President’s Corner

Greetings Fellow Operating Staff,

It’s hard to believe this semester has finally drawn to a close, especially considering the last two months alone have each felt a semester long! COVID-19 has certainly stolen the spotlight and monopolized all recent focus, but we cannot allow it to eclipse our collective successes and accomplishments.

During its final meeting of the year, University Council overwhelmingly voted to approve the sweeping shared governance changes which I have mentioned in previous articles. The most notable change for employees is that staff members, both SPS and OS, now account for 31% of the voting seats; whereas we previously only accounted for 6%. As a result, pending final approvals via faculty referendum and the BOT, NIU staff will enjoy significantly more influence over nonacademic matters than any of our counterparts across the state. Additionally, University Council adopted newly updated grievance procedures for those faculty and staff not represented by collective bargaining agreements — a culmination of over 18 months of committee efforts.

After being home for eight weeks, I am pleased to report that my significant other and I have not yet caused each other harm, and we have finally settled into a successful work-from-home arrangement. I must say my favorite part has been watching many of my colleagues’ pets join in on Teams meetings. My own cat, Moses, attempted to cast his own vote during my last meeting.

There is a lot of work left ahead of us. I recognize that our administration has some difficult decisions to make and I do not envy a single one of them. I continue to be grateful that NIU has emerged as an exemplar of communication and employee commitment, and I promise that staff concerns will remain at the forefront of every conversation. I believe that we will look back on this time and recognize that our 125th anniversary was not defined by the sacrifices we had to make, but rather by the ways in which we came together, became stronger, and moved NIU forward, together forward, all despite this pandemic.

Continuing Forward,

Jeffry Royce
President | Operating Staff Council
jroyce@niu.edu | osc@niu.edu

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.
Huskies on the Front Line Need Our Help

Pamela Roesner

During a recent Operating Staff Council (OSC) Workplace Issues Committee meeting, Housing and Residential Services Associate Director Lauren Teso-Warner expressed a need for masks for housing staff. Teso-Warner indicated that there are approximately 500 students still living on campus, and community advisors are on the front line providing services and support for those students.

OSC member and Holmes Student Center (HSC) Administrative Aide Patricia Gingrich rallied other HSC staff, and they began sewing masks. Gingrich reached out to Aline Click, director of eLearning Services and the Digital Convergence Lab in the Division of Outreach Engagement and Regional Development.

Click is the coordinator for The Giving Project: Crafting for a Cause, sponsored by the OSC, whose members create items for Huskie students and other community members in need. This is a growing cause and now includes staff from Housing and Residential Services, HSC, The Giving Project, Employee Assistance Program, Police and Public Safety, and many others.

Materials are still needed for making face masks and include elastic, paracord and old NIU T-shirts. For additional information on how to donate materials or for face mask patterns and instructions, visit The Giving Project or email dell@niu.edu or pg Gingrich@niu.edu.

NIU students can obtain a free face mask by showing their OneCard ID when picking up a meal at New Hall or by visiting the NIU Police Dispatch Center located next to Health Services on Wirtz Drive. Masks will be available on a first-come, first-served basis and will be replenished as they become available.

Confessions of a Rookie

Rookie: Jessica Seipp

Human Resource Services
Hire date: March 21, 2018

Tell me, do you have a secret talent no one knows about? Well some people know, but I am a member of Stage Coach Players in DeKalb, so you may have seen me in a play or two. If anyone saw “Noises Off” I was Poppy.

A certified, bonafide actor is in our midst. Look at that! I bet you have a tame side, too. Right?

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. Also, if you have suggestions of candidates, please have them reach out to me.

Get to Know the Committee

The Public Relations and Activities Committee meets once each month. We focus primarily on generating ideas for articles to appear in this newsletter; planning events such as the annual staff bowling night and OSC Staff Appreciation Luncheon; and selecting recipients for the OSC dependent scholarship.

Typically in March or April, we would have hosted the annual bowling night and also would have had an opportunity to meet many of you in person at our table at NIU’s annual Wellness Fair. Then in this issue, we would share photos from these events with you. While the Wellness Fair planned for April I had to be cancelled, we still hope to offer staff an opportunity to get together for both the staff bowling night event and the OSC luncheon. Naturally, we are waiting to see how current events will shape these plans in coming months and will keep you posted once we have more information.

