

Chapter Meeting Minutes
Neal Welcome Center
July 7, 2016

Members Present (42): John Flynn, Jone Zieren, Mary Anne Hanner Julie Sterling, John Best, Dale Downs, Jill Nilsen, Vicki Hampton, Marita Metzke, David Maurer, Margaret Messer, Nancy Dole, Bob Propst, Judy James, Shirley Hunt, Laura Hussey, Sam Taber, Mary Taber, Ellen Keiter Richard Keiter, Betty Dodson, Carlene Baharlou, Alan Barharlou, Ferne Rogers, Don Rogers, Marilyn Coles, Audrey Edwards, Tom Edwards, Penelope Clay, Jayne Ozier, Margie Checkley, Helen Gregg, Roann Kopel, Robert Whittenbarger, Carol Helwig, Lois Dickenson, John Kilgore, Don McKee, Evelyn Goodrich, Jeffrey Lynch, and Jerry Zachary.

Guests (6): Linda Moore, Luz Whittenbarger, Bob Clapp, Daiva Markelis, Jane Gilbert, and Charlene Bandurski.

I. Welcome and President's Remarks: President Hanner called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

President Hanner welcomed members and guests. She thanked the members for their diligence in contacting legislators and the Governor during the budget crisis. While the crisis is not really over, EIU appears to be in a better position than it was at the beginning of the last fiscal year. EIUAA's support of SUAAction can have a positive impact in races around the state, supporting candidates who are supportive of higher education and Illinois annuitants. As election season approaches, please consider a donation to SUAAction.

EIUAA purchased 45 EIU yard signs as a service to our members. Members reserved signs as they signed in and all 45 signs were taken at the end of the meeting.

President Hanner announced that she and Margaret Messer are planning the 2017 meetings. Members are urged to share ideas for meeting programs by contacting her or Margaret.

II. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Chapter Meeting of March 3, 2016 were approved as read. (Lynch/Hampton)

III. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Hank Davis was out of town. President Hanner presented his report. The current balance in the EIUAA checking account is \$3311.72. At the March 29 EIUAA Board meeting, the Board of Directors authorized the following donations:

- A. \$1275 to the EIUAA Scholarship Fund with \$1000 placed in the corpus of the fund and \$275 added to the 2016 awards to give each student a \$1000 scholarship.
- B. \$1000 to SUAAction
- C. \$1000 to SUAA Legal Fund

IV. Committee Reports

- A. **SUAA Annual Meeting:** Vicki Hampton, Margaret Messer and Jeffrey Lynch attended the 2016 SUAA Annual Meeting in Springfield on June 21-22. Vicki Hampton presented a summary of the SUAA meeting:

Guest speakers at the meeting included Eric Madiar of Madiar Government Relations, Charlie Wheeler III-Director, Public Affairs Reporting Program at the UofI, and Senator William “Sam” McCann, R-50, Carlinville. From their presentations, the attendees learned:

1. Although SUAA won the court battle for pensions and health insurance, other battles will likely surface soon. While the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that no unilateral changes could be made to the existing constitutionally protected contract, it is clear that the legislature will try to go after what they can *contractually* via negotiation with the unions. Various scenarios all target current employees, who may be asked whether or not they wish to barter any future raises for a COLA fixed to their current salary, accept a buyout offer or other pension changes. In short, rather than focusing on ways to pay for the constitutionally protected current retirement system the legislature will continue to seek legal avenues to evade pension payments.

2. We also heard from John Carr and Aaron Maduff, SUAA attorneys, that is currently no resolution to negotiations of health insurance since AFSCME and the Governor are at a gridlock. SUAA attorneys are closely watching for any changes that could potentially diminish annuitant’s health care benefits.

3. If members are having any issues with health insurance such as doctors refusing to provide treatment because of the State of Illinois plan and reimbursement issues or being made to pay for services that insurance should cover, please call Linda Brookhart, SUAA Executive Director so that they know (217-523-4040) or email her at suaa@suaa.org. Ms. Brookhart can advocate more effectively when she has actual incidents to cite.

4. Often we hear that public employees earn too much. Here are some facts about SURS annuitants and their annuities:

- For SURS annuitants, the average monthly retirement annuity is \$3,172.
- 55% of SURS monthly annuities are \$2,706 or less.
- 79% of annuitants live in Illinois so a large proportion of the funds are returned to the Illinois economy
- 58% of SUAA members are staff and 42% are faculty

5. The number of active (current employees) is dropping. This means less money is going into the pension system. The return on our investments is running at 7.25%.

