

SEIU LOCAL 73

Union rejects UI's proposal

Workers in building, food service say it amounts to a one-year wage freeze

By PAUL WOOD

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URBANA — Nearly 800 Urbana campus building- and food-service workers have rejected a proposal from the University of Illinois.

SEIU Local 73 said the offer is essentially a wage freeze. The union has already filed two unfair-labor-practice charges against the UI for what it said is a failure to bargain over issues it is legally required to bargain over, one for building-service workers and one for food-service workers.

But the university differed on the proposal, a one-year

extension of the current contract, which included a small signing bonus and "an opportunity to partner with it on a collaborative effort to address attendance issues of concern to both parties," UI spokeswoman Robin Kaler said.

"We are disappointed that the union rejected this opportunity. The union's proposal to the university included many features that would significantly limit our ability to manage our operations. The university must always protect its right to manage its resources. However, the university is fully prepared to continue to sit

down with the union and bargain this contract," she said.

Ricky Baldwin, SEIU Local 73 senior field organizer, said members voted against the proposal in large numbers.

"We had a great turnout, and the members voted overwhelmingly to reject the zero contract," Baldwin said. "Six to one in food service, two to one in building service."

Baldwin said union members were dismayed by the \$170,000 increase President Michael J. Hogan gained over his predecessor in office, as well as a large salary for his executive assistant.

"It would be different if the university were broke," he said. "The university has money. They're just using the

recession and state budget crisis to squeeze a little more blood out of a work force that's just about dry already."

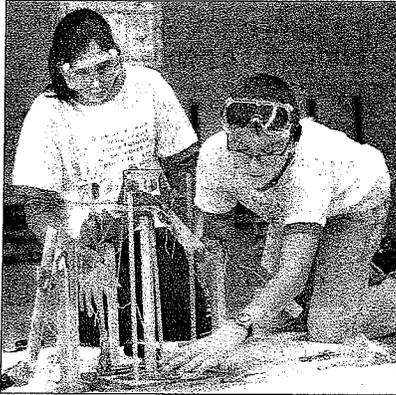
In the dispute over control of work times, Urbana campus custodians, called building-service workers, want the right to apply or "bid" on jobs that come open if they like the location and shift. In some parts of campus they already have this right, but not in others, Baldwin said.

In food service, the UI instituted, without collective bargaining, a policy of 30 "mandatory attendance days" during which workers cannot use vacation days or sick days without documentation from a doctor that meets strict requirements, Baldwin said.

SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

Deal means UI will host national contest more often

Eighth-grader Neha Patel, left, and sixth-grader Cole Cunningham, both students at Danville's North Ridge Middle School, put the finishing touches on their Junkyard Challenge entry, a marble racer, during the 2010 Science Olympiad regional on Feb. 27 at Central High School in Champaign.
Robin Scholtz/
The News-Gazette



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URBANA — The University of Illinois Urbana campus will be host to the national Science Olympiad more often, as well as continue to host the state tournament, as part of an agreement between the UI and the nonprofit.

The shared missions of encouraging science knowledge as well as increasing diversity in math, science and engineering make the two a good fit, said Lizanne DeStefano, the director of the Illinois Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Initiative.

The deal has been in the works about two years, she said. Last week, UI Board of Trustees Chairman Christopher Kennedy praised the move at a trustees meeting in Chicago.

"Science Olympiad is the most widely recognized and prestigious science competition in the United States," interim Chancellor Robert Easter said. "Our campus is excited about the pos-

sibilities for getting more and more students engaged in science."

The merger creates the Science Olympiad Endowment at the University of Illinois Foundation, devoted to serving the philanthropic goals of the Science Olympiad.

DeStefano said the UI has had a long association with the Olympiad, hosting the state tournament going back almost two decades. It has hosted two national tournaments.

The Olympiad was founded in 1984 as a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of K-12 science education, increasing male, female and minority interest in science, creating a technologically literate work force and providing recognition for outstanding achievement by both students and teachers.

Some 200,000 students on 6,000 middle and high school teams in 48 states compete in tournaments every year.

DeStefano said the UI will also host

the national tournament every four or five years from now on. She predicted those events will become an economic boon for the community, "with people flooding into area right after commencement to fill hotel rooms."

DeStefano also said the merger won't involve spending tax dollars.

"Since the Science Olympiad is private and not-for-profit, it's self-supporting. It generates its own funds through grants," she said. "We intend to keep to that model."

