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President's Corner



Greetings Operating Staff,

As this will be my final installment of the "President's Corner," it has been a privilege and an honor to be elected to serve this past year as the first African American president of the Operating Staff Council (OSC).

As I walked with my graduating class in the in-person ceremony held on June 25, 2021, it symbolized all the hard work we have achieved during unprecedented times. What we have accomplished is nothing short of amazing. This pandemic has taught me that we as a university are stronger than we think, we are resilient, innovative and the best is yet to come. I made the difficult decision not to seek reelection to be prepared for what is next for me. I will remain an active member of shared governance and continue to help in any way that I can while still on the council.

This OSC updated our bylaws on how we will elect members for University Council. We will open one seat to civil service at large, which means you can get involved and not have to be concerned with the time commitment it takes to be on OSC, which is a huge opportunity! I believe this is one of the most important committees that a person can be on because many of the decisions that will affect the entire university are made at this council. If you ever thought, "we need to make this change," or "our university would be better if we did this," you should consider putting your name on the ballot when the time comes to be on this council.

Another change the OSC has made to its bylaws is extending the president's term from one year to two years. This change will help provide more consistency to the OSC and provide more opportunities to work together with senior leadership and build upon the relationships needed to make decisions and implement changes. It is my privilege to announce our next OSC president: Holly Nicholson. Holly is amazing, and just this past year, she was chair of one committee and secretary of two other committees. She also serves alongside me on the President's Budget Roundtable and just received her Master of Science in digital marketing. She recently received one of the OSC spotlight awards, and the heartfelt message shared about Holly was much deserved.

The Operating Staff Council held its officer elections on July 1. Congratulations to our new President Holly Nicholson (Web and Internal Communications), Vice President Jeffrey Royce (HSC) and Secretary Evan Forbes (HSC). Congratulations also to our Parliamentarian Cindy Kozumplik (Division of Information Technology) and Treasurer Linda Yates (College of Education), who were reelected for second terms.

We received some emails asking about the Civil Service Celebration. Unfortunately, we cannot have our traditional Civil Service Celebration event this year, but if you have any thoughts or ideas on something we can do virtually, please email us at osc@niu.edu.

Stronger together,

Natasha Johnson

President, Operating Staff Council 2020-2021

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NIU Employees can Request to be Removed from fall 2021 COVID-19 Surveillance Testing

Beginning Monday, Aug. 16, 2021, all employees will be added to the weekly surveillance testing pool. Employees can be exempt from testing if they have been fully vaccinated or if their supervisors and division leaders verify that those employees are working entirely remotely for the fall semester. To request to be removed from the testing requirement, please [complete the form on the Protecting the Pack website](#) by 11:59 p.m. CDT Thursday, Aug. 12.

You will need to provide which vaccine you received and the date of your final dose of the vaccine. You will also need to upload a clear photo or scan of your proof of vaccination (JPG or PDF file format). This will most likely be the CDC card issued to you when you received your first COVID-19 shot. If you did not receive a card, please upload a scan, screenshot or photo of any printouts or proof of vaccination that you received from the health provider where you received the vaccine.

Confessions of a Rookie

Rookie: Rave Meyer

Office Manager

Hire date: Sept. 16, 2017

So, a little birdie told us that our zany interviewer for Confessions of a Rookie is a rookie herself. So, we decided to turn the tables on Rave Meyer. Rave is the office manager in Environmental Studies, which is part of the Institute for the Study of Environment, Sustainability and Energy. They exist to foster research, education and community engagement about the environment and sustainability.

Let's get started. Rave, where is your favorite place in the world?

Among the trees, preferably near a river. My husband and I love to go camping and kayaking and do so frequently. Tent camping. Hammock camping. River or lake. You name it. A few years ago, we spent the solar eclipse camping at the Shawnee National Forest with nothing but our backpacks and two hammocks. Last weekend we kayaked the Spoon River.

That sounds like outdoors is the place for you. It sounds very relaxing. What else do you like to do to relax?

I like to read. I'm on book four of Robert Jordan's Wheel of Time series titled, "The Shadow Rising." I read the series when it first came out in 1990 and was so hooked, I reread it occasionally. I'm on book five (again), and my license plate is personalized for a type of character in the series. I cannot wait for the Amazon series to premiere later this year.

When you are not relaxing and you are at work, what's your go-to productivity trick?

Answer emails promptly. Do not wait. In today's times, email is vital to any work being accomplished and your email answer could be what's preventing someone else from completing their task or job. Even if I don't have an answer right away, I try to email and say so. Then I find the answer and respond again.

