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President's Corner



Greetings Operating Staff,

While most days I can remain relatively optimistic, sometimes it feels as though the pandemic, and winter, will never end. If you can relate, or you are experiencing stress, frustration or feelings that affect your mental health for any other reasons I want to share some resources at NIU that can help.

The [campuswide well-being initiative](#) offers numerous resources for every dimension of wellness. On the website you can learn about self-directed techniques and activities, or find out how to [connect to on-campus services](#).

If you are hoping to improve circumstances in your career, seek trusted advice and be sure to advocate for yourself.

The [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP) offers counseling and career coaching. The [Office of the Ombudsperson](#) is a confidential, neutral resource which can help you navigate university-related concerns. Mediation is a very effective way to work through conflicts with others in your workplace, and there are multiple trained mediators on campus. [Mediation](#) can be requested through EAP.

If you have taken on duties outside of your classification, you have the right to request a [position classification review](#) (“desk audit”). If you have taken on a lot of extra work, due to a colleague’s departure or any other reason, talk to your supervisor about the possibility of [additional pay](#), or “add pay” as it is commonly called.

There are also many HR resources you can utilize. On their website you can find [work-life balance](#) resources, information about [family support](#) and guidance on how to navigate [life events](#). You can [get involved](#) by volunteering, attending campus events, recognizing colleagues for their hard work and more.

In addition to these resources, it always helps me to think about the [mission and vision](#) we share as part of the NIU community. We are helping to transform the world - supporting students and their education (and in some cases, our own education). Huskies have always supported each other - let's continue to do so with empathy and grace for each other.

Forward together,

Holly Nicholson

President, Operating Staff Council 2021-2023

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Confessions of a Rookie

Rookie: Chris Newquist

Financial Aid and Scholarship Office

Hire date: Oct. 18, 2021

Good day everyone! Today we sit down with Chris Newquist, a financial aid coordinator who has been at NIU for just around three months. Good morning, Chris and welcome to the NIU family. Let's get right into it, shall we? Tell me, if reality weren't a thing, what fictional place would you most like to visit?

Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory.

Really? I love the original movie and I would love to visit there myself. Let's hope you like chocolate and stay away from the chocolate river or you'll get sucked into the pipes. Crazy!

Speaking of weird, what's the craziest thing you've ever done?

Jumped off a bridge into a river.

Really? How do we know this was a crazy thing? How high was the bridge? Was it a walking bridge two feet over a riverbed? Not exactly crazy then, right? Twenty feet high, then we can talk.

Moving on —let's go with the embarrassing. What fashion trend do you regret?

The bowl haircut.

Oh my. Yes, those were particularly and sufficiently embarrassing. Let's hope they don't come around again.

Changing tactics, tell our dear readers what was the best concert you've ever attended and why?

Paul McCartney. It was the best because his music defined generations and it really was apparent in the crowd when anyone and everyone was there.

A solid answer. McCartney is a classic. Speaking of classic, what's something you're planning to do that you've never done, and why are you doing it?

I plan to restore a classic car. It's something I have always wanted to do, and I like to work with my hands.

I sure hope you already have this classic car. I wonder what make and model it is?

One last question before we let you go back to work. What is, was or will be your 15 minutes of fame?

It will be because I lost the winning lottery ticket in a trash can, so I went dumpster diving until I found it. They'll call me the trashiest lotto winner ever!

And there you have it, folks — our chat with Christ Newquist of the Financial Aid and Scholarship office. If you would like to be featured as a rookie, please contact RMeyer@niu.edu. We have several spots open and waiting for you.

Annuitants Association Advocates for You

The [State Universities Annuitants Association](#) (SUAA) works hard in Springfield to advocate for the protection of retirement benefits for SURS participants. Many associate the word “annuitant” with retirees, but SUAA represents current employees as well as the spouses and survivors of retirees.

