President's Corner

Greetings, Operating Staff!

As the Illinois budget impasse continues, we are hearing bad news from our peer institutions. Our thoughts are with Chicago State, Eastern Illinois University, and Western Illinois Universities as their administrators are having to make difficult decisions and their students and staff are facing uncertain futures.

However, due to your hard work under the leadership of NIU’s administration, we have been given assurance that NIU’s doors will stay open – without layoffs or furloughs. The comfort in knowing our jobs are safe is invaluable.

The extraordinary sacrifices you have been making including wages, travel, other types of limited expenditures, and taking on additional duties when colleagues leave and are not replaced are commendable. Yet, despite these sacrifices and challenges, our students are still happy here. Retention rates are rising, and NIU’s mission is still being carried out.

I’m thankful to work with people so willing to put the greater good above their personal working conditions.

Our current situation is not sustainable however, and I’m looking forward to returning to more acceptable maintenance, staffing, and compensation levels when we finally receive a budget from the state. It is then that NIU will really flourish.

With hope for the future,

Holly Nicholson, President
Operating Staff Council 2015–2016

How Can Operating Staff Help with Student Retention?

Remind, encourage, and empower staff to keep NIU a student-friendly environment.

Tips for providing excellent (customer) student-service:

• Make eye contact and acknowledge people. When making eye contact with the students, be aware of facial and body language.
• Remember that some students are away from home for the first time – even in the spring semester. They may be missing mom, dad, and the family dog. A friendly smile might be just what they need to remind them of home.
• When moving across campus, smile at students. If you overhear a conversation and have something positive to add, do it. Take the opportunity to engage in a conversation when appropriate.
• If you see someone who looks lost, stop and ask them if you can help them find something.
• Keep a positive attitude. Remember, a positive attitude is catching!
• When a student asks something and you don’t have the answer, find the answer for them. Use phrases like “Let me find out for you.” We often hear questions multiple times, however, it’s the first time they’ve asked you.
• Smile and be friendly when working with students in person. A smile is infectious – and that is something we want to pass along!

(Continued on next page)
How Can Operating Staff Help with Student Retention? (continued)

- Is your area set up to be customer friendly? Maybe add a candy dish to your desk or helpful aids.
- It’s always a good idea to address the student by their first name. This makes them feel valued.
- Turn a complaint into an opportunity to solve a problem. If possible, give some options on how to prevent the problem from happening in the future. Knowledge is power!
- When dealing with a customer in a long process, engage in small talk. Whether it be asking them how their day is, or even talking about the weather, this will make their experience better. When you think you have finished helping the student or parent ask them, “Is there anything else I can do for you?”
- Be mindful of your tone of voice and how you are saying something. It’s not always what you say, but how you say it. When you answer the phone, remember to smile – the smile will transfer to your voice. Answer the phone in a friendly and inviting manner, not in a way that makes the student feel even more nervous about calling.
- When answering the phone, identify your department and name.
- When emailing, be sure your signature includes your name, department, and phone number at the minimum.
- Choose wording carefully in email correspondence. Remember to proof-read before sending.
- Not sure how you are perceived? Ask a co-worker for their input or critique. Make an attempt to model the skills and habits you appreciate when you receive friendly service.
- Remember: Treat Everyone how you would want to be treated.

Huskies Student Food Pantry Seeks New Location

Did you know that out of 100 NIU students, about 13 have hunger issues? The Huskies Student Food Pantry continues to step in to fill this need. It has fed over 2400 students in the two years since it opened on March 20, 2014.

A valuable student resource, the pantry has outgrown the Grace Ministries space and needs to find a new location.

“Although Grace Place has been very generous in housing the pantry, they want their space back. My ideal site would be somewhere on campus, as our mission is to help currently enrolled NIU students who are experiencing food insecurity,” said Kathy Zuidema, NIU Career Services employer relations specialist and founder of the Huskies Student Food Pantry.

Zuidema said that the pantry would like to be moved by the end of the spring semester. She wants it to be housed on a main floor and would like electrical outlets for a refrigerator and freezer, which they don't currently have but hope to get. Additionally, having a space to serve as a waiting area would be ideal. Zuidema doesn’t want the students to have to stand in line.