She said the merger serves the UI by attracting the best and brightest undergraduate and graduate applicants, many of whom will have experienced the Urbana campus already through the tournaments.

DeStefano said the university and the nonprofit see eye to eye on bringing more underrepresented groups into math, science and engineering.

Please see OLYMPIAD, B-2

OLYMPIAD

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The Olympiad has a built-in program to advance women into the fields; the teams must have an equal balance of males and females, she said.

"It fits in our interest in math and science to a T," she said. "Anybody who has had an opportunity to see the enthusiasm and excitement it generates around math and science can see how it will benefit the university."

The I-Stem Initiatives goals include a K-12 outreach.

"The university has always done a tremendous amount of work in school systems, but it has not always been well-coordinated. The merger will really help in this area," DeStefano said.

Other I-Stem goals, she said, are "reaching deserving and needy schools," engaging underrepresented populations, reforming undergraduate and graduate education, and political advocacy in furthering state support for programs.

In 2014, the UI plans to host the 30th anniversary of the Science Olympiad National Tournament.

EDITORIALS

State's FOIA still under assault

The Illinois Senate should vote "no" on a measure that would exempt evaluations of public employees from disclosure. The public has a right to know about the performance of the employees their tax dollars are paying for.

"The disclosure of information that bears on the public duties of public employees and officials shall not be considered an invasion of personal privacy." [5 ILCS 140/7(1)(c)]

That passage from Illinois' revised Freedom of Information Act, which took effect Jan. 1, set a tone of accountability for public employees that had not been seen before. Spurred by the ethical lapses of the Blagojevich administration, the General Assembly passed a revision of the state's Freedom of Information Act that strengthens the access law in many key areas.

For just a brief moment, it seemed that the forces of transparency had won the day in Illinois government. Then the reality of politics in Illinois set in.

The new FOIA was barely two weeks old when legislators amended it the first time in January, repealing a provision that made evaluations of public school employees, including principals and superintendents, available. Several other measures were introduced aimed at various FOIA provisions.

The assault continued in the spring session when the Legislature passed House Bill 5154, which amended the state's Personnel Records Review Act to exempt all performance evaluations of public employees from disclosure under FOIA. So much for public accountability.

Gov. Pat Quinn amended HB 5154 to exempt only the performance evaluations of state and local law enforcement personnel from disclosure, joining public school employees. Last week the House of Representatives voted to override Quinn's amendatory veto on a 77-36 vote.

The measure to override now moves to the Senate. If it passes there, citizens of Illinois will have lost an invaluable tool for holding public employees accountable as the performance of every single public employee in the state becomes "top secret" information. We urge senators to give the Freedom of Information act a chance to work without further gutting it and vote "no" on HB 5154.

There are powerful forces lined up on the side of HB 5154, the AFSCME union and the Illinois Municipal League among them.

The municipal league objects that personnel evaluations are designed for in-house use only, that evaluations are subjective assessments, that making evaluations public could affect employee morale and that public bodies may not accurately evaluate employees if they think the evaluations may be made public.

But the overriding principle here is that the public has a right to know about the performance of the employees their tax dollars are paying for. Evaluations of public employees bear precisely on "the public duties of public employees" and should remain open.

Government operating in the shadows has for too long plagued Illinois to the extent that it is regarded as one of the most corrupt states in the nation. It's about time citizens of Illinois demand the accountability and transparency in government they deserve. HB 5154 is a giant step in the wrong direction.



News

Poor Ratings for 'U.S. News' Rankings

November 23, 2010



In something of a turnabout, admissions professionals recently had the chance to rank *U.S. News & World Report* for its college rankings -- and let's just say that the magazine was judged at about the equivalent of the dreaded "third tier" in its evaluations.

The National Association for College Admission Counseling conducted the survey, part of a series of research efforts related to the rankings and leading to a full report next year. The survey was conducted both of high school counselors and of college admissions officials -- and both groups expressed low regard for the *U.S. News* rankings, while acknowledging their impact, which may even be growing.