[SUAA has accomplished much on our behalf](#), including:

- Suing the state of Illinois for unconstitutional pension reform. The Supreme Court agreed the new law was unconstitutional and this ruling saves pensioners thousands of dollars during retirement.
- Stopped legislation intended to lead to the discontinuation of tuition waivers for university employees.
- Defeated the addition to the Illinois constitution that would harm SURS employees and retirees.

SUAA continues to monitor and prevent changes to the constitution that are not beneficial to university employees and retirees as well as support any legislation that would improve benefits.

They also fight to preserve Illinois' higher education system and position it as an important asset to the state.

SUAA also needs your support. Contributions received through SUAA chapter memberships, such as the [NIU Annuitants Association](#) (NIUAA), allow them to continue to be strong advocates on our behalf. Current employees as well as retirees (and spouses/partners and survivors of employees or retirees) can become members and have access to briefings about relevant legal issues and opportunities for professional development grants and scholarships for dependents.

Enrolling as a member in NIUAA includes membership in SUAA. NIUAA is a very active chapter and boasts the second highest membership count in the state.

Consider [joining today](#) and support our annuitant association's advocacy efforts.

Huskie Fresh Meal Kits Are Here

Huskie Fresh is NIU's new meal kit service. We work to create and prepare sustainable, nutritious, flavorful dinners to help with life's busy schedules. Our meal kits are partially prepared, pre-measured, and come with detailed recipe instructions to help you make the best meal possible in under 30 minutes at home.

With your Huskie Fresh purchase, you support the academic growth of our student Huskies. We are predominantly a student-run program in partnership with the College of Health and Human Sciences, School of Health Studies. Campus dietitian Meg Burnham, MS, RDN, CSSD, LDN and project leader/nutrition graduate assistant Ashley Valinskas work in partnership with six to 10 nutrition and dietetics undergraduate students.

These students develop our educational content and video demonstrations as part of their capstone project in NUTR 409: Nutrition Education for Health Promotion and NUTR 410: Community Nutrition.

Meal kits can be purchased at go.niu.edu/huskie-fresh-meal-kits. Meal kits will be made available to pick up at The Depot C-store located in Holmes Student Center from 4 p.m. Monday until closing time on Wednesday (6 p.m.) the week of the scheduled meal kit pickup date. With each purchase, you not only make your life a little easier, but you also give back to our Huskies with 10% of profits donated to the Student Assistance Fund.

Printing with R.R. Donnelley

Do you know NIU has a new partner for document printing? R.R. Donnelley (RRD) is the new company NIU now works with to support all your document needs.

The RRD storefront is located at go.niu.edu/rrd. Currently everything is considered a custom order, but they will soon have templates available in the storefront so check back soon. If you're looking to order new business cards, hold off on that until the template is ready.

If you have questions such as: Where can I now get my printer paper? How do I order? Can I get a proof? — you may be able to [find answers on DoIT's website](#).

Change can be hard, so if you have had a difficult time figuring out something new, feel free to contact osc@niu.edu so we can help you with the transition. It will take all of us to work together to keep up on the new and upcoming changes.

Omicron, Spring and the Civil Service Emergency Fund

By now, you know the spring 2022 semester began online due to a spike of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 cases. With this in mind, we would like to remind everyone that the Operating Staff Council's Civil Service Emergency Fund is set up to assist civil service employees who are facing an economic crisis.

A committee that works together to solicit donations for the fund, evaluate applications and distribute funds oversees the fund. We are always in need of donations.

Please consider helping your fellow Huskies.

You can give online on the NIU Foundation website by selecting the Civil Service Emergency Fund in the "available designations" dropdown.

