

## **PUBLIC NOTICE AND AGENDA**

**University Council**  
**Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 3 p.m.**  
**Holmes Student Center Sky Room**  
**Northern Illinois University**  
**DeKalb, Illinois**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

### **II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM**

### **III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

### **IV. APPROVAL OF THE [JANUARY 31, 2018](#) MEETING MINUTES**

### **V. PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Technology Accessibility at NIU  
Katy Whitelaw, Information Technology Access Officer  
[Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act 2.0](#) effective January 18, 2018  
[Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Refresh](#) effective January 18, 2018  
[Reducing risk of litigation \(PDF\)](#)
- B. Textbook Affordability  
Fred Barnhart, Dean, University Libraries  
Leanne VandeCreek, Acting Associate Dean, University Libraries  
Ian Crone, Director, Holmes Student Center  
Stephanie Torres, Director, Academic Affairs, Student Association
- C. Illinois State Legislature Higher Education Working Group  
Chris McCord, Acting Executive Vice President and Provost

### **VI. CONSENT AGENDA**

### **VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. Ombudsperson End-of-Term Review received by the Office of the President,  
Lisa Freeman, Acting President

### **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **IX. REPORTS FROM COUNCILS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

- A. Faculty Advisory Council to the IBHE – Linda Saborío – [report](#) – Page 3

- B. University Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees – no report  
Barbara Andree, Catherine Doederlein, Alex Gelman,  
Mark Riley, Linda Saborío, Kendall Thu
- C. Academic Policy Committee – Terry Bishop, Chair – no report
- D. Resources, Space and Budget Committee – Jim Wilson, Chair, and  
Sarah McHone-Chase Faculty Senate Liaison/Spokesperson – report
- E. Rules, Governance and Elections Committee – Therese Arado, Chair – no report
- F. University Affairs Committee – Reed Scherer, Chair – no report
- G. Student Association – Rachel Jacob, President; Christine Wang, Speaker of the  
Senate - report
- H. Operating Staff Council – Barbara Andree, President – report
- I. Supportive Professional Staff Council – Catherine Doederlein, President – [report](#) –  
Pages 4-20

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

## **XI. INFORMATION ITEMS**

- A. [Minutes](#), Academic Planning Council
- B. [Minutes](#), Athletic Board
- C. [Minutes](#), Baccalaureate Council
- D. [Minutes](#), Board of Trustees
- E. [Minutes](#), Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee
- F. [Minutes](#), Comm. on the Improvement of the Undergraduate Academic Experience
- G. [Minutes](#), General Education Committee
- H. [Minutes](#), Graduate Council
- I. [Minutes](#), Graduate Council Curriculum Committee
- J. [Minutes](#), Honors Committee
- K. [Minutes](#), Operating Staff Council
- L. [Minutes](#), Supportive Professional Staff Council
- M. [Minutes](#), University Assessment Panel
- N. [Minutes](#), University Benefits Committee
- O. [Minutes](#), Univ. Comm. on Advanced and Nonteaching Educator License Programs
- P. [Minutes](#), University Committee on Initial Educator Licensure

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

## FAC to IBHE Jan 19 Meeting Report

1. Welcome discussion with President of Illinois College: the topic of this discussion was the value of a liberal arts education. At IC, student-faculty interaction (learning experiences, collaborative relationships) are paramount. There are a number of short term travel abroad opportunities (called “breakaways”) made available to students along with scholarships to help defray costs. Also, there is summer research support for students. Under curriculum, there is a first year and a senior capstone experience. IC emphasizes writing, public speaking, diversity, and teamwork; in other words, a broad education. Finally, there is a student presentation day in April called “Celebration of Excellence Day;” classes are cancelled so that faculty and students can attend recitals, research and art expos, theatrical productions, and more.
2. Rebecca Spencer from IC presented on IC’s programs with Japanese universities, such as Ritsumeikan University. Opportunities include a 10-week research lab experience in the summer for students and a 4-5 week language intensive internship focusing on environmental issues.
3. Marie Donovan indicated that IBHE is no longer going to have lunches with their constituency groups at their quarterly meetings. The stated reason is so that the Board members can have more time to interact with each other; yet, we still want to have a yearly opportunity to make a substantial presentation to the Board. It was suggested that this perhaps could be arranged for what would have been our annual meeting with the Board on June 5<sup>th</sup> at the College of Lake County. We would also like the opportunity to make a brief presentation at each Board meeting. The hope is that Al Bowman, Tom Cross, and other Board members could be present at more advisory council meetings in the future.
4. Jaimee Ray – Legislative Report: 1) change the Truth in Tuition laws to allow opt in or opt out 2) expand slightly the scope of the Grow Your Own Program (grants for additional certifications) 3) remove the budget recommendation request for the Graduation Incentive grant program since there is no funding
5. There was discussion regarding the state budget and HLC accreditation. It was suggested that we contact our Faculty Senates/Councils and prepare resolutions on this matter to be publicized and shared with the Governor and Legislature.
6. We received a presentation by Kathleen Almy from NIU on remedial math impacts of the Illinois Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (PA 99-0674), which was signed into law on July 29, 2016. Transitional math courses in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of high school can help students prepare for college. These courses would be structured to offer a different (more applied) type of experience than the math courses in the first three years. Students that pass with a C or better are guaranteed placement into college level math at Illinois community colleges.

