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President's Corner



Greetings Operating Staff,

With the sun staying out longer and the weather becoming bearable, this is a reminder that **spring is here!** It will not be long before we can see leaves on the trees, people walking their dogs and luscious green grass growing from the ground.

The results are in from the 2021 OSC Professional Development Opportunity survey. The top votes indicated

that staff are interested in learning how to create a survey using multiple channels, change management training, using LinkedIn and learning how to stay engaged while working remotely. We will be working with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to see how these training pieces can be incorporated into their training modules. If you are interested in attending any **training EAP already offers**, be sure to sign up.

We are still living in a time where people are battling fears and have concerns about the pandemic and many social injustices while juggling home and work. I want to remind everyone that it is vital to practice self-care. Check out the **great tips EAP has to offer on self-care**.

As my work on the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee is coming to an end, I am grateful to have witnessed people on our campus demonstrate a new desire to understand what systemic racism is. I have also seen people join the pursuit of improving diversity, equity and inclusion on our campus. I genuinely believe that the work and effort we put forth today will set us up for a better tomorrow.

I encourage you to attend our **April 1 OSC meeting at 9 a.m.** John Heckmann, associate vice president of Facilities Management and Campus Services, will give a presentation on where we currently stand with our facility plans and answer any questions you might have.

If you do not know something, educate yourself, ask for the policy and then read it to know how things work. Join in a **board of trustees meeting** and listen to what is going on at our university. All the meetings are currently virtual, making it easier than ever to listen in.

I am encouraged that through everything we have endured, NIU continues to move forward. Just think of **NASA's Perseverance Rover**. What we continue to accomplish even in the midst of uncertainty depends on us being focused on our future goals. Let us each do our part to encourage one another, check in with our students and tell two people how great and affordable NIU is and watch our admissions grow.

I look forward to seeing you again when it is safe to do so. Do not forget to three Ws: wash your hands, wear your mask and watch your distance to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Stronger Together,

Natasha Johnson

President, Operating Staff Council 2020-2021

Do You Know...?

Sick Leave Bank

If you're a regularly appointed civil service, SPS or faculty member you can [participate in the sick leave bank](#). The bank assists employees who face major health crises and have used all other available benefits.

Employees may donate a minimum of one day of compensable sick leave to the sick leave bank. For those employees not having any compensable sick leave, noncompensable accrued sick leave may be donated. For employees on less than 100% appointment, one day is determined on the basis of their appointment percentage.

An employee who donates must have at least 10 days of accrued sick leave remaining for their personal use after donating one day. Remaining sick leave time is not reviewed for eligibility until the end of the fiscal year, June 30. Participation in the program is then established for the following fiscal year.

Subject to university policies, employees who donate to the sick leave bank under this program will be eligible to request additional sick leave credit in the event that paid leave benefits become exhausted while experiencing a qualifying illness or injury.

Employees in the sick leave bank are eligible for 45 days additional sick leave or 1/3 of the sick leave bank, whichever is less at time of application.

There is an application process to receive additional sick days from the sick leave bank. Contact Human Resource Services with any questions and full details.

If you have not yet joined and would like to, you can [download and fill out the form](#) on the HRS website. Remember, you can only submit the form during the benefits choice period and only those who donate can pull from the bank.

Confessions of a Rookie

Rookie: Jorie O'Brien

Financial Aid Advisor/Coordinator

Hire date: March 19, 2018

Good day, Jorie! How is everything in the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office? I bet you get tons of questions and there is always so much to do! What's your go-to productivity trick?

Music. Especially rock. I can get lost and really focus on my work. Some favorites are Van Halen, Kings of Leon and Foo Fighters.

Those are some great rock bands. Can you tell us what the best concert you've ever attended was?

In March of 2011, my daughter and I attended a Rascal Flatts concert in Moline.

Woah, that's not rock music!

My daughter was 13 and too cool for mom, but we shared a love for this group. We got front row seats! We had so much fun and on the trip there and back we sang and just made memories together.

Memories are all we really have, right? So you and your daughter are close, huh?

Yes, my daughter was about to leave for college in the summer of 2018 and with her gone, it was time to start doing things for me.

Oh? Is that why you wanted to work at NIU? To be close to your daughter?

No, my daughter went to SUU-Carbondale. But I spent many years working close to where I lived, and working back in education was important to me. My husband found the NIU job posting and voilà! Here I am almost three years later.