6. **Connected Benefits:** SUAA has joined with Connected Benefits to offer SUAA members and their family members access to life and disability insurance, vision and dental insurance, final expense insurance, pet insurance and more. This is non-dues revenue, which will increase SUAA’s assets and ability to serve SUAA and EIUAA members. Members are urged to investigate these services. To access the Connected Benefits website, visit www.suaa.org and scroll down to the Connected Benefits button. Call the SUAA office at 217-523-4040.

7. **Central Management Services (CMS):** CMS is overhauling their computer software. The changes will be implemented on Sept. 1, 2016. These enhancements will allow them to more readily make required updates as legislation changes. After the system is live, **no more paper enrollment or changes will be allowed. All enrollments and changes will be done online. For annuitants who do not have internet access, CMS representatives will continue to be available by phone.** With the new system, annuitants will be able to add dependents and make change in status.

8. **TRAIL enrollment** will be October through November this year. Updates and additions will be made online. TRAIL members will receive email and paper notification of the enrollment period. Members who are not making changes in their health benefits do not need to do anything. Their current benefits will continue.

9. **SUAA Bylaw Changes and Election of Executive Officers** were approved. New officers are: Larry Alferink, President, Linda Branch, Treasurer, Karl Harrison and Pat Wenthold, Region 1 Director, Joan Larner, Region 2 Director, David Steinberg, Region 3 Director.

10. **SUAAction:** SUAA and EIUAA must gear up for future legal battles that are expected to occur in upcoming legislative sessions. At this time only 19% of the EIUAA members have contributed to SUAAction. Members are urged to help in with this advocacy. Donations can be online with PayPal or a credit card by going to www.suaa.org or by mail with a check payable to SUAAction and sent to: SUAAction, PO Box 1770, Springfield, IL 62705.

11. **MEMBERSHIP:** Increasing membership is always important. Especially with the changes to electronic reporting, it is important for spouses, powers of attorney, and any other person to have access to information concerning member pension and health benefits. These people can join SUAA as a **supporter**. Current employees can be members. **EIUAA** dues are \$38 annually per member. A membership form can be found at:

http://castle.eiu.edu/annuitants/membership_form.pdf

Why join: EIUAA and SUAA is your VOICE in Springfield. We advocate for all retirees and current employees.

B. **Membership:** Jone Zieren presented the Membership Committee Report. Members of the Membership Committee are Jone Zieren, John Flynn, John Best, and Mary Anne Hanner. The Membership Committee always needs the assistance of all EIUAA members to encourage their friends and former colleagues to become members and to maintain their membership. Every month we receive notice from SUAA of members whose membership has lapsed. We reach out to those members to encourage them to re-join. The best way to avoid that is to sign up for a deduction of \$3.17 each month from your SURS annuity.

This spring we visited Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and the Civil Service Council to inform current EIU employees of the benefits of EIUAA and to encourage them to join. We distributed brochures and asked them to encourage their constituencies to join as well.

Mary Anne Hanner attended the annual EIU Retirement Dinner. She gave each retiree in attendance a brochure and urged them to join and some have joined. We have lists of recent retirees here today. We ask that you take one of the lists and if there are people on the list that you know, please contact them and give them a brochure or direct them to the EIUAA website where they can print a membership form.

EIUAA and SUAA are stronger with more member voices.

C. **Scholarship Committee:** Margaret Messer presented the Scholarship Committee Report. Since Vicki Hampton issued the challenge for scholarship donations at the annual luncheon, the EIU Foundation has received over \$2000 in donations to the fund. We will continue to work toward the goal of \$25,000 to fully fund the endowment.

D. **Nominations Committee:** Margaret Messer announced that the slate of officers and members of the Board of Directors will be presented at the October Chapter meeting. Members who are interested or who wish to submit a name of prospective Board member was asked to email that information to her by August 31, 2016.

V. **Program:** Members of the Past-Forward Memoir Writing Group presented a very engaging program. Four members read excerpts from their writings. The group is

organized by Professor Daiva Markelis. The presenters were Jane Gilbert, Lois Dickenson (EIUAA member), Charlene Bandurski, and Bob Clapp.

VI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Summarized by Mary Anne Hanner

Date to Remember

August 31 – Send nominations to Margaret Messer

October 6 – Chapter Meeting – NWC – Program by President Glassman