In the meantime, if you have suggestions for fun activities we could offer to staff once group gatherings are possible again, we would love to hear from you. Please email those suggestions to our committee chair Rebekka Ayres at rayres@niu.edu. Thank you!
March 2020

Welcome New Employees:

Christina Bagwell, Office Administrator – Theatre and Dance
Brian Buddinger, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Elizabeth Chilton, Business Manager II – Intercollegiate Athletics
Rogelio Godinez-Parra, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Nicholas Holloway, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Alison Hurlburt, Program Coordinator – Chief Diversity Officer
Yoon Jae Jeon, Program Coordinator – Asian American Resource Center
Johnathan Johnson, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety
Krystyna Kamka, Office Manager – Center for Latino and Latin American Studies
Patrick Kunzer, Multimedia Communications Associate – Office of Institutional Communications
Xavier Lewis, Facility Operations Specialist – Regional Center Operations
Jonathan Lindstrand, Office Manager – College of Education
Kelsey Mark, Admissions/Records Officer – Registration and Records
Kazim Mohammed, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Julnasha Morehead, Program Adviser – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Gennelle Romero, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Rachel Schmit, Senior Events Coordinator – College of Business

Retirements:

James Farley, Building Service Worker – Building Services

Separations:

Ashley Flesher, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services
Prashanth Gurrala, IT Technical Associate – Application Services
Shane Miller, Office Support Specialist – Physics
Miles Rinehart, Accounting Associate – Human Resource Services
Stephanie Smialek, Program Adviser – College of Health and Human Sciences
George Smith, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Services
Avyion Sterling, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety
Mindy Venners, Grants and Contracts Associate – Sponsored Programs Administration

April 2020

Welcome New Employees:

Kourtney Bert, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety
Nia Burrows, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety
Lima Chatterjee, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Mohammed Faridi, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Joseph Griffey, Program Coordinator – Nursing
Hope Hammond, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety
Kathleen Hughes, Office Administrator – Admissions Tours and Events
Cynthia Serrano, Maid – Holmes Student Center
Samuel Yost, Building Service Worker – Building Services

Retirements:

Carolyn Ramsey, Office Support Specialist – Career Services

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 Gravlin, 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

Award Winners

Operating Staff Council Dependent Endowed Scholarship

Congratulations to the winners of this year’s Dependent Scholarship Awards. The Operating Staff Council was able to award four scholarships this year for a total of over $3,200.

Hannah Secor
NIU employee parent: Jill Secor.

Olivia Monteiro
NIU employee parents: Jay and Christine Monteiro.

Morgan Haga
NIU employee parent: Sandy Jakubiak.

Sam Hancock
NIU employee parent: Barbara Hancock.

Outstanding Service Award

The Outstanding Service Award is presented each year to up to four NIU civil service employees. The award recognizes employees who have demonstrated outstanding service and made significant contributions to the university community.

Congratulations are in order to the following individuals for their outstanding service to NIU.

Jennifer Ridge
Administrative Assistant, College of Health and Human Sciences.

Leslie Shive
Program Assistant, International Training Office.

Patricia Wallace
Program Coordinator, Research Compliance, Integrity and Safety.

Alan Clemens
Program Director, Report Cards.
March 2020

5 Years

- Brian Berchtold – Vice Provost
- Jonathan Cook – Public Safety
- Nicole Giardelli – Allied Health and Communicative Disorders
- LeeAnn Gustafson – University Recreation and Wellness
- Michael Riley – Campus Dining Services
- Julie Schetley – College of Health and Human Sciences

10 Years

- Joan S. Laurino – Center for Governmental Studies
- Samantha McCarron – Financial Aid and Scholarship Office

15 Years

- Angelina Gasero – English
- Kenneth Whitney – Campus Dining Services

20 Years

- Jeffrey Anderson – Heating Plant
- Deirdre Davis – Grounds
- Jeffrey Lang – Building Services

Patrick Sanchez – Libraries
Lori Viereckl – Building Service

25 Years

- Matt Volk – Heating Plant

30 Years

Debra Thompson – College of Visual and Performing Arts

April 2020

5 Years

- Scott Foelske – Intercollegiate Athletics
- Deborah Gory – School of Interdisciplinary Health Professions
- Michele Hunt – Libraries
- Lisa Johnson – Physical Plant
- Joseph Reilly – Libraries
- Lynn Schmitz – ACCESS Tutoring and Support Services
- Margaret Thacker – College of Education

10 Years

- Andrzej Stolarski – Parking Services

15 Years

- Rebekah Kohli – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

20 Years

- Carolyn Grzywa – Allied Health and Communicative Disorders
- Len Lennergard – Integrated Media Technologies
- Jeffrey McCarthy – Infrastructure Services
- Ernest Williams – Building Services

