Service Stores Laborer – Campus Dining Services  
**Edward Murphy**, Pre-Press Technician – Integrated Media Technologies  
**Teresa Rogers**, Staff Nurse I – Lorado Taft Operations

### Separations:

**Christina Bagwill**, Office Administrator – Theatre and Dance  
**Cheryl Davis**, Office Support Associate – Conferences Event Management  
**Craig Mulligan**, IT Technical Associate – College of Business  
**Chanel Suggett**, Office Manager – Environmental Studies  
**Cody Tescher**, Program Adviser – Intercollegiate Athletics

## NIU's Operating Staff Council Teams Group Open to All

We have created an [OSC group in Teams](#), open to everyone at NIU. It is still in its infancy, but interested individuals should be able to ask questions, access upcoming agendas and previous meeting minutes, as well as calendar appointments for council meetings. Please provide feedback to help us make this group as effective as possible.

## Feedback and Concerns Anonymous Suggestion Box

Do you have feedback or concerns but are worried about possible retaliation? Please send us your input through the completely anonymous [virtual suggestion box](#). Open to operating staff, Civil Service, SPS, Students, administration, and faculty.

# Service Awards

## May 2020

### 5 Years

**Jason Bolles** – Housing and Residential Services  
**Jeannine East** – Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development  
**Jennifer Ferris** – Sponsored Programs Administration  
**Joan Parrish** – Executive Vice President and Provost

### 15 years

**Cheryl Alliston** – Associate Vice President Finance  
**Michael Mackey** – University Marketing  
**Diane Rich** – Nursing

### 20 Years

**Paul Dauksha** – Application Services  
**Susan Lietz** – Management  
**Ginger Prothero-Schwersenska** – Libraries  
**Bernhard Ritter** – Architectural/Engineering Services

**Rahul Thatte** – College of Law  
**Carrie Williams** – Sponsored Programs Administration

### 25 Years

**Brian Thompson** – Integrated Media Services  
**Vicky Vosburgh** – Kinesiology and Physical Education

### 30 Years

**Joan Pontarelli** – Vice President Research and Innovation Partnerships

## June 2020

### 5 Years

**Sheree Carlson** – Student Involvement and Leadership Development  
**Lima Chatterjee** – Report Cards  
**Zachary Effler** – Libraries  
**Kathryn Swope** – Libraries

### 10 Years

**April Law** – Anthropology  
**Christopher Mitchell** – Center for Black Studies

### 15 Years

**David Berg** – Physical Plant  
**Paula Vasko** – Housing and Residential Services

### 20 Years

**Michael Fleming** – Integrated Media Technologies  
**James Garman** – Physical Plant  
**Paul King** – Grounds

### 25 Years

**Scott Olsen** – Procurement Services and Contract Management  
**Patricia Wieler** – College of Education

## The 10 Best Ways to Help Students Regarding Financial Aid and Scholarships

### Angela Gutierrez-Vargas

Many of the operating staff at NIU are in academic support units that deal directly with students. We thought it would be a good idea to help you help the students who may ask you for financial aid advice.

**1. Urge students to complete their FAFSA yearly**, as close to the Oct. 1 availability date as possible, to ensure they receive the maximum aid they may be eligible for.

**2. Remind students they need to check their NIU student email frequently** as well as their **MyNIU** "To Do's" found under the Tasks Tile on the student homepage.

**3. Advise students to use our financial aid guide** for important steps they need to take.

**4. Encourage students to use the Planning and Cost Estimator** to begin planning for any balance they will owe, or to determine any credit balance they will have for other educationally related expenses.

**5. Inform students about MyScholarships**. This is an NIU's campuswide scholarship application system.

**6. Enlighten students about their opportunities for private scholarships**. They can find information and additional resources for **outside scholarships** on our Financial Aid and Scholarship Office webpage.

**7. Educate students that grades and attendance are not only critical for academic success, but are also important for continued financial aid eligibility.** Per federal regulations, an undergraduate student loses financial aid eligibility if they do not successfully complete at least 67% of courses attempted for the degree and if their cumulative GPA falls below 2.0.

**8. Before a school year begins, financial aid assumes full-time enrollment.** Once enrollment is final at the end of the drop/add period, aid must be adjusted for actual enrollment.

**9. Graduating in a timely manner is the best way to reduce debt.** Additionally, both grant and loan programs have maximum lifetime eligibility which some students will exceed in a fifth or sixth year of attendance.

**10. Please review our Frequently Asked Questions section found on our Financial Aid and Scholarship webpage.**

Feel free to reach the FA office if you have additional questions:  
**Financial Aid and Scholarship Office**  
Swen Parson Hall 245 | DeKalb, Illinois 60115  
815-753-1395 | [finaid@niu.edu](mailto:finaid@niu.edu) / [scholarships@niu.edu](mailto:scholarships@niu.edu)  
[niu.edu/financial-aid](http://niu.edu/financial-aid)

# A Map to Huskie Treasure

By Rebekka Ayers

As employees gradually return to campus and social distancing remains a priority, one way to enjoy campus — and its history — will be to head outdoors. A scenic walk around campus will be a great way to enjoy some fresh air; scope out some places to enjoy a socially-distant break, lunch or picnic; and take a self-guided tour of campus landmarks.

There is a little something for everyone to enjoy around campus, especially on the east side where one can visit several unique landmarks within just 10-15 minutes. The Freshman Kissing Bench donated by the Class of 1903; the Alumni Court adjacent to HSC gifted by the Class of 1968; trees planted in memory of students and a former NIU president gone now but never forgotten; benches dedicated to the memory of professors and staff lost to the passage of time and other tragedies; at least five Huskies on Parade; and sculptures aplenty are just a few of the treasures campus has to offer.

Check out this list and follow the treasure map to take yourself on a tour through NIU history!

1. Huskie on Parade (2008).
2. Pyramus and Thisbe Statue.
3. Forward, Together Forward Memorial Gardens.
4. The Balance of Equality.
5. Martin Luther King, Jr. Statue.
6. Tree and Plaque Dedicated to NIU President Leslie A. Holmes (1974).
7. Alumni Court (1968).
8. Two Huskies on Parade (2008)
9. Huskie on Parade (2008).
10. Bill of Rights Plaza.
11. Benches dedicated to NIU Staff.
12. Fred L. Charles Memorial Bench (1943).
13. Observatory (1965).
14. Le Baron (1967).
15. Incredible Nothing that Permeates All Reality.
16. Castle Drive Gates.
17. East Lagoon Kiwanis Bench (1941).
18. Freshman (Kissing) Bench (1903).
19. Memorial Tree and Plaque to Student Founders of the NIU Footbag Club (2006).
20. William the Goose Plaque.
21. Veteran's Memorial Flag Pole.
22. Huskie on Parade (2008).
23. Altgeld Grotesque.
24. Outdoor Sculptures around the Jack Arends Art Building.
25. Outdoor Sculptures around the Music Building.



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