SPS Council  
2017 Survey Recap

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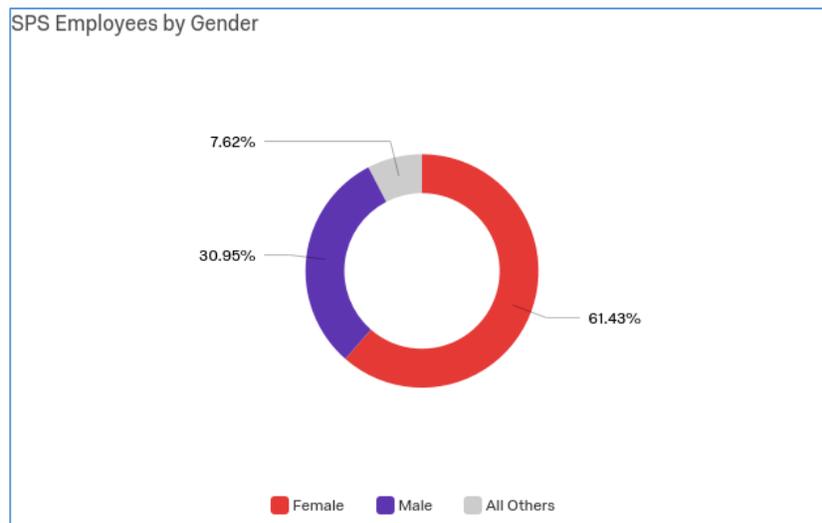
In the spring of 2017, the SPS Council and SPS Council Workplace Issues Committee administered a Workplace Issues Survey. This survey, which addresses general workplace issues and satisfaction, is done every other year. Historically, the survey is distributed in the fall of even numbered years. However, due to the impact of Program Prioritization, the decision was made to delay the survey until the spring. The Council and the Workplace Issues Committee felt this delay would provide a better representation of the issues and concerns of our constituents.

### General Demographics

The survey, released on February 6, 2017, was available for respondents until the end of business on February 17, 2017. During this window, a total of 239 individuals completed all or part of the survey. Key to understanding the survey results was determining who these 239 individuals were. Given that there are 831 SPS on campus, we saw a survey return rate of 28.7%<sup>1</sup>.

### Gender

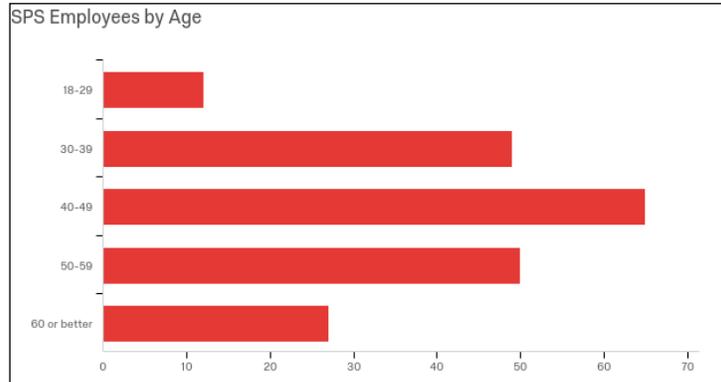
Of the 210 individuals who answered this question, 61% reported being female and 31% were male. The remaining 8% chose not to respond, identified as transgender, or provided an alternative gender designation.



<sup>1</sup> Human Resource Services provided the number of campus SPS employees on February 28, 2017.

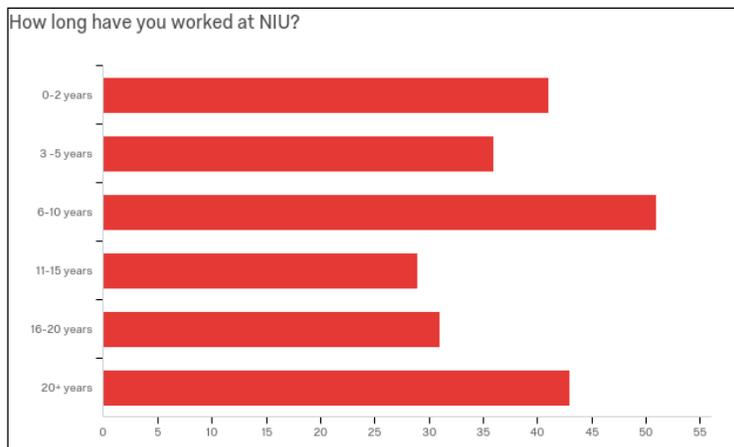
## Age

SPS employees are distributed widely across the age spectrum. The largest cohort of the 203 respondents fell into the 40-49 age bracket. This group makes up 32% of the respondents.