Some of the findings:

- Asked to evaluate the *U.S. News* rankings on a scale of 1 to 100, with 1 as "strenuous objection," 50 as complete neutrality and 100 as "strong support," the average score given by college admissions officers was 38.5 while the average score of high school counselors was 28.7.
- Asked whether the title the magazine uses for the rankings, "America's Best Colleges," is accurate, only 2.4 percent of high school counselors and 3.3 percent of college admissions counselors said they agreed. Majorities (51.3 percent for college admissions officers and 61.9 percent for high school counselors) said that it was not accurate at all, with the remainder seeing it as somewhat accurate.
- In several questions, the respondents suggest that the rankings do damage of various kinds. Solid majorities of respondents (68.4 percent of high school counselors and 54.2 percent of college admissions officials) agreed that the rankings offer "misleading" information to the public. Very similar majorities agreed that the rankings encourage "counter-productive behavior" by colleges. And large majorities (more than 80 percent for each group) agree or somewhat agree that the rankings end up creating "greater confusion" for students and families.

However much those surveyed don't see the rankings as reliable, they do see them having influence -- and many see that influence increasing.

Perceived Change in Prominence of *U.S. News* Rankings Over Last 5 Years

	College admissions officers	High school counselors
Much more	18.9%	23.5%
Somewhat more	36.2%	34.3%
Same	32.4%	33.2%
Somewhat less	11.8%	8.0%
Much less	0.7%	1.1%

In addition, solid majorities of those interviewed at colleges and high schools saw the rankings -- however doubtful in validity -- as being helpful in college recruiting efforts.

View that the *U.S. News* Rankings Help Colleges in Recruiting

	College admissions officers	High school counselors
Agree	15.2%	29.9%
Somewhat agree	40.4%	42.9%
Somewhat disagree	23.0%	14.1%
Disagree	21.4%	13.1%

The survey was done by a special NACAC panel examining the rankings, and brief remarks about the findings released with the survey data note that these findings will not surprise those who talk with high school counselors and college admissions officers. (While *U.S. News* officials are meeting with the committee on a range of issues, they played no role in planning the survey.)

On his blog, Robert Morse, who oversees the college rankings, praised the study, writing: "*U.S. News* is very glad that NACAC conducted and published the survey. The results offer unique insights into NACAC members' complex views toward our rankings. *U.S. News* believes having ongoing open and frank conversations with NACAC is very important, and we look forward to discussing the report."

Asked whether he was concerned about the negative feedback, Morse said via e-mail that he was not surprised. He noted that many guidance counselors, especially those at private high schools, have long held "negative views" about the magazine's rankings. He said that, in some ways, the surprise was that the response wasn't more negative -- and he noted that the college admissions officers seemed to see more value in the rankings than did their high school counterparts. He also said he was not surprised by the findings that both high school counselors and college officials see the influence of the rankings growing.

— Scott Jaschik

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News

Pushback on a B-School's Bold Plan

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The [blog](#) of the Faculty Association of the University of California at Los Angeles features a video, labeled "a little self-sufficient music" -- the Supremes singing "Stop in the Name of Love." The clip starts not with the famous title line of the song, but with the refrain: "Think it o-o-ver."

The reference to "self-sufficient music" is a play on the plan of the business school at UCLA to stop accepting any funds from the state -- in return for greater flexibility over such matters as tuition rates. And what's become clear in the past few weeks is that the more faculty leaders think it over, the less they like the plan, which many view as privatization.

A [report](#) from the Academic Senate at UCLA this month noted that several faculty panels had reviewed either part or all of the business school's plans -- and the reaction wasn't remotely ambivalent. "Virtually every Senate body listed above, either unanimously, by majority, or by expression of concerns, opposes this proposal," wrote Ann R. Karagozian, chair of the Senate and professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering. "Many of the specific objections from Senate committees may be categorized as being financial, programmatic, or philosophical in nature. But in addition, a number of groups expressed concern that a highly expedited review was being requested for a proposal that could well set a long-term precedent for many other schools within UCLA and in the University of California as a whole. Many Senate bodies feel that a paradigm shift of such profound significance warrants a much more complete and substantive proposal as the basis for a thorough review."

Judy D. Olian, dean of the Anderson School of Management at UCLA, is undeterred. She said in an interview that there have been "misinterpretations" of her plan and that she would work hard to dispel them. "I think our main objective is to make sure that people understand what financial self-sufficiency is and is not," she said. Olian noted that UCLA's central administration had asked the business school for an answer to the issues raised by faculty members, and that she was working on one.

Still, the faculty opposition suggests, at the very least, that the idea may receive a lengthier review than might have been the case a few months ago. When Olian first discussed the idea publicly in September, she said it had been approved at the campus level and was awaiting a review by Mark G. Yudof, president of the university system.