“Students sometimes have up to an hour of waiting time. Students have had to sit on the floor at Grace Place due to the lack of space. There is a large screen TV, snacks, foosball, internet, etc. for them to help pass the time, and I love that they are comfortable and interacting with each other. The pantry is doing its part in helping students fulfill their dreams by giving them the nourishment they need to stay focused and make it to graduation. This is an investment in the future.”

The Huskies Student Food Pantry always needs monetary donations and food and toiletry items, as well as volunteers. You can help by running a food drive. Groups, organizations or individuals can donate. The donation guide lists items that are most needed. The following are some volunteer opportunities:

Prep the pantry (organize, clean & stock shelves)
- 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month 1:00-3:00 p.m. (You do not need to be there the whole time.)

Distribute food to needy students
- 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month 5:00-7:30 p.m. (If you sign up, it’s very important that you be there or find a replacement.)

Unload boxes of food into the pantry
- 1st Monday of the month 9:30-11:00 a.m. (Must arrive by 9:30 a.m., but do not have to stay the whole time.)

The Huskies Food Pantry is located at Grace Place Campus Ministries, 401 Normal Road. To sign up to volunteer or if you have questions, please call Zuidema at (815) 753-8344 or email huskiesstudentfoodpantry@gmail.com or kzuidema@niu.edu. The website address is: www.huskiesstudentfoodpantry.org.

Employment Changes

DECEMBER 2015

Welcome New Employees
Jennifer Beasley, Clerk—Holmes Student Center
Coraima Beltran, Police Officer—Public Safety
Linda Carlson, Office Support Specialist—Sponsored Projects
Jonathan Cavell, Program Assistant—AVP Finance
Asontawa Cleveland, Account Technician I—Holmes Student Center
Kiwane Lewis, Police Officer—Public Safety
James Locke, Grounds Worker—Grounds
Debrah Meyers, Survey Interview Supervisor—Center for Governmental Studies
Erica Newman, Bookstore Clerk II—Holmes Student Center
Lindsey Rausch, Admissions/Records Representative—Admissions
Dillan Smith, Grounds Worker—Grounds
Nicolesusner, Police Officer—Public Safety
Michael Tweed, Grounds Worker—Grounds

Changes
Carol Albert to Service Desk Analyst—Customer Support Services
Sharon Farley to Office Support Specialist—Biological Sciences
James Fisers to Grounds Worker—Grounds
Marisa Glover to Office Manager—Industrial & Systems Engineering
Sylvia Gorman to Systems & Storage Administration—Information Services
David Guzzardo to Storekeeper II—Materials Management
Matthew Hook to Grounds Worker—Grounds
Andrew Johnson to Infrastructure Applications Manager—Information Services
Arezou Kashani to Immigration Specialist—International Student & Faculty Office
Leonard LeGrand to Office Manager—Student Athlete Academic Supervisor Services
Katherine Lencart to Office Support Specialist—Computer Science
Nina Slack to Office Manager—Geology and Environmental Geosciences
Rahul Thatte to IT Technical Associate—College of Law
Brian Timms to Carpenter Foreman—Physical Plant
Michael Verbic to Field Service Manager—Network & Communication Services
Department Changes
Patricia Liberty-Baczek, Office Support Specialist—Biological Sciences
Ruthann Yeaton, Office Manager to Biological Sciences

Retirements
Leland Hoffman, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Barbara Palmer, IT Support Associate—Center for Governmental Studies
Rachelle Pottinger, Cook—Housing & Dining

Separations
Yi Chen, Institutional Research Data Specialist—Institutional Research
Benjamin Coan, Mailing Equipment Operator/Expeditor I—Materials Management
Jennifer Dabb, Police Telecommunicator—Public Safety
Lincoln Fox, Chief Instructional Media Systems Engineer—Customer Support Services
Chiquita Heard, Medical Office Specialist—College of Health & Human Sciences
Timothy James, IT Technical Associate—Information Services