## Length of employment

SPS employees vary widely in the amount of time they have been employed at NIU. While the largest single group of the 231 respondents indicated they had been employed for 6-10 years, there are other large cohorts of employees as well, as seen in the following chart.



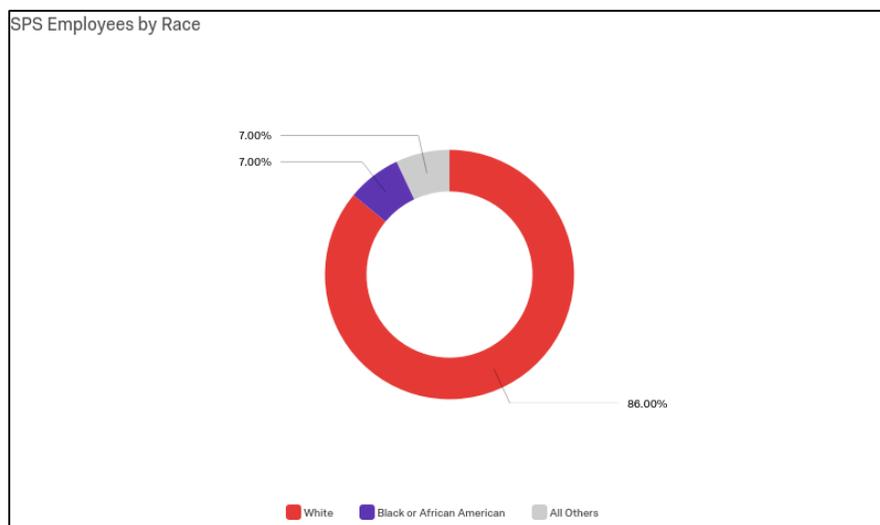
Additionally, the results show that 33% of the respondents have been hired in the past five years. This finding is contrary to the widely held belief that SPS personnel are no longer being hired on campus.

From a planning perspective, identifying the number of individuals who are at or close to retirement age becomes important. If we assume that individuals who are over 50 years of age and who have worked at NIU for 16 or more years are approaching retirement, then the data would suggest that 17% of SPS employees are at or are nearing retirement. This information should guide Human Resources in its development of retirement workshops. Further, it should provide a warning to units across the campus about the need to ensure business continuity plans are in place in advance of potential retirements.

		Which category below includes your age?					Total
		18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or better	
How long have you worked at NIU?	0-2 years	5	8	10	7	3	33
	3 -5 years	4	13	11	4	1	33
	6-10 years	3	22	8	7	5	45
	11-15 years	0	5	12	8	3	28
	16-20 years	0	0	14	10	3	27
	20+ years	0	1	10	14	12	37
	<b>Total</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>27</b>

### Race

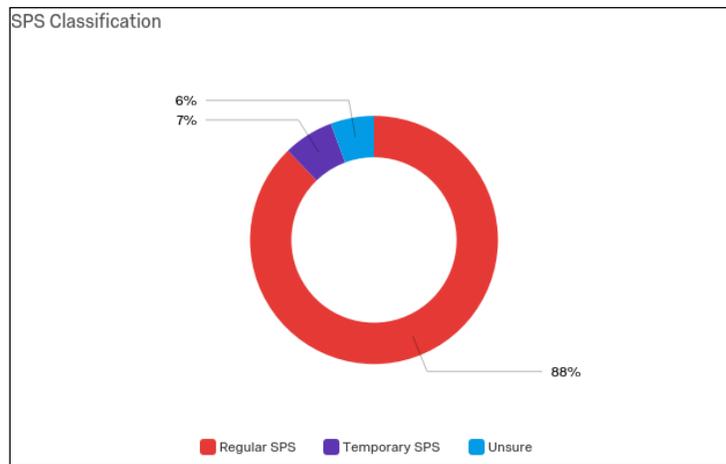
Survey respondents were also asked to identify their race. Of the 200 participants who answered this question, an overwhelming majority, 86%, identified as being white.



While this may accurately represent the SPS population on campus, the lack of diversity in this employee population is obvious. Going forward, steps should be taken to actively recruit a more diversified pool of qualified candidates for all job openings.

### Regular or temporary SPS classification

Respondents were also asked to identify the type of SPS position they held. Of the 229 individuals who responded to this question 201, or 88%, indicated they were classified as Regular SPS and 15, or 7%, identified as Temporary SPS, with the remaining portion indicating they were Unsure of their classification