25 Years

- Loris Anderson – Bursar
- Suzanne Hogan – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

35 Years

- Vance Moore – Application Services

“Swen Parson Lived Here”
and Other Points of Interest in the DeKalb Ellwood Historic District

By Rebekka Ayers

If you’ve been feeling cooped up during the quarantine and need a dose of NIU history, consider hopping into the car and taking a windows-up, drive-thru scenic tour through the streets of the Ellwood Historic District which is adjacent to the east side of the NIU campus. You will find several streets filled with architecture of bygone days.

When NIU opened, no residence halls were available to students. However, from the beginning, community support for then Northern Illinois State Normal School (NISNS), was so strong that DeKalb residents eagerly welcomed students into their homes. Several “clubs” were formed and the students who lived in these homes often identified themselves based upon which club they called “home.” Most of these homes still exist today, and some of them continue to rent rooms to NIU students:

- 247 West Locust – Shafer Club
- 443 College – Benson Club
- 305 Augusta – Tudor Club
- 528 College – Hurt Club
- 148 Harrison – Fowler Club
- 355 Augusta – Kilmer Club

In those early days when few people owned cars and DeKalb was far more rural than it is today, faculty and staff created a true community atmosphere by living among, and socializing with, students and residents.
"Swen Parson Lived Here," con’t.

In her Women at Northern book series, former NIU First Lady Barbara Cole Peters describes how students were isolated from the rural town of DeKalb, because it was nearly a mile away. This isolation served to meld the students and faculty into a small family which entertained itself and included everyone.

Another factor explaining this bond may have been the age of the students in relation to the faculty. Many NISNS students were older than the modern norm of 18 to 21 years of age, and 45% of the students in the first class ranged in age from 21 to 40 years old.

Mathematics Professor Norma K. Stelford gives another example of this community atmosphere in her 1972 essay, “Notes on the Mathematics Department of the Northern Illinois University: The First Three Administrations.” “[Mathematics Professor Swen Parson] frequently invited the mathematics majors to his home at the corner of Linden Place and College Avenue for informal Sunday evening gatherings. After making hot chocolate and popping corn in the kitchen, the group would often sit around the fireplace while their gracious host entertained them with an amusing story about one of his grandchildren or played a record of classical music.”

If you decide to take a tour, be sure to look for the following homes that have special connections to NIU history:

208 College Avenue, where English teacher Ida Simonson lived in 1910; she later moved to 235 Normal Road.

305 College Avenue, where math professor Swen Parson lived from at least 1910 through 1940, and probably until his death in 1945. The day the 1940 census was taken, Swen Parson was living with his daughter Eleanor and his son-in-law Romeo Zulauf, and their children, Richard and Nancy. Zulauf’s 72-year-old mother Hattie is listed as a boarder.

322 Augusta Avenue, where social science teacher Edward Carlton Page lived in 1929, and NIU’s first Foreign Language Department Chair Pauline “Lillian” Cobb also lived in 1930-31. Edward C. Page was known for collecting historic artifacts to share with students.

336 College Avenue, where Professor Charles McMurry lived with — as of the 1910 census, his wife, five children and a servant. According to Earl W. Hayter’s “Education in Transition,” Colonel Ellwood built the home for McMurry as an incentive for him to join President Cook at NISNS as the director of the Training School.

336 Augusta Avenue, where Celine Neptune rented an apartment, which she shared with her younger sister Katharine, a librarian at NISNS, and their mother Nannie. Celine lived there through at least 1940.

346 Linden Place, where fourth NIU president Karl Adams lived according to the 1929-30 Student and Staff Directory. He later moved to 133 Park Avenue, according to the 1930-31 Student and Staff Directory, and had moved yet again to 345 Augusta Avenue in time for the 1940 census. One cannot help but wonder, “Why did he move so many times?”

411 College Avenue, at the northwest corner of College and Park, where first NISNS President John Williston Cook lived when he came to DeKalb. According to Glen A. Gildemeister, the house was “one of the inducements Colonel [Isaac] Ellwood tossed into the package” as DeKalb vied for the new Normal school to be located in DeKalb.

To learn more about NIU History from the comfort of your home, consider a visit to the [NIU Regional Archives web page](http://www.niu.edu/regionalarchives) which includes free access to NIU’s Norther yearbook collection, or check out the books referenced in this article.

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