January 2016

Welcome New Employees
Erika Banks, Residence Hall Attendant—Public Safety
David Bauer, Storekeeper I—Holmes Student Center
LaWanda Benson, Administrative Aide—Administration & Finance
Brock Bjellk, Kitchen Helper—Holmes Student Center
Nicholas Bourle, Office Support Associate—Orientation & Family Connections
Jonathan Cain, Residence Hall Attendant—Public Safety
Keith Cochrane, Library Assistant—University Libraries
Denise Finn, Child Development Supervisor—Campus Child Care
Jeanne Ferrario, Admissions/Records Representative—Admissions
Lucas Finnin, Clerical Assistant—College of Business
Lynette Fischer, Office Manager—Computer Science
Devin Foil, Office Manager—Environmental Studies
Jennifer Johanson, Program Adviser—ACCESS
Eryn Johnson, Clerk—Public Safety
Karli Johnson, Publicity Promotion Specialist—Office of Creative Services
Brooke Lawrence, University Union Night Supervisor—Holmes Student Center
Darren Mansfield, Grill Cook—Holmes Student Center
Kyla Matheson, Account Technician II—Development Operations
Vimoklat Mounivong, Kitchen Helper—Housing & Dining
Donald Mullis, Security Guard—Public Safety
Trevor Rogneby, Office Support Specialist—Engineering Technology
Ashton Spegal—Residence Hall Attendant—Public Safety
Erick Suarez, Security Guard—Public Safety
Jennifer Symonds, Library Assistant—University Libraries

Changes
Sara Boslovatz to Program Assistant—Outreach & Engagement Administration
Jeanine East to Manager—Office of Creative Services
Scott Galto to Steam & Power Plant II—Heating Plant
Edward Hall to Steam & Power Plant II—Heating Plant
Stephanie Krauzenga to Benefits Officer—Human Resource Services
Joseph Lifshitz to Multimedia Supervisor—Holmes Student Center
Eugene Massey to Business/Administrative Associate—AVP Finance
Patti Miller to Staff Clerk—Center for Governmental Studies
Holly Nicholson to IT Technical Associate—Office of Creative Services
Patrick Sheridan to Food Service Stores Laborer—Housing & Dining
Michael Strunk to Events Administrator—Holmes Student Center
Joseph Thomas to Manager—University Libraries
Deborah Williams to Office Manager—Graduate School
Sandra Woodson to Human Resource Officer—Human Resource Services

Retirements
Donna Arne, IT Support Associate—Bursar
Diane Ashley, Administrative Assistant—Division of Information Technology
Juanita Bahr, Catering Supervisor—Conference Services
Ronald Beldon, Power Plant Mechanical Engineer—Architectural/Engineering Services
Christine Berg, Office Manager—Housing & Dining
Sheila Berg, Athletic Business Manager—Intercollegiate Athletics
Bradley Besonen, IT Technical Associate—Information Services
Robert Besonen, Applications Analyst—Information Services
Beth Bjorneby, Office Administrator—Executive Vice President and Provost
John Boudin, Jr., Electrician—Physical Plant
Dennis Cardinali, Plumber—Physical Plant
Ronald Castenson, Equipment Service Supervisor—Housing & Dining
Charles Clark, Motor Vehicle Operator/Mechanic—Transportation
Dean Cornell, Pipefitter Foreman—Physical Plant
Mary Cridde, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Kathleen Eberly, Cooks Helper—Housing & Dining
Wanda Enburg, Library Operations Associate—University Libraries
David Etnyre, Food Service Administrator II—Housing & Dining
David Farley, Pipefitter—Physical Plant
Debra Fetting, Pharmacy Supervisor—Health Services
Cathleen Finnan, Cook—Housing & Dining
Roger Finnan, Route Driver—Materials Management
Joanne Ganshir, Office Manager—University Honors Program
Karen Grubb, Multimedia Technician—Communication
Rose Hayes, Office Support Specialist—Computer Science
Donna James, Assistant Payroll Manager—Human Resource Services
June Kubasiak, Office Manager—Public Administration

February 2016

Welcome New Employees
Alvato Cartman, Jr., Security Guard—Public Safety
Bernadette Caveny, House Attendant/Housekeeper—Conference Services
Brian Eisen, IT Support Associate—NIU Outreach Naperville
Abeer Elshamy, House Attendant/Housekeeper—Conference Services
Iflat Fathima, Office Support Specialist—Foreign Language & Literature
Sandy Garza, Administrative Aide—Office of Education System Innovation
Bartek Geisman, Program Adviser—School of Art and Design
Jacob Glover, Distribution Clerk—Holmes Student Center