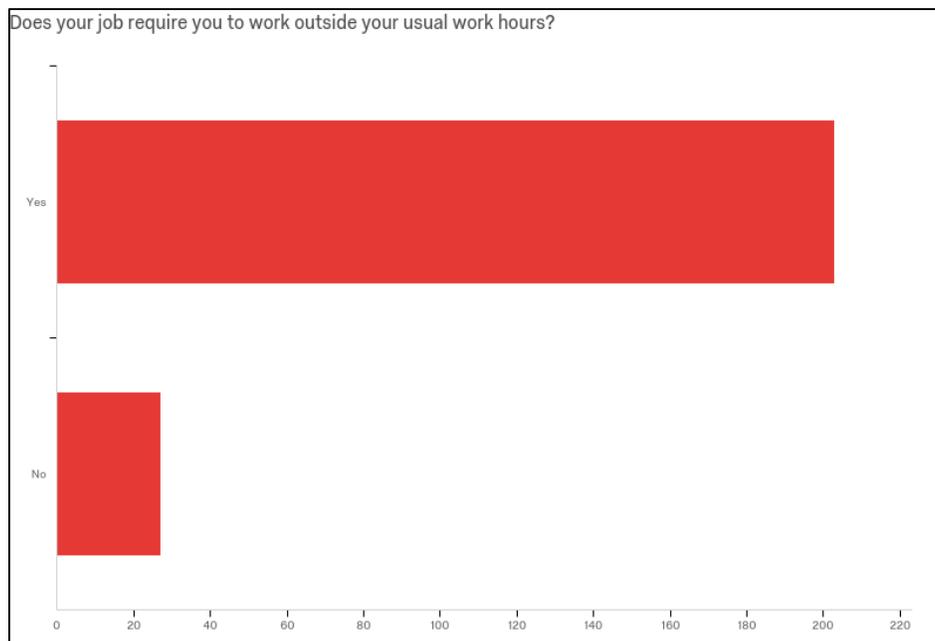


Data obtained from Human Resources indicate that there are actually 357 Temporary SPS and 474 Regular SPS employees. This would suggest that survey results are likely not representative of the entirety of the SPS population but are more heavily weighted toward the opinions of Regular SPS employees. Future surveys should attempt to reach out directly to the Temporary SPS population to ensure a more representative sample of the whole membership.

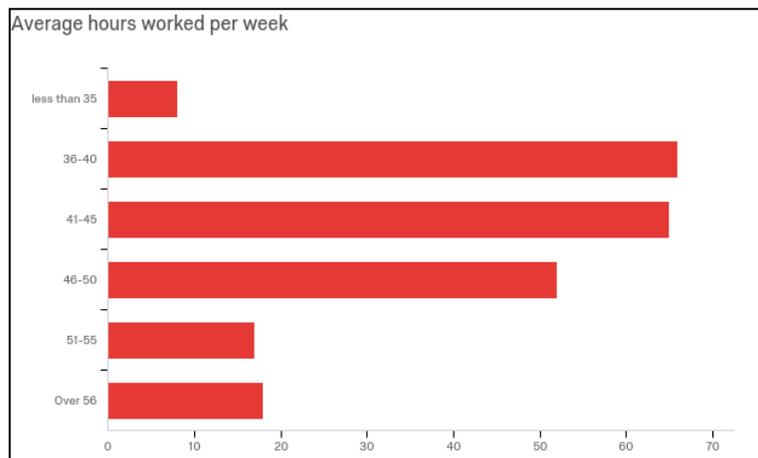
## Work Environment

### Hours worked per week

One of the major concerns voiced by our constituents is that they often feel overworked. To begin looking at this, survey respondents were asked if they were required to work outside their usual work hours. Overwhelmingly, 88% of the 230 respondents to this question indicated that they were in fact required to work outside their usual work hours.



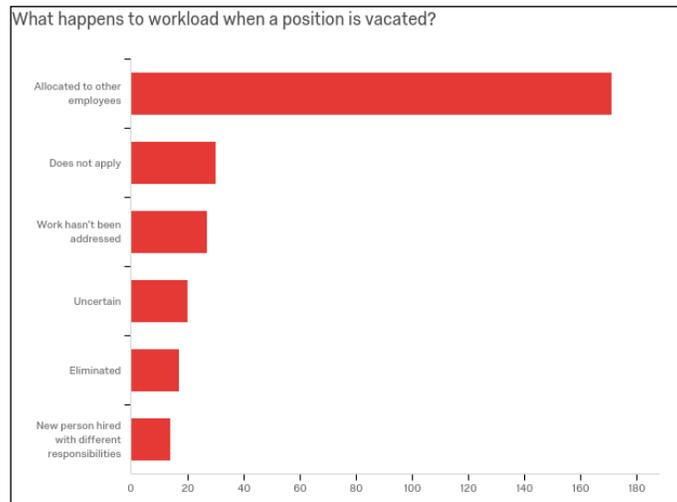
To get a sense of how much people were working, participants were asked to indicate the average number of hours per week they worked. While the full-time work week for NIU employees is 37 ½ hours, anything less than 40 hours was considered to be a normal workweek. Of the 226 respondents to this question, 67% reported working 41 or more hours per week. While some might make the case that work outside the normal 37 ½ hours should be expected for SPS employees, 38% of respondents indicated they work 46 or more hours per week.



## Unfilled vacancies

One of the other major concerns among SPS employees is the impact that vacancies within departments have had on employees. Respondents were asked if vacated positions within their departments had been filled. Slightly over half, 54%, of 224 individuals answering this question indicated that vacant positions had not been filled within their department.

What happens to workload within an office when there is an unfilled vacancy often impacts employee morale. An overwhelming 75% of individuals' state that in the wake of vacated positions, the workload is allocated to other employees.