That sounds like good advice. What makes you laugh?

My husband. On a daily basis. He is incredibly smart and intelligent - quips just seem to flow out of him often and when I least expect them. I do so love to laugh, and he is a never-ending supply.

When you are not laughing, you are obviously somewhere near the opposite, right? What are your top three pet peeves?

- 1. Assuming what you think or believe is what others think or believe.*
- 2. Manipulation or coercion in any form, for any reason.*
- 3. Paper money not all facing the same direction.*

Do people really carry cash any more to worry about it all facing the same direction? What else are you hiding from us? What is your secret talent that no one knows about?

Well, not many people know this, but I have done stand-up comedy. Not recently, but it was something I did for several years. My brain simply finds the twist (a.k.a. funny) in situations. I have to curtail that instinct at work. It could get me in trouble!

Laughter is the best medicine. It keeps us all going. Is that what makes you excited to go to work every day?

Well, I truly love my job. I am in the perfect department - my boss is polite, professional and particular. My co-workers are fabulous. We all get along very well and are respectful of each other. It is absolutely refreshing.

OK, folks, those were quips from the rookie who interviews rookies! If you, or someone you know has worked at NIU fewer than five years and wants to be the next rookie, please contact Rave at RMeyer@niu.edu. We are always looking for new and exciting rookies to play along.

Do You Know?

You can check NIU's policies and business procedures:

- Policy Library: niu.edu/policies
- Business Procedures Directory: niu.edu/procedures

Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

What every student and staff member should know.

What is Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)?

Federal and state regulations require that students meet SAP to be eligible to receive financial aid, including student loans and federal campus work-study. There are three standards of SAP that are measured at the end of each semester to establish eligibility for aid for the next semester the student will attend. The standards reviewed are cumulative GPA, rate of completion (Pace) and maximum timeframe.

How and when is SAP evaluated?

SAP is evaluated at the end of each semester/payment period (including summer) for all students who enrolled for that semester/payment period regardless of whether the student applied for or received financial aid. The result of that evaluation determines a student's SAP status and financial aid eligibility for the immediately following semester/payment period that the student attends.

Reestablishing eligibility

A student who loses financial aid eligibility and has a SAP status of Not Meet **can attend**, if otherwise allowed by NIU Academic and Student Conduct policy, **without receiving financial aid**. Once the student meets all SAP standards, the student will reestablish eligibility and have a status of Meet for the next the semester the student attends.

A student may file an appeal based on special circumstances.

If the student will be able to meet all SAP standards in one semester an academic plan is not required and students with an approved appeal will have a status of Probation.

If the student needs more than one semester to meet all SAP standards, an academic plan is required and student with an approved appeal will have a status of Plan.

Preparing an appeal

An appeal includes a personal statement, supporting documentation, and a meeting with your dean and/or academic advisor who will complete a course plan.

You can find the appeal and read more about what is needed at:

- [Undergraduate and Post-Baccalaureate SAP Appeal Documents.](#)
- [Graduate and Law Student SAP Appeal Documents.](#)

Summary

SAP regulations are established by the Department of Education (DOE), not by NIU, so they do not necessarily align with academic policy.

For example:

- A student could lose their financial aid eligibility, but not be dismissed from NIU. Once student meets all SAP standards, the student will reestablish eligibility and have a status of Meet for the next the semester the student attends.
- A student could get a GPA restart which would put them within the minimum GPA for academic policy, but they would still not be eligible for financial aid because they must have met the cumulative GPA standards for SAP.
- If a student decides to attend NIU and does not meet SAP and does not have an approved appeal, then they will be responsible for their charges and will not be able to receive financial aid until they are meeting SAP standards.

Employment Changes

May 2021

Welcome New Employees:

Tiene Bialas, Human Resource Representative – Human Resource Services
Carlos Brown, Jr., Program Services Specialist – Center for Child Welfare and Education
Claire Buchanan, Radio TV Producer
Announcer II – Northern Public Radio
Marissa Dordick, Program Adviser – Special and Early Education
Mohammed Faridi, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Mownica Ghanta, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Sashi Gobbilla, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Shay Hanlon, Office Manager – Human Resource Services
Stephen Hansen, Business Manager I – College of Health and Human Sciences
Maulshree Verma, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards

Retirements:

Susan Gossman, Deputy Director – Sponsored Programs Administration
Herbert Kaelin, Steam and Power Plant III – Heating Plant
Lori Kocher, Admissions/Records Specialist II – Registration and Records
Alice Pileski, Office Manager – Engineering Technology
Carolyn VanEtten, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Maria Wilk-Siuba, Benefits Counselor – Human Resource Services

