

SUAA/SIUE Chapter Newsletter

Meet SUAA's New Executive Director



W. Bryan Soady, SUAA Executive Director addresses SIUE Chapter



Keith Becherer presents framed document to John Jennetten

Other Chapter Activities

[September 21, 2023](#) we sponsored a SURS Tier I and Tier II Understanding Your SURS Benefits zoom session.

Also on September 21 current employee SUAA members hosted a table at the Human Resources Benefits Fair.

A Kaffeeklatsch at Goshen Coffee on [January 25](#) and a Happy Hour at Global Brew on [February 8](#) were designed to kick off the new year by inviting SIUE annuitants to join their colleagues, co-workers and friends for fun events to connect and socialize while highlighting the important role of SUAA.

January 31 Keith Becherer and our newest Chapter Board Member Natalie Rosales-Hawkins who is a current employee presented at the resumed New Employee Orientation (40-45 in attendance). Our Chapter is invited to present at future orientations as well.

[March 20](#) brought SIUE alumni from Front Office Wealth Strategies to campus to present Understanding the Basics of Financial Literacy.



Chapter Meetings

[December 11, 2023](#) drew a crowd with guest speaker Illinois State Representative Amy Elik. She discussed her legislative initiatives in the upcoming 103rd General Assembly and priorities she hopes to see addressed in that session. Updates on topics of specific interest related to higher education and pensions/benefits for those in the SURS system were also provided.

[February 27](#) was also well attended allowing members to meet and greet SUAA's new Executive Director Bryan Soady and Illinois Senator Erica Harriss. Senator Harriss provided an update on current legislative initiatives relative to higher education and pensions.

President Keith Becherer presented Past President John Jennetten with a framed copy of the 2013 Chapter Meeting agenda announcing his appointment as well as announcing a donation was made by Chapter Board members in John's name to The Center for Spirituality & Sustainability.

Prior to the Chapter Meeting, Director Soady met with your Chapter Board.

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Membership

We continue to emphasize the importance of growing our membership to ensure our voice is heard. If you know any current employees, retirees or survivors of an annuitant, please encourage them to consider [joining](#) our vibrant chapter with over 400 active members.

SUAA Board Member Highlight

Randy Dunn, SIUE Board Member and SUAA Region 3 Director for Universities, was appointed to the Board of Directors for The Center for Tax and Budget Accountability (CTBA).

SUAA State Fall Meeting

Brief summary of the Fall meeting October 25, 2023, at ISU: Jo Gibson, Keith Becherer, and Nobby Emmanuel attended as delegates. Randy Dunn attended as a SUAA Board of Directors member.

A total of 60 delegates were in attendance. This is significantly lower than in years prior to the pandemic and a concern for the SUAA Board in getting critical information out to the chapters.

Presentations:

Kristen Houch, Director of Legislative and Stakeholder Relations at SURS, provided a legislative update and discussed initiatives related to pension system funding, Tier II, and the status of the State Funding Plan.

Pat Devaney, Secretary-Treasurer of the Illinois AFL-CIO, provided a presentation titled, "Tier II and How it Came About." Pat described the history of the Tier II legislation in Illinois and summarized efforts to address potential safe harbor concerns and strategies to bolster funding for the State Pension Plans.

Ann Lousin, Professor of Law at the University of Illinois Chicago and participant in the 1970 Illinois Constitutional Convention, provided a presentation titled, "Too Early to Talk Constitutional Convention?" Ann provided an overview of Illinois Constitutional Convention procedures and trends and summarized Illinois' rules requiring the question of a Convention to be placed on the Illinois ballot every 20 years. The next such window will be election day 2028. Of course, the Illinois Pension Protection Clause, which has been verified by the Illinois Supreme Court to guarantee the integrity of Illinois public-sector retiree pension and health insurance benefits, is part of the Illinois Constitution.

Approval of 2024 Legislative Platform:

Legislative Platform Co-Chairs, Bill Peterman and Gary Davis presented the Proposed 2024 Legislative Platform to the Delegates for discussion and approval. The annual Legislative Platform provides an important synopsis of the mission, values, and priorities of SUAA representing member interests in the Illinois and Federal governmental contexts. Delegates unanimously approved the [2024 Legislative Platform](#) as presented.

A Finance Committee was approved and subsequently appointed creating a greater level of transparency and clarity around our budget planning process, fiscal operations, and updating investment and reserve fund policies. The Committee will conclude its initial work no later than the 2024 Annual Meeting.

SURS

Voting has started in the 2024 SURS trustee election. Six candidates have met the requirements to be included on the ballot. [Voting](#) is open through May 1.

Effective July 1, 2024, SURS will implement automatic escalation for Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP) participants that will automatically increase their contributions at regular intervals by a set amount until a preset maximum is achieved. The annual contribution increases will allow SURS members to save more for a secure retirement. Participants will be able to opt out of the escalation feature if they wish.

SUAAction

From your Chapter President "Hopefully you received the mailing this week from SUAAction, the Political Action Committee affiliated with SUAA. While it very important for us to maintain and grow the membership base as that matters when talking to legislators, it is also just as important for us to have financial resources to lobby for our priorities.

I hope you will join me in contributing to the SUAAction campaign this spring so Bryan Soady and his team can actively lobby on our behalf." [SUAAction Contribution](#)

State SUAA Office

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 19 & 20 in Springfield.

The **SUAA Legislative Committee** is regularly informed on all legislation being flagged by the SUAA Government Relations Team (Bryan Soady, Matt Maloney, Thomas Martin) and discussion is held when appropriate with feedback always welcome and encouraged. Currently the Legislative Committee is also exploring the implementation of a "Legislative Action Center" to facilitate real-time communication with SUAA Members as the issues develop.

The 103rd General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn on May 24th, you can be assured the State office, chapter leadership and SUAA lobbyists are closing tracking proposed legislation and will keep you updated and informed so our interests are protected.

Stay Up to Date Checklist

- ✓ Visit SIUE Chapter website often www.siue.edu/suaa
- ✓ Call the State SUAA office (217) 523-4040 with all contact updates ESPECIALLY your email.