Comments by a number of respondents offer insight into the situation:

*"There is more work to complete than we have the personnel to do it."*

*"Required to take on an additional FTE position's duties and not compensated for it. Was forced upon me as there is no support for hiring this much needed (collaborative) position (for over 5 years) and also partially due to a vacancy (served as a stop-gap with some of the duties) that has gone unfilled for over a year."*

If the workload is being allocated to other employees, one must ask if this additional workload is actually influencing the number of hours worked per week. Looking at the average number of hours worked per week for individuals who indicate that work has been allocated to other employees in the wake of a vacancy provides some insight. Results suggest that following a vacancy, a workweek of 41-45 hours per week is very common, with 44% working at least 46 hours per week.



Comments provided by participants responding to this question added that:

*“Things are what they are right now. It feels like a historic time of challenge, change and opportunity. so yes workload might be higher than “normal” and timelines collide to produce much more stress than “normal”, but that is part of where NIU is right now with program prioritization, budget and staff challenges.”*

*“Workload has been increasing significantly, despite efforts to redistribute responsibilities. Additional responsibilities have been assigned to my department without additional staff.”*

*“The work may sometimes seem excessive but, at other times there is a lull, so it all evens out in the end.”*

#### Additional pay

When vacancies lead to additional work within a department, only 17% of the 231 respondents indicated they had been provided with compensation for the additional responsibilities. As noted below, it appears that taking on additional work comes without the requisite compensation.

*“We have lost several positions in our department, so the work has been spread out to others and no increase of pay for the additional responsibilities. Duties as assigned.”*

*“NIU pays less than most other state institutions. For my position at other state institutions, there is about a \$5000 difference at least, even the institutions that seem to be struggling financially more than NIU. We have not replaced positions in my department and the workload has been tacked on everyone else without an increase in pay.”*

## Control over workload

While staffing reductions and additional mandates have had an impact on offices, individuals still report having at least some control over the scheduling of the work and the amount of work they take on.

*“I have professional autonomy, but my position is a supportive position to the NIU administration along with clients that I have through contracts and grants. At times there is a ton of work to do and no support to help me get through those times so I have to work on the weekend and until the late hours of the night.”*

Unfortunately, 20% of respondents indicated that their workload is always excessive.

*“I am consistently expected to accomplish tasks that cannot be done within the normal work hours, and am held responsible for them with no discussion about the extra time needed to accomplish them.”*

Field	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
You can determine the timing/scheduling of your work	46.45% 98	47.87% 101	5.69% 12	211
You have control over the amount of work you take on with your job	18.57% 39	64.29% 135	17.14% 36	210
The workload in your job is excessive	20.48% 43	67.14% 141	12.38% 26	210

## Benefits and opportunities for growth

Respondents were asked to consider salary, benefits, and opportunities for advancement at NIU. Sixty-percent (60%) of the 211 employees disagreed or strongly disagreed that salary at NIU was reasonable for their profession.

*“NIU needs to provide serious cost of living raises to all employees. We also need fair and equitable pay across NIU for similar job descriptions. It's no secret that some advisors make much more or less depending upon who you are and where you work. It also appears that some positions are "filled" without notice. This does not promote opportunities for growth. For some of us, we have not had a real raise since being employed at NIU. Advancement is limited and bias based.”*

*“I am not looking for advancement opportunities as I am very happy in the position of leadership that I currently have. As for compensation - for the workload, the accountability expectations, and responsibilities that are inherent in this position of mine, the salary is low compared to other positions like this at similar universities. Heck, there was even a position almost just like mine in another Division doing the same work, and that former director was paid \$20,000 more a year than me. So, no, I do not feel at all that I am being compensated accurately for the work that is done in my position. // I do feel very grateful for the benefits I have at NIU. Truly, that is why most people work here - not for salaries. That has historically been true. I think that the university can no longer just accept the fact that good people will stay, or want to choose NIU to work, based on benefits anymore. Really strong people are leaving this university, and have*

*been for a while now, left and right. People need to be compensated and given yearly raises.”*

*“The generous time off offsets a lower pay standard for the profession. The department's current situation does not allow for advancement.”*

Over half (56%) of the participants also disagreed or strongly disagreed that there were opportunities for internal promotion on campus. Given the lukewarm nature of the results, it was surprising to find that 54% of SPS felt that NIU offered a competitive benefits package. It may well be that the benefits package helps NIU recruit and retain valued employees.

*“NIU's benefits package is excellent, but the salaries are far below what others in equal positions are paid at other IL institutions. Internal promotions are almost non-existent, but I was personally promoted from within, so it does happen on occasion. I would HOPE NIU's pension plan and health insurance remain the same or improve in coming years, but I feel the state's financial situation will adversely affect both programs.”*

Unfortunately, a majority of respondents disagree or strongly disagree benefits (pension and insurance coverage) will remain the same or improve in the coming years. If the quality of benefits is influencing the recruitment or retention of employees, any reduction in benefits coverage will negatively affect the workforce.

