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(Note to journalists: A publication-quality photo of Jonathan Pyatt is available online at <http://www.uillinois.edu/our/images/>.)

Capitol Hill staffer Jonathan Pyatt to lead University of Illinois office *Illini alum named Director of Federal Relations*

URBANA, Ill.—The University of Illinois has named Jonathan Pyatt, Deputy Chief of Staff to Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D.-Fla.), as the University's new director of federal relations, leading a Capitol Hill operation from an office in the Hall of States that will open in two weeks.

Pyatt, 38, a U of I alumnus who grew up in downstate Pinckneyville, Ill., will join the University April 18, pending formal approval by the Board of Trustees at its scheduled meeting next Wednesday in Springfield.

Pyatt has worked on Wasserman Schultz's staff since 2005, her first year as a member of Congress. Wasserman Schultz is a member of the House Budget and Judiciary committees and served on the Appropriations Committee until January. A member of the House Democratic leadership, she currently serves as Vice Chair of the caucus's Steering and Policy Committee and as Chief Deputy Whip.

An attorney, Pyatt has also served as Rep. Wasserman Schultz's legislative and general counsel, her counsel on the House Judiciary Committee, and as her assistant on the floor of the House of Representatives, where he helped with her leadership and vote-counting responsibilities.

Pyatt has worked on voters' rights programs with the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; he worked for two non-profit human rights organizations in New York; and he served as a criminal prosecutor for the City Attorney in San Diego.

U of I President Michael J. Hogan said the objective of a reinvigorated Washington operation will be to establish a stronger presence in Washington to compete for federal research funding, raise the University's reputational profile, and network with a large alumni and donor base in the region.

"Jon adds a valuable dimension to our governmental relations team as a seasoned congressional staffer," Hogan said. "He has played key roles for a leader in Congress and has experience with committees, agencies and the capital culture that will serve the University well."

Pyatt and the Washington office will function within the University of Illinois Office for Governmental Relations, which also manages University relations with state government.

Rep. Jerry Costello (D.-Ill.) hailed the choice of Pyatt. “In addition to being a proud U of I graduate, Jon is a native Southern Illinoisan with a great affinity for the state and higher education. While these are challenging times for universities and governments, Jon’s experience in House leadership leaves him well prepared to lead the University’s federal outreach efforts in the days and years ahead,” said the congressman from Belleville, a member of House committees dealing with transportation, infrastructure, science and technology.

Pyatt has a strong connection to the U of I. He earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, representing the third generation in his family to attend the University. As an undergraduate, he performed in the Marching Illini band; as an alumnus, he is a member of the President’s Council of the fundraising University of Illinois Foundation. Pyatt earned his law degree from Pepperdine University in California and a master’s degree in international affairs from Columbia University in New York.

“As a national leader in innovation, research and medicine, the University of Illinois has a unique opportunity to better avail itself of shrinking federal resources that will help our nation grapple with profound challenges, enable our state to better compete in the global economy, and help keep a U of I degree accessible and affordable,” Pyatt said. “Our faculty, researchers and alumni have incredible stories to share with the policy and decision makers in Washington, but first we have to be here. I’m honored to come ‘home’ and help my alma mater make its substantial case in our nation’s capital.”

The University of Illinois has an annual operating budget of \$4.7 billion, including nearly \$800 million in sponsored research, with more than 76,000 students enrolled on campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield. Its medical center and health sciences colleges are major providers of clinical care and health care professionals in Illinois.

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The University of Illinois is a world leader in research and discovery and is the largest educational institution in the state with more than 76,000 students, 24,000 faculty and staff, and campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield. The U of I awards more than 18,500 undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees annually.