Northern Staff News
February 2017
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Oops!
In the November 2016 Northern Staff News we incorrectly listed DAWN Sibley as Dan in the September Changes. We are very sorry for the missing “w”. She moved to Office Manager in Geography.

President’s Corner
Greetings Operating Staff!
Thanks to all who joined us for our January 12 Staff Bowling Night! Around 50 staff and family members came to bowl, play pool and air hockey and visit with colleagues. It was an enjoyable evening, and an event the OSC will be hosting again in the future. Check out the photos on page 4!

We are entering an exciting time of year – award season! If you know a civil service employee who goes above and beyond, please nominate them for an Outstanding Service Award (http://go.niu.edu/service-award). The deadline is Friday, February 17, 2017.

The council will be selecting our next Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship recipients in February as well. We currently have 20 outstanding candidates; it is sure to be a difficult decision. Learn more about the award and past recipients at http://go.niu.edu/osc-scholarship.

Thanks for all of your hard work. Here’s to another productive semester!
Holly Nicholson, President
Operating Staff Council 2016–2017

Call for Nominations
2017 Outstanding Service Award
The annual NIU Outstanding Service Award recognizes individual civil service employees who demonstrate outstanding service and significant contributions to the university and community. Up to four awards of $1,500 are presented at the spring Awards Luncheon.

More details are available at http://go.niu.edu/service-award.

The complete nomination package (nomination form, one nomination letter, and two letters of support) must be received all at once – if incomplete, the nomination will not be considered.

Send or deliver to Human Resource Services, ATTN: Outstanding Service Awards Selection Committee.

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS is 4:30 p.m. on FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2017.

AFSCME Local 1890 Update
February 15 will mark the one year anniversary for negotiating an initial contract with NIU. Considerable progress has been made in bargaining, with several non-economic items agreed to by both parties. There will be a grievance procedure ending in legally binding arbitration, which will be critical in enforcing all language within the contract.

The AFSCME Local 1890 bargaining team has submitted the economic proposals to the Employer representative, and looks forward to receiving their response in future bargaining sessions. Economic proposals include securing benefits that are currently available; ensuring that all benefits such as education stipend, vacation time and more, are able to be accessed equitably by all employees, and of course, an aggressive wage increase proposal. Scheduled negotiation dates are February 1, February 6 and February 15.
A Huskie You Should Know: Spotlight on Operating Staff
Featured Civil Service Employee: Theresa LaRocco

Theresa LaRocco, Records Supervisor for the Graduate School, gives excellent student service on a personal level, which helps student retention. She recently created an instructional video for graduate students. She developed a video with Dr. Elizabeth Wilkins, Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction (formerly Literacy and Elementary Education) and Co-Coordinator of the Graduate Career and Professional Development Center in the Graduate School, entitled “Preparing to Graduate: Critical Information You Need to Know.”

LaRocco shared with Wilkins the fact that students were asking a considerable amount of questions through voicemail and email. Wilkins suggested that she use PowerPoint technology to create an online video that would clarify the graduation deadline system for the students using multi-platform technology to reach students by computer, tablet or telephone. “She brainstormed, wrote the script and put forth the idea from a student perspective. Enhancement of communication is so good for students because it makes the pathway for graduation much more understandable and streamlined for them,” said Wilkins. She said that LaRocco has excellent insight on the common areas where students lack full understanding. When students are at the stage where they need the information, the video is attached to their audit report. The video, which has been viewed more than 900 times since its implementation in October 2016, has cut down on students’ questions considerably, which saves time for the Graduate School staff and the students.

Dana Hughes, Administrative Assistant for the Graduate School, said that LaRocco is a hardworking employee and an excellent co-worker and thinks that the service that LaRocco provides for students definitely helps with graduate student retention. “She truly cares about the students and goes above and beyond to get things done,” Dana Hughes said. “In her position she deals mostly with currently enrolled students, many of whom appreciate her help so much that they take the time to send her a thank you note for going the extra mile to solve their problem.”

One of LaRocco’s favorite memories is about a student that she met at the Naperville campus during a “Writing a Dissertation” workshop. LaRocco always sits at the back of the room during these workshops, where students can come by with their individual questions regarding degree progress and graduation deadlines.

“One student sat down and talked about how she didn’t think she was close to graduating. She stated she had missed many deadlines and asked if I could check her degree progress,” said LaRocco. “Once I started comparing her degree progress report and her file, I found she wasn’t far away from achieving her goal. She was so happy to hear what I was saying, she started crying.”

LaRocco helps NIU graduate students by processing schedule changes, updating degree progress reports, posting degrees and answering emails and voicemail messages. In addition to working with the students, she communicates with staff from all the NIU schools and departments and works with her Graduate School colleagues. Wilkins said, “Theresa LaRocco is a true gem. She helps her team to be as sufficient as possible. Theresa provides support for the students at all ends: start, middle and finish,” said Wilkins.

“I have many interests outside of work. My most recent is learning how to crochet for The Giving Project [sponsored by the Operating Staff Council] here at NIU. I recently finished a sleeping mat for the homeless and have started crocheting scarves for our NIU Huskie students,” said LaRocco.

Nominate somebody! Send an email to osc@niu.edu with who you want to nominate as A Huskie You Should Know and why. We’ll post feature stories on them on the Operating Staff Council website.