*“Though our department/division has made significant efforts toward ensuring market salaries for purposes of recruitment and retention, salary levels at public institutions almost always fall below those of private. I am very concerned about pension and insurance benefits going forward.”*

*“Other than our insurance, unfortunately, there isn't much of a reason to work here besides the colleagues.”*

*“I do not anticipate having any retirement available in the future and expect the insurance to become a real mess everywhere. Not a very positive outlook on the benefits.”*

#	Field	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Your salary meets reasonable standards for your profession	17.65% 9	18.52% 45	13.06% 29	23.34% 74	24.22% 54
2	NIU offers a competitive benefit package	52.94% 27	35.80% 87	23.87% 53	10.09% 32	5.38% 12
4	You have the opportunity for advancement through internal promotion	5.88% 3	13.17% 32	26.13% 58	22.71% 72	20.63% 46
6	You expect NIU's pension plan to be the same or improve in coming years	9.80% 5	13.99% 34	19.37% 43	21.14% 67	27.80% 62
5	You expect NIU's insurance coverage to be the same or improve in coming years	13.73% 7	18.52% 45	17.57% 39	22.71% 72	21.97% 49
		51	243	222	317	223

Showing Rows: 1 - 6 Of 6

### Perceptions about supervisors

Overall feedback from the 208 respondents who answered questions about both their direct supervisor as well as their dean, director or department chair was overwhelmingly positive. Of particular interest was a question related to respectful treatment. When respondents were asked if their dean, director or chair treated staff members with respect, 71% reported that they were always treated with respect.

Communication and transparency were the most often cited areas of improvement when participants were asked to comment on departmental leadership and communication. This may be a result of the recent program prioritization process undertaken by University administration over the past 18 months. Many comments related to communication, leadership, and perceptions could be cross correlated and linked to comments about apprehensions related to the prioritization process.

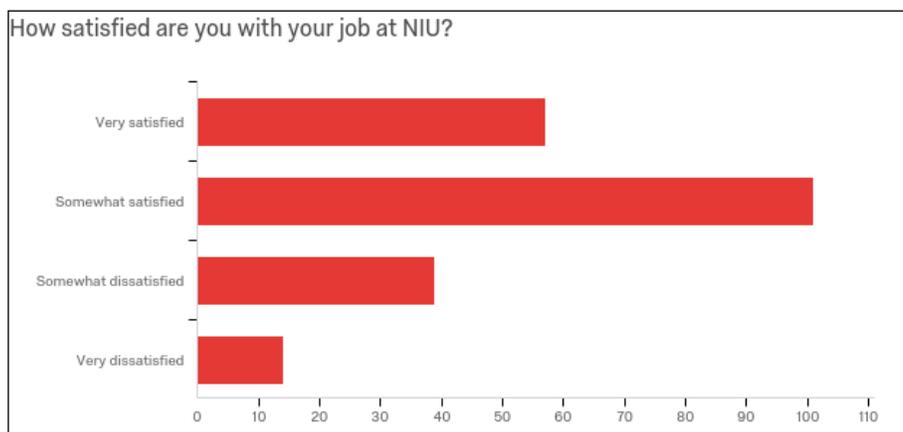
### Perceptions about colleagues

Interactions with colleagues were also very positive. Coworkers were generally seen as being supportive in their interactions. They were also seen as having professional communication skills as well as the ability to resolve conflict in a professional manner.

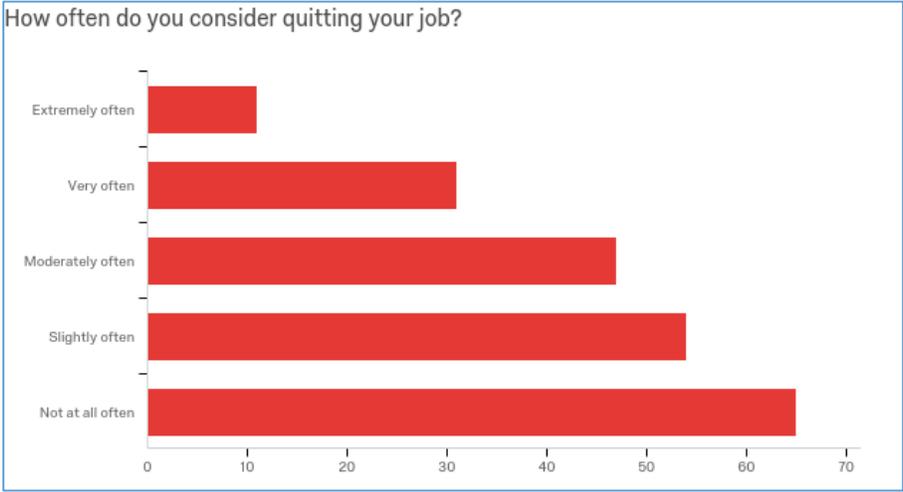
### Job satisfaction

Respondents reported being generally happy working in an academic environment and felt satisfied in their interactions with students, alumni, and friends of the university as well as external organizations. Respondents also felt satisfied in their ability to provide service to other areas of the university. Interestingly, respondents were less satisfied with the assistance they received from other departments on campus. This lower level of satisfaction with services received from units on campus may substantiate the existence of the “Huskie Shuffle.” It might also suggest an area for professional development related to supporting internal customers.

