

STATE UNIVERSITIES ANNUITANTS ASSOCIATION
UIUC Chapter Executive Committee
Minutes for April 8, 2026
Web site: www.suaa-ui.org
Facebook Site: <https://www.facebook.com/SUAA.UIUC/>

Executive Committee Attendees: Melinda Carr, Michael Hirschi, Melanie Loots, Vera Mainz, Megan Pearson, Katie Ross, Donald Uchtmann, Matthew Wilson

I. Call to Order and Introductions.

Wilson called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes for March 11, 2026.

A motion to approve the minutes for March 11, 2026, was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

III. President's Update.

IV. Treasurer's Report.

Loots presented the report for the activity in March 2026 and the year to date. She continues to receive dues payments promptly. The outstanding checks to Illinois Human Resources (IHR) have still not been cashed. Loots will wait another month to see what she can do to get IHR to cash these checks. The reports to State Office have been completed. Loots noted that while travel to a Big Ten Retiree Association (BTRA) meeting may result in useful information, the cost is about \$1200-1500/person. She wants us to mindfully consider how many members we could reasonably support. Hirschl wondered how many concurrent sessions are being offered. If two, then two could attend. If three, then three could attend. If we need to cap the expenses, there are ways to approach it. The expansion of Big Ten could make attendance more expensive. Loots requested that she give her report as the first item on the program for the upcoming Annual meeting. Loots was thanked for the report.

NOTE: When purchasing anything where an invoice is sent to the UIUC-SUAA Chapter, please send to Melanie Loots: 813 W. University Avenue, Champaign, IL 61820-3921

V. Action/Discussion Items.

- A. Information on Annual Meeting-McCall has made all the arrangements. Uchtmann will chair the meeting as Wilson will be out of town.
 1. Sunday, April 19th at the I-Hotel, Quad Room, 2:30 pm Reception with 3:00 pm Program (attached)
 2. Program: Kam Cox, UIUC Associate Athletic Director for Business Operations
 3. 2026-2029 Candidates for Executive Committee. Melinda Carr, Tanya Gallagher, Vera Mainz, and H. F. Williamson will be presented as nominees for the Executive Committee for 2026-2029.
- B. Preparation for Annual Meeting. The Spring *Annuitant* was sent out digitally to our members. McCall requested an entry on the State SUAA website calendar. Williamson will submit an entry for the UIUC EWeek a week ahead of the meeting date. McCall will have the stand-up banner, programs, and name tags at the sign-in desk.
- C. Status of Spring *Annuitant* – Carr reported that the *Annuitant* has been published and sent out digitally to our members. It was suggested we add an action/discussion item to find a new *Annuitant* editor to next month's agenda.
- D. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, OLLI, olli.illinois.edu. As has been discussed in the past, the possibility of coordinating with OLLI was reviewed. This could involve such actions as our describing their activities in the *Annuitant* and their publicizing SUAA at their programs. Ross agreed to look into this.
- E. Planning for Annual State Conference and Business Meeting: June 25-26, 2026, Champaign, Illinois. No report.
- F. Review Records Retention Guidelines. Set date for Loots, Mainz, and Williamson to meet and evaluate the old records. No report.

VI. Standing Committee Reports.

- A. Legislative Committee: Adams, Flider (Chair), Marlin, Rugg, Schoell, Winkel. See SUAA Statehouse Report 3-20-2026, **attached**. There was a discussion about the proposed funding reform.
- B. Membership Committee: Carr, Loots, Pearson, Ross, Williamson (Chair). Williamson sent out the report prior to the meeting. The slight decline this month was fairly typical for our Chapter and lower (-0.3%) than the loss for the entire state (- 0.68%).
- C. Communications Committee/Newsletter/Website: Carr, Francis, Gallagher. See V.B and V.C sections above. Wilson noted that we thank the State Office for the loan of their banner, and thank Flider for returning it to the State office. Having the physical banner available helped us in our decision to purchase our own banner.
- D. Benefits Committee: Hirschi, Ross, Stone (Chair), Williamson. No report from Benefits Committee.
- E. Program Committee: McCall, Wilson. See V.A section, above.

VII. Ad Hoc Committee Reports.

- A. Big 10 Retirement Association Committee: Gallagher, Williamson. Williamson provided the email invitation to attend this year's BTRA meeting which is being held in Minneapolis, July 21-24, **attached**. Williamson requested that discussion of the costs and how many members should attend be added to the Agenda for the May meeting.
- B. Long Range Planning Committee: Gallagher, Marlin, Williamson, Wilson (Chair), Uchtmann. In the past, sometimes the July meeting has been skipped or used for a specific topic discussion.

VIII. New Business.

IX. Adjournment and Next Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:53 pm. The next scheduled meeting will be at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, May 13, 2026.