We are glad to have you with us! So tell me, what's the one thing that surprised you about working for NIU?

The only thing that surprised me was how quickly I felt that I was at home. It started when I came to NIU for my interview. The minute I stepped foot on campus, I knew I was home and could see myself staying here for a long time. I also decided to gain my master's degree in higher education and student affairs here at NIU. Now that I will be graduating in May, I will be a Huskie, forever!

And there you have it, everyone. This edition of Confessions of a Rookie. We hope you join in on the fun by emailing Rave at RMeyer@niu.edu if you want to participate!

Reminders from the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office (FASO)

Scholarships

NIU's campuswide scholarship application system still has some available scholarships for currently enrolled students. Please direct students inquiring about scholarships to [MyScholarships](#) and also encourage them to check with their academic department to see if there are any other opportunities not available on the system. Also, for those students wondering when they will hear if they were selected for a scholarship, remind them to monitor their NIU student email. Recipients will be notified via email sometime before the end of the semester. However, not all departments notify students who are not selected. Most scholarship awards will be for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Another resource to direct students to is the [outside scholarships](#) resource webpage. Here they can find tips, resources and links for scholarship searches.

Financial Aid

For inquiries regarding summer 2021 financial aid eligibility and information, please direct students to the [summer aid](#) page on the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office website.

Also, encourage students to compete their [2021-2022 FAFSA](#) or the [2021-2022 Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid](#) as soon as possible if they haven't done so already. Financial aid notifications will be available soon for incoming students, and by the end of April for continuing students, as long as their application has been received and is complete. Students should log in to the [MyNIU Student System](#) and click on the Task tile to view any pending to-dos that could hold up their financial aid.

For any questions, please contact FASO via finaid@niu.edu, or by calling 815-753-1395, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., and a representative will be available to assist you.

Donate to the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship

The [Dependent Scholarship](#) provides financial assistance to NIU students who are the children of NIU operating staff (civil service) employees. The scholarship is made possible by the fundraising activities of civil service employees.

Last year, the Operating Staff Council gave four students scholarships. Due to numerous factors and the pandemic, we were only able to award two scholarships for 2021.

We need your help!

Individuals can [donate several ways](#): by filling out and mailing a check and the donation form, by utilizing a payroll deduction or by calling 1-877-488-2648 or 815-753-1652.

How can your student apply to receive a scholarship?

Visit the [OSC Dependent Scholarship Awards](#) webpage for more information.

Virtual Team Building

Are you feeling disconnected from your coworkers, organization or team?

NIU Recreation has the solution to help you reconnect and motivate your group who cannot come together in a physical setting.

Launching in spring 2020, engaging, virtual programming will help your group reach your goals while having fun in the process. Team building sessions can be customized to your group's needs in one-hour, two-hour or 15-minute sessions. For more information visit go.niu.edu/virtualteambuilding.

Employment Changes

January 2021

Welcome New Employees:

Samantha Brown, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety
Angela Orokoh, Program Coordinator – Precollegiate-Upward Bound
Swetha Palakoti, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Derrick Risley, Procurement Officer – Procurement Services and Contract Management
Lewis Rule, Program Coordinator – Precollegiate Upward Bound

Retirements:

Deborah Evans, Library specialist – Libraries
Mary Fitzgerald, Business/Administrative Associate – IL Board of Examiners
William Fritsch, Brickmason – Physical Plant
Carolyn James, Food Service Sanitation Laborer – Residential Dining Service
Colette Maher, Program Director – College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
Steven Olson, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Lynn Retherford, Program Assistant – Music
Vidya Sagar, Food Service Sanitation Laborer – Residential Dining Service
Constance Spohn, Office Administrator – Mathematical Sciences

Separations:

Ravea Alexis, Office Manager – University Recreation and Wellness
Edwin Burgess IV, Program Adviser – Biological Sciences
Daniel Curtis, Human Resource Assistant – Human Resource Services

Terry Dobson, Mailing Equipment Operator/ Expeditor II – Materials Management
Shawnda Harris, Maid – Holmes Student Center
Katelyn Kozinski, Office Support Specialist – Statistics
Jeanette Maldonado, Snack Bar Attendant – Campus Dining Service
Ryan Maloney, Admissions/Records Representative – Admissions Systems and Processing
Carla Marcuccelli, Office Support Specialist – Educational Technology Research and Assessment
Sree Muvva, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards
Lisa O'Donnell, Culinary Worker III – Residential Dining Service
Thomas Reading, Business/Administrative Associate – Convocation Center
Patricia Schroeder, Building Service Worker – Building Services