Even with the slightly gloomy workload issues, employees are still fairly happy working at NIU. When asked about overall job satisfaction, 75% of the 211 respondents indicated that they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their job at NIU.



Respondents were also asked how often they felt like quitting their jobs. Of the 208 respondents to this question, 20% considered quitting extremely often or very often.



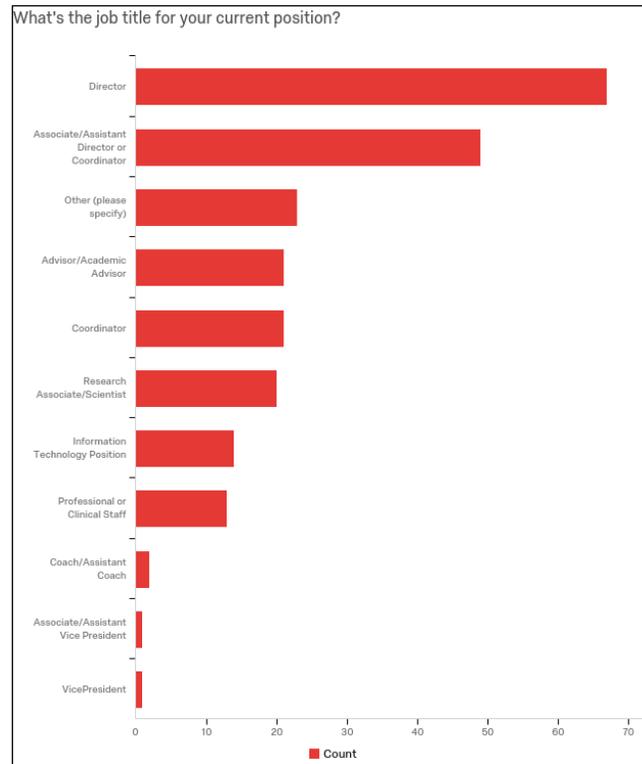
Not surprisingly, individuals who were less satisfied with their job were also the most likely to consider quitting their job.

		How often do you consider quitting your job?					Total
		Extremely often	Very often	Moderately often	Slightly often	Not at all often	
Overall, how satisfied are you with your job at NIU?	Very satisfied	0	3	3	14	37	57
	Somewhat satisfied	0	9	31	31	27	98
	Somewhat dissatisfied	3	15	12	8	0	38
	Very dissatisfied	8	4	1	1	0	14
	Total	11	31	47	54	64	207

## Professional Development

### Types of jobs held by SPS

SPS employees fill many key leadership roles within the university. Survey results show that 59% of respondents classified their positions as directors, associate directors or coordinators, with advising being the next largest classification at 9%.



Professional growth for these individuals is important to the success of the institution. Whether professional development means attending professional conferences, taking classes or workshops, advancing one's professional skills is key to the employees and institutional success. Given the impact staffing cuts and retirements have had on the institution, a highly skilled workforce is perhaps more important today than at any time in the history of NIU.

When participants were asked if they had attended professional meetings or conferences during the past year, 37% indicated that they had attended no meetings or conferences.

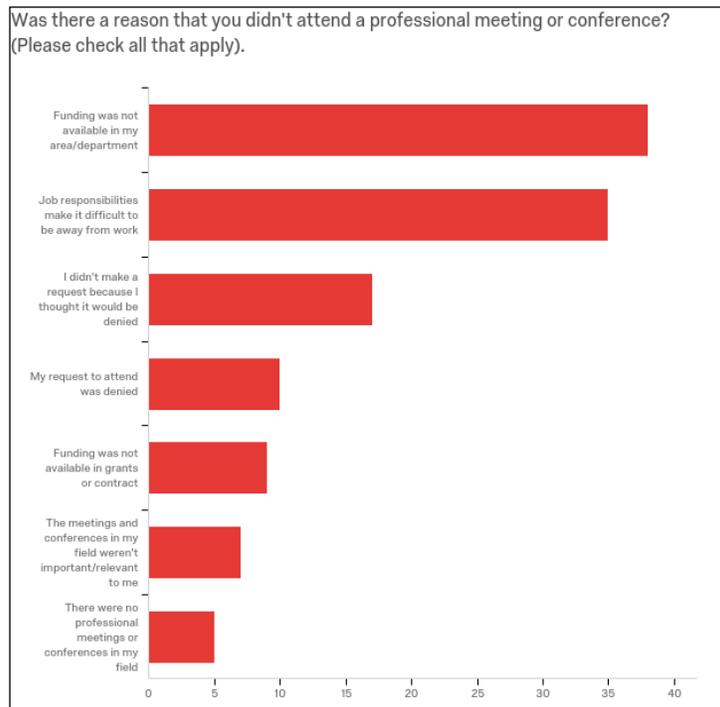
For those who had not attended a conference or professional meeting, lack of funding within a department or area or difficulty being away from the office was cited as the primary reasons. Additionally, comments provided by some participants indicated that funding is discretionary upon the specific office, department or division's internal practice.

