

**UNIVERSITY STAFF SENATE REGULAR MEETING**  
**MUC Mississippi/Illinois Room**  
**Zoom Meeting ID 945 0315 5890**  
**May 1, 2025 – 9:00 am**  
**Approved Minutes**

The regular meeting of the University Staff Senate was called to order at 9:02 am on Thursday, May 1, 2025, by President Doug James.

**Present:** Doug James (President), Kelly Jo Hendricks (Past President), Steven Green (President-Elect), Cindy Cobetto (Treasurer), Angie White (Secretary), Ben Kaminski (CSNP Constituency Rep), Evan Lewis (ASR Constituency Rep), Christy McDougal (CSOR Constituency Rep), Linda Eilerman, Maria Ferrari, Cheryl Jordan, Shane Kessinger, Sarah Kirkpatrick, Amy Miller, Tiana Montgomery, Angela Pritchett, Dusty Rhodes, Brittany Smith, Tim Staples, Michael Tadlock-Jackson (ex officio), Jessica Take

**Absent:** Julie Babington, Mike Hamil

**Guests:** Eric Lichtenberger, Keith Becherer, Maureen Bell-Werner, Karyn Chambers, Terry Clark, Rachel Garrett (incoming Staff Senate member ASRP—FY26), Alarice Houston, Chris Hubbard-Jackson, Heather Knapp, Matthew Miller, Misty Newman, Robert Newman, Jacob Nolden, Thomas Oliver Rosner, Amanda Russell (incoming Staff Senate member CSOR—FY26), Jill Smucker, Patty Werner, Tom Willhoit, Connie Wyvell

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Meeting minutes from April 3, 2025 were approved as written.

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

Director of Institutional Research & Studies (IRS) Eric Lichtenberger spoke to Staff Senate. Dr. Lichtenberger gave a detailed presentation about his department. He shared that IRS is housed in Academic Affairs. It's responsible for the bulk of the external reporting to entities such as the Higher Learning Commission, Illinois Board of Higher Education, and US Department of Education. It produces data and reports internally for other departments around campus for grant applications, reporting, and outside recognition (e.g., Military Friendly, Higher Education Excellence in Diversity). IRS has started to conduct predictive studies within student work and retention; it is the keeper of the SIUE Factbook. It is the bearer of news—both good and bad. Finally, IRS is pivoting to produce informational tools that could be disseminated and used internally for planning and decision-making (e.g., SOAR Dashboard, HR Monthly Report, Revenue & Expense). Dr. Lichtenberger completed his presentation by showing Staff Senate some retention trends among student workers.

**NOMINATIONS:**

Doug James opened the floor for Staff Senate President-Elect nominations to serve FY26 while Steven Green is Staff Senate President. Sarah Kirkpatrick, Director of the Learning Resource Center and Campus Engagement on the East St. Louis Center, was nominated and accepted. Tiana Montgomery, Director of the Project Success Program at the East St. Louis, was also nominated and accepted. No other nominations were made. Staff Senate will officially vote on President-Elect and other officers at the conclusion of our next meeting in June.

**REPORTS:**

**President Doug James** – Thanks to Steven for driving the election process. Sat in on the UPBC meetings regarding the Program Prioritization proposals. Hoping people take our opinions seriously. Attended the

Chancellor's State of the University Address. Dr. Minor has indicated that student retention rates are positive in terms of deposits and enrollment trends; he also said the \$10.3 million deficit has been significantly decreased to about \$7.4 million, and that deficit represents only 2% of our total budget. Attended the BOT meeting in Carbondale on April 17—was able to greet every trustee and shake their hand, thanking them for their service. Thanks to Angie White for coordinating the Social Security webinar on April 10. The tuition and fee increase were approved at the meeting, as was a 2% salary increase for non-represented employees, effective January 16, 2024. We had 116 people registered. Jack Myers from Social Security Administration was the guest speaker—he always does a great job. I sit on the SIU System Staff Advisory Committee, and one of the things we've been talking about the last couple of weeks is our training opportunities for staff at all our campuses. We are looking at a training plan for FY26. These are the trainings that Dave and Annette Heth have been delivering. Those will be starting in July, and they will be making the classes a bit shorter in hopes of making it a little easier for more people to attend.

**Past President Kelly Jo Hendricks** – Helped set up the digital ballot for the Staff Senate election. Attended all the UPBC meetings, as well as the Chancellor's State of the University Address. Was also involved with the Social Security webinar. Was a significant player for the One Day, One SIUE event we had on campus. Attended the Faculty/Staff Appreciation Day events on each campus.

There were no other executive reports.

**Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration** – The search is being extended.

**Executive Director of Marketing & Communications** – Had their first finalist on campus last week.

**Curator of University Events** – Search is nearing completion.

**SIU System VP for Financial and Administrative Affairs** – Currently the position is posted, and application & nominations can be sent to the search firm. May 26 is the due date for applications.

