

Inventory of the

Operating Staff

Records

in the

Northern Illinois University Archives

UA 7

INTRODUCTION

Material from the Operating Staff came to the archives in several installments during the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. Additions will be incorporated into the record group as they are received by the archives. There are no restrictions on access to these records.

15 boxes
8.25 linear feet
1931+

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This series documents the activities of the Operating Staff and the organizations that represent civil service employees. In addition to Operating Staff Council records, the record group contains material from the Illinois State University Civil Service System (SUCSS), the Clerical Union Organizing Committee, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the NIU Credit Union.

In 1961 the Non-Academic Staff Council began composing and distributing a monthly newsletter called The Civil Word. In 1970 it was succeeded by People, a joint effort of the newly-christened Operating Staff Council and the NIU Personnel Office. In January 1995 this newsletter became the Northern Staff News. Issues of Northern Staff News and Operating Staff Council meeting minutes are regularly added to the record group. Researchers may also consult the records of the President's Office for further information on the operating staff.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Beginning in 1905, the nonacademic staff positions of Northern Illinois University were regulated by the Illinois Civil Service Law. The State's basic personnel agency was the Illinois Civil Service Commission. This Commission supervised about half of the employees of state operated institutions. Exceptions were the employees of the Division of Highways, the Department of Public Works, and the offices headed by elected officials. Difficulties arose in the areas of standardization of job classifications, maintenance of job eligibility registers, fair rates of pay, and assignment of benefits as the number of state employees under the Commission grew from several thousand to twenty-two thousand by 1950.

To address this situation, the State University Civil Service System of Illinois (SUCSS) was formed in 1952 by the state teachers colleges of Illinois and the University of Illinois. This system separated the nonacademic staff of the colleges and universities from the state civil service system as a whole.

The new SUCSS was governed by a small Merit Board consisting of representatives from the governing boards of the major universities. The purpose of this Merit Board was to establish

and maintain classification systems and salary ranges for jobs. The Board also regulated civil service testing and assigned benefits. The SUCSS Advisory Committee was also established consisting of representatives from all the member institutions.

Between 1952 and 1964 the director of the State University Civil Service System was a dual position held by the director of nonacademic personnel at the University of Illinois. In 1952 the SUCSS administered 5,956 positions in 593 classifications at U of I and the teachers colleges. However, by 1964 the SUCSS was responsible for 11,099 positions in 832 classifications at institutions all over the state of Illinois. In light of these increasing responsibilities, the directorship of the SUCSS was established as a separate full-time position in 1965.

In 1957 the NIU Business Affairs Office created the position of Personnel Officer to take charge of all clerical and civil service matters on campus, as well as administer the State University Retirement System to academic as well as nonacademic personnel. The position's title was changed in 1965 to Director of Nonacademic Personnel, and again in 1969 when the Board of Regents changed the term Nonacademic Personnel to Operating Staff.

Shortly after NIU established the position of Personnel Officer, a group of civil servants was elected by their peers to serve as the Non-Academic Council, with the Personnel Officer acting in an advisory capacity. The purpose of the council was to facilitate communication between the staff and the university administration and act as an advisory body to the administration on matters affecting the civil service staff.

In 1972 the twelve-member NIU Operating Staff Council (OSC) was formally recognized by the Board of Regents in their "Green Book" which outlines the governance of the regency system. This recognition entitled representatives of the OSC to hold permanent voting seats on various university boards and committees. The OSC also serves as an advisory body to NIU's representative on the SUCSS Advisory Committee. The advisory committee makes recommendations to the SUCSS Merit Board on matters of policy, rules, and benefits affecting university civil service employees statewide.

Unionization of civil service employees at NIU began in 1974 when the Clerical Union Organizing Committee started campaigning to establish a chapter of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) on campus. AFSCME's ties to NIU civil service employees were not new. The union had supported workers during a two week strike in 1969. In 1976 the Clerical Union Organizing Committee succeeded in establishing AFSCME as the official bargaining unit for the workers. However, it lost this position a year later by the decision of a special election of workers. At present, AFSCME represents only a portion of the civil service classifications at NIU.

The NIU Credit Union was created in 1958 for the benefit of all university employees. Originally, it was a state-chartered institution, but in 1969 it received a federal charter.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

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 3 Convocation Center Issues, 1999
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 8 Operating Staff Dependent Award, 1999-2000, 2004
 9 Staff Fest, August 2001, 2003, and 2004 (includes photographs)
 10 Operating Staff Council Member Handbook, April 2005
 11 Illinois Education Association (IEA) Union Organizing Activities, 2003-
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 12 Speech by Jay Monteiro at Outstanding Service Awards Banquet,
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