Here's how Olian has [described the plan](#): UCLA's business school would give up the state funds it receives for its M.B.A. program -- about \$6 million out of a \$96 million budget. Olian has said that the \$6 million could go to other units at UCLA, and that the business school could make up the lost revenue. The business school, she said, could introduce efficiencies from being freed of various state rules and of having to wait for state budgets to be approved, and could raise out-of-state tuition -- currently about \$49,000 -- to the levels of top private institutions (currently \$53,000 to \$58,000), while preserving a discount for in-state residents (who currently pay \$41,000). Olian says that the plan is needed to recruit top faculty talent and to support the facilities and scholarships needed to compete with the top business schools in the country -- public and private.

The idea isn't unique, but is rare. The University of Virginia's business school has operated this way for a while, and [Arizona State University's law school](#) is considering such a plan. With state universities like UCLA seeing state support dwindle, many observers expect more plans like the one at UCLA -- especially for professional schools that can attract students even with high tuition rates, and that can aspire to significant fund-raising.

The Academic Senate's analysis of the business school plan questioned all kinds of assumptions. It noted, for example, that all of

UCLA would applaud the business school for raising more private money to support spending that the state couldn't provide -- and that this wouldn't require a new relationship to the state. And the report said that based on UCLA's own data on business school faculty salaries, the university does quite well compared to leading private and public institutions -- with no evidence of top scholars leaving.

Many of the issues raised in the faculty report, however, were philosophical. One point of concern was whether in fact it is a fair deal for any state-supported unit to gain a level of independence just by halting the use of state funds. "There are also questions about why the ... proposal does not account for the asset value of the school and the investment value to California taxpayers that have resulted from 75+ years of state support. Several committees indicate that financial self-sufficiency should include compensation to the university and to the state for this historical investment," the faculty study says.

Other concerns have to do with the impact of replacing state funds with private support. The faculty report notes that some worry this would lead to an emphasis on teaching to the detriment of research that is part of the university's mission. Others "are concerned that the [self-sufficiency] model or similar programs could lead to further erosion of the U.C. and an abandonment of the spirit of the public university. Equally important, there are concerns about access to the University by state residents if fees for the M.B.A. and Ph.D. programs become prohibitively high.... Without a substantial increase in other revenue for financial aid, it is unclear how affordability will be maintained for low- and middle-income students."

Olian, the business school dean, said that the fundamental problem with the criticisms is that they assume that a change in financing would lead to many other changes. "This is not privatization. This is not changing the relationship between the school and the university, or the faculty interaction with the university," she said.

"All of the mission-related issues are, frankly, not accurately stated" in the faculty analysis, she said. "We will continue to be part of UCLA and part of the state," she said, with all of the commitments to public service associated with such ties.

Olian acknowledged that the business school has not seen a flight of top faculty or student talent but said that she feared for the future, given that the state does not seem likely to restore steady increases in support for higher education.

She said that while faculty members are correct to note various risks of going ahead with any change, "we look at the alternative as riskier. The alternative is to continue the current model, which is troublesome for the future."

Olian said that she continued to believe in the plan -- and hoped that after further discussion, it would advance.

— Scott Jaschik

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BlogU



Strictly silos

By G. Rendell November 22, 2010
4:45 pm EST

I got a bit of a shock last week; it reminded me just how strongly the

disciplinary culture rules at Greenback U.

I happened to be walking from one academic building to another. A tenured faculty member I know who's been teaching here for about eight years was headed in the same direction for a different meeting at the same time. The building to which we were both walking is a major one on campus, part of one of our better-known schools, facing out on an academic quad. But she didn't know which building it was.

I mean, she knew the name of the building she was supposed to go to, she just didn't know which physical structure was called by that name. Turns out, she didn't know the names of any of the other academic buildings on that part of campus, either.

Our walk took us seven or eight minutes (think two blocks). We didn't end up far from her work location of the past eight years. We were still well within the confines of the institution that pays her salary. She was going to a symposium which her department was co-sponsoring, but which was being hosted by a department in another school within the university. And she didn't know which building to go to.

I used to wonder why it's so hard to establish curricular momentum around the idea of sustainability. Now I get it, at least a little bit. It's hard to build momentum within Greenback's faculty because -- in a sense -- Greenback doesn't have a faculty. It has *many* faculties. And, unless their members happen to belong to the same church or bowl in the same league, those faculties don't talk to one another.

I knew Clark Kerr was right, but I didn't appreciate just *how* right he was. An assembly of schools and colleges, united by a common heating system. (And they don't want to have to know anything about the heating system.)

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