Separations:

Mark Andres, Steam and Power Plant I – Heating Plant
Sarah Carli, Library Assistant – Libraries
Maria Christiansen, IPolice Officer – Public Safety
Tamara Cochran, Human Resource Representative – Human Resource Services
Hareendra Donapati, IT Technical Associate – Center for Governmental Studies
Abeer Elshamy, Food Service Area Supervisor – Conferences Event Management
Ramses Flores, IT Support Associate – Operation Services
Anthony Guzzaldo, Educational Program Evaluation Coordinator – Vice Provost
Lyndsey Johnson, Human Resource Associate – Human Resource Services
Erick Koenig, Automotive Technician – Transportation
Osel Lopez, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety
Michael Lyle, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Swetha Palakoti, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Donald Rodman, Police Lieutenant – Public Safety
Rita Selig, Program Coordinator – Nursing
Niti Srivastava, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Jennifer Symonds, Library Assistant – Libraries

June 2021

Welcome New Employees:

Aivree Gomez, IT Support Associate – Housing and Residential Services
Yashwanth Kasturi, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Brandon Kraybill, IT Technical Associate – Application Services
Christopher Lowe, Program Adviser – Curriculum and Instruction
Richard Mazzolini, Admissions/Records Specialist II – Graduate School
Enrique Nueve IV, IT Technical Associate – Computer Science
Swetha Palakoti, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards

Death:

Erwin Wittke, Food Service Chef – Campus Dining Service

Retirements:

Barbara Amberg, Program Advisor – Special and Early Education
Mary Beldon, Program Advisor – College of Health and Human Sciences
Susan Bidstrup, Parking and Traffic Coordinator – Campus Parking
James Meyers, IT Manger/Administrative Coordinator – Operation Services
Ted Moen, Program Coordinator – College of Education
Angela Schroeder, Senior Library Specialist – Libraries

Separations:

Chad Bradford, Payroll Specialist II – Human Resource Services
Cordell Curtis, Police Officer – Public Safety
Asabe Dawudu, Business/Administrative Associate – Development Administration
Megan Harris, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Danielle Hintz, Child Development Supervisor – Child Development and Family Center
Hardik Jain, IT Technical Associate – Registration and Records
Heidi Nelson, Events Administrator Associate – Holmes Student Center
Jane Pretkelis, Office Administrator – Physics
Anthony Sperando, Publicity-Promotion Associate – Intercollegiate Athletics
Brittany Wereminski, Program Coordinator – College of Education
Rheycy Williams, Security Guard – Public Safety

Service Awards

May 2021

5 Years

Brigitte Bingham – Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development Web Media and eLearning

Kimberly Imundo – Residential Dining Service

Rana Sanyal – College of Engineering and Engineering Technology

10 Years

Patrick Condon – Grounds

Timothy Condon – Executive Vice President and Provost

Ray Ortiz III – Holmes Student Center

15 Years

Karinne Bredberg – Vice President Research and Innovation Partnerships

Anthony Calderala – Kinesiology and Physical Education

Evelyn Comber – Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault

Catherine Doederlein – Career Services

Ruperto Herrera – Application Services

20 Years

Lorelli Carlson – Registration and Records

Erin Corwin-Surwillo – Graduate School

Dawn Crawford – Vice President Research and Innovation Partnerships

James Gable – Office of Research Compliance, Integrity and Safety

Kathryn Hogshead – Application Services

Michael Kuba – Student Affairs Central

Andrew Reiss – Building Services

Krzysztof Siuba – Heating Plant

25 Years

Fern Evins – Residential Dining Service

June 2021

5 Years

Lynsey Bernardy – Intercollegiate Athletics

William Bryant Jr. – Physical Plant

Keith Dunaway – Physical Plant

10 Years

Elizabeth Denius – Center for Southeast Asian Studies

Christy Fell – Building Services

David Jadran – Public Safety

Larry Williams – Public Safety

15 Years

Myrna Lopez – CHANCE Program

John Moluf – Architectural/Engineering Services

20 Years

Cindy Carlson – Public Safety

Richard Collin Jr. – Physical Plant

Dathan Jackson – Public Safety

Steve Kispert – Accountancy

Amy Pitts – Vice President International Affairs

Joseph Trickey – Regional Technology Services

25 Years

Laura Nicklaus – DoIT-Administration-Business-Finance

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