You can also contribute by sending a check, with Civil Service Emergency Fund written on the memo line, to:
Northern Illinois University Foundation
Altgeld Hall 135
DeKalb, IL 60115-2882

Employment Changes

November 2021

Welcome New Employees:

Ashutosh Aloor, Manager – Application Services
Deborah Beck, Office Support Associate – Illinois Board of Examiners
Keith Chartrand, Marketing Associate – Intercollegiate Athletics
Tyler Collins, Storekeeper II – Materials Management
Jacklyn Egolf, Senior Library Specialist – Libraries
Michael Foster, Campus Recreation Coordinator – Intercollegiate Athletics
Matthew Harris, Survey Interview Supervisor – Health and Human Sciences Survey Research Laboratory
Nicholas Johnson, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Bryan Lutes, Administrative Assistant – University Advancement and NIU Foundation CEO
Matthew Mol, Program Adviser – Intercollegiate Athletics
Janelle O'Malley, Program Assistant – School of Art and Design
Alexandra Owens, Program Adviser – Special and Early Education
Julian Reese, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Justin Riner, Residence Hall Attendant Program Coordinator – Housing and Residential Services
Jeannine Szostak, Business/Administrative Associate – English
Leighton Taylor, IT Technical Associate – Report Cards

Retirements:

Tina Erickson, Mailing Equipment Operator/ Expediter II – Materials Management
Brenda Jones, Office Administrator – History
George King, Building Service Worker – Building Services (Holmes Student Center)
M. Eugene Massey, Business/Administrative Associate – Associate Vice President Finance
Thomas Urda, Carpenter – Physical Plant

Separations:

Collin Bruning, Ticket Sales Supervisor – Convocation Center
Holly Kessler, Procurement Officer – Procurement Services and Contract Management
Brien Martin, Business/Administrative Associate – Budget Office
Michael McNeil, Building Service Worker – Building Services
Lisa Nelson, Police Telecommunicator – Public Safety
Enrique Nueve IV, IT Technical Associate – Computer Science
Emily Salvani, Assistant Information Technology Manager – Web and Internal Communications
Jennifer Simenson, Collection Assistant Manager – Bursar
Chimarra Spivey, Food Service Administrator I – Campus Dining Service
Brian Terry, Building Service Worker – Building Services

December 2021

Welcome New Employees:

Rebecca Drury, Culinary Worker III – Residential Dining Service
Elizabeth LeMay, Administrative Assistant – College of Health and Human Sciences
Andrew Mazur, Electronics Engineer – Integrated Media Technologies
La Tanya Rush, Catering Supervisor – Regional Center Operations
William Usilton, Police Telecommunicator – Public Safety
Wester Wuori, Public Information Associate – Office of Institutional Communication

Retirements:

Vivian Bandy, Account Technician II – Accounts Payable and Travel
David Ulrick, Systems Programmer II – Infrastructure Services
Terry Halsey, Building Service Worker – Building Services

Separations:

Jacob Abell, Building Service Worker – Building Services
David Dosier, Program Director – Nursing
Kimberly Durbin, Snack Bar Attendant – Residential Dining Service
Morgan James, Marketing Associate – Intercollegiate Athletics
Arielle Sherman, Office Manager – Psychology
Nathan Wilkin, Food Court/Snack Bar Supervisor – Campus Dining Service

Service Awards

November 2021

5 Years

Yuko Asada – Music
Nancy Newman – Health Studies

15 Years

James Collin – Heating Plant
Joseph Summins – Intercollegiate Athletics
Janice Wylde – Career Services

30 Years

Vicki Thompson – Campus Dining Services

December 2021

5 Years

Jolene Eberhardt – Building Services
Carol McFarland McKee – Registration and Records
Noah Rhea – Building Services
Debra Tewolde – CHANCE Program
Margot Witzel – Accounts Payable and Travel

10 Years

Arthur Hall – Physical Plant
Lisa Pitney – College of Business
Pingping Ren – Institutional Research
Lene Kathrine Scherer – Office of Research Compliance, Integrity and Safety
Jun Zhang – Institutional Research

15 Years

Michael Verbie – Integrated Media Technologies

20 Years

Bernard Spraner – Infrastructure Services

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