"Funding was not given to my level only Acting Assoc [SIC] Director and Director attends national conferences."

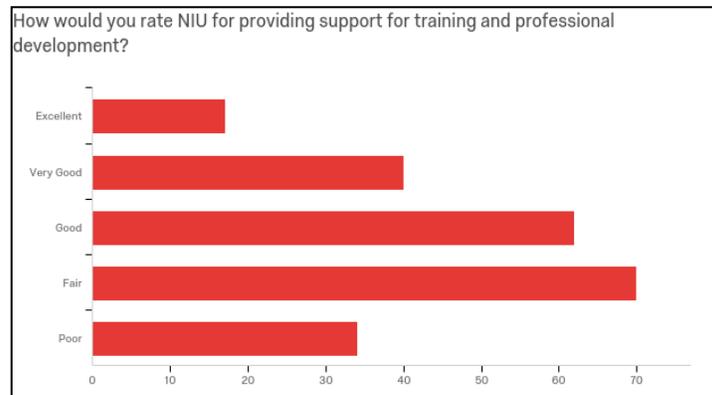
“I was turned down to attend the annual meeting of my international professional association but permitted to attend a much smaller, cheaper conference. I used to attend 3 professional development experiences each year. Now, I am down to one (which I understand is much more than many people on this campus receive). It is disheartening and devaluing when genuine professional development is denied, or we are told to pay for it ourselves (as opposed to many faculties on campus, and staff at other institutions). Professional development helps the whole institution, not just the individual involved.”

“It was local, so costs were minimal. The only way I could attend any professional development.”

“Unless in Illinois, and within Chicago metro area, we are only allowed 1-2 events on office budget. However, this is unfair as certain employees are on the road constantly attending regional and national events annually without allowance for others to engage.”



While the survey reports that 67% of employees were, in fact, able to attend conferences or professional development, the perception is that NIU is not fully supportive of these activities.



Given the impact of reduced funding and reduced staffing, creative solutions to the professional development concerns would benefit not only the university but may positively impact employee morale. Centralized funding opportunities and encouraging supervisors to come up with ways to make training and professional development a priority for employees should be explored.

### Job Descriptions and yearly performance reviews

Two major initiatives of the SPS Council over the past several years have been encouraging a regular review of one's job description and promoting the importance of a regular performance review. We are pleased to see that 54% of the 230 respondents indicated they had reviewed their job description in the past year. A common time to review one's job description would be during an annual performance review. When participants were asked if they received a yearly performance review, 73% indicated they always received a yearly review and 20% indicated they sometimes received a yearly performance review. While there is still work to do on both of these initiatives, the Council finds these results to be quite positive.

### Conclusion and recommendations

We are encouraged by many of the findings of the survey. Perhaps the most important positive finding is that overall 75% of respondents are very happy with their employment at NIU. Given all of the uncertainty and general state of morale on campus, this finding is certainly a silver lining in a rather dark and stormy season. It is further proof that NIU has been, and continues to be, a great place work.

That said, there are several areas that should be addressed.

### Lack of diversity among SPS

We believe that NIU strives to hire the best candidate while ensuring equal opportunities for all candidates. That said, we must ensure that job postings are directed in a manner that makes the positions available to all qualified candidates. Human Resource Services and the Affirmative Action and Diversity Services Office could provide guidance and training related to improving the reach of job postings.

### Overall workload

Job descriptions should continue to be reviewed for all employees. This is especially critically for those who are working excessive hours or for those who have unfilled vacancies within their units. Supervisors and staff must be able to adjust work assignments to ensure that critical functions are being accomplished. In addition, supervisors must be encouraged to provide extra compensation for individuals who are taking on responsibilities that are well beyond their normal job duties.

### Enhance benefits package

While SPS appreciates the difficult position that the University finds itself in, employees seem quite concerned that the benefits package will lose value over the coming years. While the University does not have discretionary funds to make up for multiple years without pay or merit raises for SPS employees, improvements in the benefits package would be a welcome start. We understand that the benefits package is largely controlled by CMS, but are there things that could be done at NIU to improve our employee work/life balance such as encouraging departments to offer more flexible scheduling or work at home options. Additionally, employee wellness initiatives, including free access to campus fitness centers or flexible or extended lunch hours for employees who wish to exercise, would be beneficial. The SPS Council and Workplace Issues Committee continue to explore options and will provide additional recommendations.

### Improve access to professional development

Access to professional development is an issue on the NIU campus. A centralized funding pool to assist in supporting professional development requests should be established. A restructuring of the sabbatical process could be a part of this plan. SPS have difficulty taking advantage of sabbatical leave in its current form. Offering more flexible sabbatical scheduling might make this an option for SPS professional development. Additionally, some of the unused SPS sabbatical funds each year could be used to support the centralized professional development funding pool.