Jerry Lane, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Mary Letheby, Office Manager—Computer Science
Paul Letheby, Central Stores Manager I—Materials Management
Ann Mohammad, Office Manager—Biological Sciences
Christine Myroth, Library Specialist—University Libraries
Norris Nieto, Bindery Worker I—Document Services
Linda Novotny, Grants & Contracts Administrator I—Sponsored Projects
Dena Olson, Transportation Clerk—Transportation
Theresa Paulson, IT Support Associate—University Libraries
Charlotte Peel, Account Technician I—Accounts Payable & Travel
Patricia Peshia, Accountant I—Heating Plant
Freyja Rasmussen-Johns, Office Support Specialist—Biological Sciences
Billy Roberson, Building Service Worker—Holmes Student Center
Margaret Russell, Office Manager—College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Betty Shearman, Business/Administrative Associate—Division of Information Technology
Carol Silkey, Staff Nurse II—Health Services
Margaret Sloot, Office Manager—Sociology
Karol Smith, Office Administrator—Office of the Ombudsman
Terri Stover, Office Support Specialist—Psychology
Barbara Vogt, Office Manager—Geography
Cynthia Wallin, Public Functions Supervisor—Holmes Student Center
Peggy Williams, Office Support Specialist—Literacy and Elementary Education

Separations
Erika Banks, Residence Hall Attendant—Public Safety
Gary Bjorklund, Police Officer—Public Safety
Kathleen Finlon, Broadcast News Specialist—Northern Public Radio
Rocio Garcia, Account Technician II—Bursar
Cynthia Hodges, Business/Administrative Associate—Controller
Gordon James, Parking Services Agent I—Campus Parking
Wendy Marshall, Admissions/Records Officer—Illinois Board of Examiners
Martha Ryan, Library Assistant—University Libraries
Ashlei Taylor, Office Support Specialist—Gender & Sexuality Resource Center
Tracy Wescott, Office Support Specialist—English
Service Awards

January 2016

5 Years
Jennifer Jeffries—Holmes Student Center
Christine Monteiro—Internal Audit
Anthony Sosin—Network & Communication Services
Sherry Wisdom—Health Services

10 Years
Clifford Benson—Heating Plant
Allan Cagle—Heating Plant
Sharon Campbell—University Libraries
Lisa Carroll—Health Services
Sharon Farley—Biological Sciences
Christine Gould—Information Security & Operations
Monica Jinks—College of Visual & Performing Arts
Theresa La Rocca—Graduate School
Patricia Maxwell—College of Engineering & Engineering Technology
Brian Pringnitz—Housing & Dining
James Quick—Housing & Dining
Sandar Wynn—University Libraries

15 Years
Bridgett Davis—Human Resource Services
Rosamond Esary—Customer Support Services
Kathleen Faber—Liberal Arts & Sciences External Programming
Denise Frakes—Holmes Student Center
Timothy Gray—Building Services
Jennifer Gregory—Non-Governmental Leadership & Development
Thomas Maloan—Building Services
Jerry Rose—Building Services
Alex Sroczyński—Building Services

20 Years
Warren Lubbers—Materials Management
Dawn Menke—Housing & Dining
Daniel Shipman—Building Services

February 2016

5 Years
William Montgomery—Career Services

10 Years
Earl Beck—Holmes Student Center
Emilia Gamino—Housing & Dining
David Hegberg—Parking Services

15 Years
Denotra Davis—Customer Support Services
Kenneth Erickson—Information Security & Operations
Patricia Lee—Office of Student Engagement
Cynthia McCord—Office of Creative Services
Paula Mitchell—Building Services
Sherry Patterson—University Libraries
Mary Schlagel—Environmental Health & Safety

20 Years
Angela Bergstraud—Housing & Dining
Louise Calderone—Psychology
Kelly Williams—Lorado Taft

25 Years
Suzetter Oller—Physical Plant