There were no more executive searches.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Confidence in Administrative Leadership** – On April 9, Doug James sent requests to this Senate body, asking members to send concerns that can be forwarded on to the Chancellor. These concerns were sent to Chancellor Minor a couple days ago. Doug invited the Chancellor to come and address the Staff Senate Executive Board in one of our upcoming meetings—so, we will get that scheduled, give him a chance to address the concerns, and go from there. There were some concerns about voicing these concerns directly to Chancellor Minor and not going above him (e.g., President Mahony, the SIU Board of Trustees), with the concern being that if it stays at the Chancellor's level, he can make excuses or ignore what people have to say about his actions. Doug said at this time we should give Chancellor Minor the first opportunity to be aware of and take corrective action to the actions people consider problematic. If we don't get some satisfactory corrective action, then we start climbing the ladder and contact President Mahony and the Trustees.

**Sidewalk Safety from Lot P1 to Lot C** – Doug reached out to Facilities Management and Parking Services regarding this concern; was told that Facilities Management has ownership of that walkway, and that sidewalk and the others in that area are already slotted for the next phase of our multi-year sidewalk replacement project. Unfortunately, that project has not been funded for the past several years, and we don't anticipate it being funded anytime soon.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Questions Related to the Salary Increase to the Unrepresented Staff** – There were many questions from the floor related to the salary increases to unrepresented staff, as approved by the SIU Board of Trustees. These questions include:

- Which paycheck will we receive this backpay?
- There are many employees who were unrepresented in January 2024 but are now represented (e.g., many in ITS are now covered by AFSCME). Shouldn't we get the backpay from January 2024 through the date we became represented? Some from ITS were told no, this won't be the case from HR.
- How are grant-funded programs (mainly on the East St. Louis campus) affected? We are unrepresented staff; however, it's tricky as we are on grants.

Doug said he would take these questions and concerns to HR for clarification.

**Grievance Process for Unrepresented Staff** – There is a concern from individuals that for unrepresented staff members, the process is very hard to figure out. Is there a way we can print off a way, so employees know what they need to do if the situation arises? Christy McDougal, Civil Service Open Range Constituency Representative contributed to the conversation, stating that she has helped some individuals, and went on the HR website to policy 3.14 and tried navigating it and figuring out how and when and what paperwork is needed to help these individuals to start the grievance process...it's very hard to decipher. Doug said he would do a little research on the process and report back to Staff Senate.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**Public Relations** – We had a great Social Security webinar on April 10. Thank you, Doug, for stepping in as the Master of Ceremonies, and to Michael for helping with the tech and the Q&A, and to Evan, who did the preliminary work with the flyer and getting the news out about the webinar. Jack Myers is always so gracious and does such a wonderful job every year. Finally, apologies for those who saw me eating salad at the beginning of the webinar. I was in back-to-back webinars that day, and that was the only time I had to eat lunch. 😊

**Scholarship** – Needs a new chair for this committee.

**Fundraising** – No report.

**Policy Review** – Regarding the Employee Donation Time Policy and where we stand on it, Policy Council had collected all the feedback from the different unions and constituency groups, and the policy was sent back to HR to do more updates and edits. At that point, granted, it had been over a month now...but we still haven't received a revised version back. That is our understanding of where it's currently at—still in the sort of edit/feedback phase. There is a Policy Council meeting coming up in May, so I will be reaching out to everybody who has attending in the various staffing categories to see who is able and available to attend. If there are agenda items, I would ask that you would just reach out on Teams and send me those, and we will get them added to the agenda for the upcoming meeting.

**Staff Development & Well-Being** – Hosted Drug Takebacks on all three campuses last month. The Staff Wellness Committee will continue meeting again later in May and then will plan for summer and fall.

**Diversity Initiatives** – No report.

**Elections & Operations** – Elections were conducted starting at 6 am on Wednesday, April 9 and closed at 6 pm on the same day. The elections took place primarily through the Get Involved app, because we didn't receive requests from individuals needing a paper application. We only had one contested election, which was in the Administrative Staff Represented category. In that category, Rachel Garrett was elected; the other applicant, Cindy Cobetto, was not elected. For those three seats that were available in Civil Service, Negotiating & Prevailing, we had three applicants—so Cheryl Jordan, Shane Kessinger, and Dusty Rhodes were re-elected for another term. For those seats that were available in

Civil Service, Open Range, we had three applicants—so Amanda Russell was elected, and Brittany Smith and Angie White were re-elected for another term. For East St. Louis, we had one open seat and one applicant—so Tiana Montgomery was re-elected for another term. Notifications went out to everyone involved in the election a little under seven days after the election concluded. A notice will be sent out to the E Today soon with the election results. **The election results were approved as submitted.**

Doug James recognized those on Staff Senate not continuing for their years of service. This list includes Julie Babington, Cindy Cobetto, Sara Colvin, Mike Hamil, Brittany Smith, and Tim Staples.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- a. President-Elect: Election at June Special Meeting
- b. Finals Week – May 5-9
- c. SIUE Spring Commencement – May 9 & 10
- d. Camp Launch – July 11-18
- e. Welcome Weekend – August 14-17 (1<sup>st</sup> year student move-in)
- f. First Day of Fall Semester – August 18
- g. Homecoming/Family Weekend – September 22-28

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

- a. Upcoming Guest Speakers at Staff Senate
  - i. June – Penny Raburn – Director of Health Service

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 10:16 am.

Submitted by Michael Tadlock Jackson, University Governance