February 2021

Welcome New Employees:

Jane Donahue, Marketing Associate – College of Health and Human Sciences
Sandra Gonzalez, Program Adviser – Student Support Service
Bernard Kay Jr., Police Telecommunicator – Public Safety
Jaclyn Levitt, Police Telecommunicator – Public Safety
Osel Lopez, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety
Shakaria Smith, Program Adviser – Student Support Service
Matthew Todd, Program Assistant – Music

Retirements:

David Webb, Culinary worker III – Residential Dining Service

Separations:

Samantha Brown, Residence Hall Attendant – Public Safety
Tracy England, Office Support Specialist – College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
Levi Hensley, Food Court/Snack Bar Supervisor – Campus Dining Service
Matthew Hook, Grounds Worker – Grounds
Regina Jahn, Grants and Contracts Associate – Sponsored Programs Administration
Nicole Mertens, Police Officer – Public Safety
Milan Nelson, Police Telecommunicator – Public Safety
Regina Parnell, Program Services Specialist – Center for Child Welfare and Education
Lorraine Pickens, Snack Bar Attendant – Residential Dining Service
Yiluo Song, IT Technical associate – Application Services

OSC Committee Openings for 2021-22

OSC is looking for operating staff employees interested in serving on several committees for FY22. [Committee interest forms](#) are available on the OSC website. A detailed [description of all committees](#) can be found on the University Council website. Please consider being an operating staff representative for one of these important committees. For more information, contact Jay Monteiro at jmonteiro@niu.edu.

Beginning **July 1, 2021**, we will have the following openings:

- [Campus Parking Committee](#): Three openings: two are three-year terms and one is currently open now with two years left on the term.
- [Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee](#): One opening for a two-year term.
- [Parking Appeals Committee](#): One opening for a three-year term.
- [University Benefits Committee](#): One opening for a three-year term.

Service Awards

January 2021

5 Years

Jean Baxter – Student Involvement and Leadership Development
Carmin Berchiolly – Center for Burma Studies
Brock Bjelk – Residential Dining Service
Keith Cochrane – Libraries
Lynette Fisher – Computer Science
Jie Huang – Center for Governmental Studies
Vimolrat Mounivong – Building Services
Trevor Roneby – College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
Jennifer Symonds – Libraries

10 Years

Qiang Mei – Sponsored Programs Administration
Christine Monteiro – Internal Audit
Audrea Nabors – Center for Child Welfare and Education
Anthony Sosin – Infrastructure Services

15 Years

Clifford Benson – Libraries
Anthony Del Fiacco – Integrated Media Technologies
Sharon Farley – Biological Sciences
Christine Gould – Operation Services
Theresa La Rocco – Graduate School
Brian Pringnitz – Residential Dining Service
Sandar Wynn – Libraries

20 Years

Bridgett Davis – Human Resource Services
Kathleen Faber – Nursing
Timothy Gray – Building Services
Jennifer Gregory – Political Science
Jerry Rose – Building Services
David Tallacksen – Northern Public Radio

25 Years

Daniel Shipman – Building Services

February 2021

5 Years

Bethany Geiseman – School of Art and Design
Rosemarie Henton – Chief Diversity Officer
Jeannie Peterson – College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
John Plagakis – Residential Dining Service
Darius Sias – Human Resource Services

10 Years

Frank Bell – History
Claire Duvall – Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning

20 Years

Michael Albert – Infrastructure Services
Denotra Davis – Operation Service
Patricia Lee – University Honors Program
Cynthia McCord – Web and Internal Communications
Mary Schlagel – Environmental Health and Safety

25 Years

Louise Calderone – Psychology

30 Years

Suzette Oller – Physical Plant

Bring Your OneCard and Mask Everywhere on Campus

When on campus, all Huskies – including students and employees – should mask up and carry their OneCard for access to buildings.

NIU's COVID-19 protocols are in place to keep our community safe. Without identification, you may be turned away from the Holmes Student Center, Founders Memorial Library, Housing and Dining facilities and other locations.

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