Important Upcoming Dates
Deadline for nominations for Outstanding Service Award – Feb. 17 at 4:30 pm
Go to http://go.niu.edu/service-award-nomination
NIU Health & Wellness Fair – March 29, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Important Information to Know
John Hulseberg, Operating Staff Personnel Advisor, 753-1174 or email ospa@niu.edu
NIU Annuitants Association (NIUAA), 753-8377 or email annuitants@niu.edu
Sarah Klaper, NIU Ombudsperson, 753-1414 or email ombuds@niu.edu
Employment Changes

**November 2016**

**Welcome New Employees**

Crystal Sturgeon, Office Support Specialist—Sociology
Jennifer Weber, Child Development Supervisor—Campus Child Care
Kristine Coffin, Police Telecommunicator—Public Safety
Rachel Steward, Program Adviser—Student Athlete Academic Support Services
Yuko Asada, Musical Instrument Technician—Music
Danna Lamesch, Police Telecommunicator—Public Safety
Wade Stone, IT Support Associate—Office of Information Security
Nancy Newman, Office Support Specialist—Health Studies

**Changes**

Zachary Bohn to Office Manager—Nursing
Douglas Freeman to Grounds Gardener—Grounds
Danell Jackowski to Accounting Associate—Accounts Payable & Travel
Sandra McCartney to Office Administrator—Facilities Management
Paige Shinberg to Sports Facilities Manager—Intercollegiate Athletics

**Death**

Defia Briggs, Account Technician II—College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

**Department Changes**

Jeannine East, Manager to University Marketing
Tammy Hada, Office Support Specialist to Architectural/Engineering Services
Mark Papka, Accountant II to Intercollegiate Athletics
Theresa Stack, Special Events Facilitator to Alumni Services

**Retirements**

Donna Hurley, Chief Clerk—Public Safety
Thomas Andrew, Senior Applications Analyst—Application Services
Kevin Nodurft, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Monica Jinks, Office Administrator—College of Visual & Performing Arts
Ernest Hurley, Building Service Worker—Building Services

**Separations**

Anne Meesriyong-Kacskos, Internal Auditor—Internal Audit
Scott Mohr, Electrician—Physical Plant
Edward Dawson, Arena Physical Facility Supervisor—Convocation Center

Troy West, Culinary Worker III—Campus Dining Services
Russell Smith, Building Service Worker—Building Services

**December 2016**

**Welcome New Employees**

Joseph Winters, Office Support Associate—Illinois Board of Examiners
Carol McFarland McKee, Office Support Specialist—Electrical Engineering
Noah Rhea, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Tina Strasma, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Jolene Eberhardt, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Margot Witzel, Accountant II—Accounts Payable & Travel

**Changes**

Rebekka Ayres to Human Resource Representative—Human Resource Services
Scheryl Decker to Account Technician III—Building Services
Leslie Erickson to Business Manager II—Intercollegiate Athletics
Tifarah Jackson to Assistant Program Director—Student Involvement & Leadership Development
Lisa Johnson to Human Resource Representative—Human Resource Services
Darren Mitchell to Deputy Chief—Public Safety
Lauren Mock to Study Abroad Advisor—Vice President International Affairs
Lora Oberg to Assistant University Budget Officer—Associate Vice President Finance
Anna Petta to Community Affairs Specialist I—Outreach & Engagement
Vicki Thompson to Clerk—Campus Dining Services
Jill Vodden to Study Abroad Advisor—Vice President International Affairs
Jessica Whalen to Office Support Specialist—Heating Plant

**Department Changes**

Kathleen Faber, Office Support Specialist to Nursing
Deborah Sheppard, Clerk to Center for Governmental Studies
Jessica Webb, Publicity Promotion Specialist to Web & Internal Communications

**Retirements**

Peggy Simonds, Business/Administrative Associate—Admissions
Michael Sheehan, Building Service Foreman—Building Services
Sumiko Keay, Office Support Associate—Student Involvement & Leadership Development
Judy McGee, Cashier III—Bursar

**Separations**

Denise Fenn, Child Development Supervisor—Campus Child Care
Melissa Swartzbaugh, Office Support Specialist—Allied Health & Communicative Disorders
Kagni Sam Mombou, Parking & Traffic Coordinator Specialist—Parking Services
Casey Manson, Child Development Supervisor—Family, Consumer & Nutrition

**Service Awards**

**November 2016**

5 Years
Angela Camp—Educational Technology, Research and Assessment
Bryan Campbell—University Libraries
Sandra Fasnacht—Internal Audit

10 Years
James Collin—Heating Plant
Janice Wylde—Career Services

15 Years
Vicki Blevins—Bursar
Cheryl Henert—Development Operations
Ellen Wilson—Health Services

20 Years
Theresa Allen—Holmes Student Center
Sofia Komitas—Campus Dining Services
Jodi Long—English
Mollie Montgomery—Human Resource Services

25 Years
Patricia Arne—University Libraries
Vicki Thompson—Campus Dining Services

30 Years
Anne Seitzinger—Vice President International Affairs

**December 2016**

5 Years
Arthur Hall—Physical Plant
Jonathan Krengel—Public Safety
Lisa Nelson—Public Safety
Lisa Pitney—College of Education
Lene Katherine Scherer—Vice President Research and Innovation Partnerships

10 Years
Michael Verbie—Infrastructure Services

15 Years
Bernard Spraner—Infrastructure Services
Bowling Night Fun