IMPORTANT DATES

- A. Executive Committee Meetings, 2026: May 13, Jun 10, Jul 8 (tentative), Aug 12, Sept 9, Oct 14, Nov 11, Dec 9
- B. Annual Chapter Meeting: April 19, 2026, I-Hotel, Champaign Illinois
- C. State Conference and Business Meeting: June 25-26, 2026, Champaign, Illinois
- D. Big Ten Retiree Association Meeting: July 21-24, 2026, Minneapolis, Minnesota

PROGRAM AND AGENDA

ANNUAL MEETING

**State Universities Annuitants Association
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Chapter**

I HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER

Champaign, Illinois

Sunday, April 19, 2026

Please note: this meeting will be recorded for later posting to the chapter website. By attending, you are granting permission for publication of your image or comments.

2:30 PM Reception and Social Time

3:00 PM Program

Kam Cox

**Associate Athletic Director for Business Operations
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

3:30 PM Chapter Annual Meeting

Presentation of Candidates for Chapter Executive Committee for 2026-2029

Nominees approved by the Executive Committee

Melinda Carr, Tanya Gallagher

Vera Mainz, H. F. Williamson

Call for Nominees from the Membership

Chapter President's Report

Reports by Chapter Leaders

Election of Members of Executive Committee for 2026-2029

Important Information for Keeping Informed:

UIUC Chapter website: www.suaa-ui.org

UIUC Chapter facebook page: www.facebook.com/SUAA.UIUC/

State website: www.suaa.org

email: suaa@suaa.org

Address: State Universities Annuitants Association,

217 E. Monroe, Suite 100, Springfield, IL 62701

Phone: 217-523-4040

Contact: For up-to-date information from the SUAA State Office, SUAA members should send their email addresses to debi@suaa.org

Mainz, Vera V

From: suaa@memberclicks-mail.net on behalf of SUAA@SUAA.org <suaa@memberclicks-mail.net>
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2026 2:48 PM
To: Mainz, Vera V
Subject: SUAA Statehouse Report 3.20.26

- SURS Speaks in Support of Funding Bill HB 5697
- SURS Leaders Meet with SUAA
- SUAA Seeks to Update SURS Blind Mailing Policy
- SUAA “CMS Ombudsman Bill” receives Deadline Extension

It has been a slow spring legislative session so far, but SUAA has kept busy filing and advancing bills. With the primary elections over, we expect things to pick up in Springfield. A few updates on items relevant to our SUAA Members:

SURS Speaks at House Committee for Appropriations for Pensions and Personnel

Yesterday, in a subject matter hearing (no votes taken) for the House Approps-Pensions and Personnel Committee, SURS Executive Director Suzanne Mayer spoke in favor of HB 5697. The bill would allocate \$2.4 billion to SURS for FY27.

SURS Leaders Meet with SUAA

Following the committee hearing, SURS Executive Director Mayer, SURS Director of Legislative and Stakeholder Relations Kristen Houch, and SURS lobbyist Ron Holmes met with SUAA Executive Director Bryan Soady, SUAA contractual lobbyist Andrew Bodewes, and SUAA Director of External Relations Thomas Martin at the SUAA office. The meeting was an opportunity for both teams to discuss how they can continue to collaborate and work together on future projects and initiatives to continue to serve and aid all SURS participants. Thank you to Suzanne, Kristen, and Ron for their time and a productive meeting! We hope to see Suzanne join SUAA again at our annual meeting and conference in Champaign (June 25 and 26).

SUAA Seeks to Update SURS’ Blind Mailing Policy

One issue discussed during the SUAA-SURS meeting was HB 5134, a bill introduced by SUAA and sponsored by Rep. Stephanie Kifowit (D-Aurora). Current SURS policy allows for SUAA and other associations to have one blind mailing per year through SURS. SUAA has previously used this opportunity to send a membership appeal to SURS participants. Whereas SURS’ current blind mailing policy uses “snail mail,” HB 5134 would allow for an email option for SURS’ blind mailings. Earlier today, HB 5134 was discussed at the House Pensions and Personnel Committee, with SUAA contractual lobbyist Andrew Bodewes speaking to the committee in favor of the bill. We’re happy to report the bill passed out of committee, with a 7-3 vote. While the bill is currently “held on second reading,” SUAA will continue to work with SURS and other interested parties to make sure the language of the bill satisfies all parties and

SUAA will file an amendment to the bill should it be necessary. We will continue to notify SUAA members on the progress of HB 5134.

SUAA Healthcare “Ombudsman Bill” Receives Committee Deadline Extension

Over the past two years, SUAA has made a concerted effort to discuss with legislators the problems some of our SUAA members and other SURS participants are facing with their state-provided healthcare through Aetna. This has led to many productive conversations with the Department of Central Management Services, the Chair of the Healthcare Access and Affordability Committee, and Senate President Don Harmon.

Earlier this session, SUAA introduced SB 3413, which is sponsored by Senator Robert Martwick (D-Chicago). SB 3413 is a culmination of SUAA’s efforts to assist our members with their healthcare questions and, at times, guidance regarding their healthcare options. The bill amends the State Employees Group Insurance Act of 1971 and "Requires the Director of Central Management Services to designate one or more individuals who are employees of the Department of Central Management Services to serve as Health Care Ombudspersons. Requires the employees that are designated as Health Care Ombudspersons to monitor and respond to members' email and telephone questions to the Department of Central Management Services regarding the benefits that are available under the Act and the eligibility of members for those benefits.”

Furthermore, the bill “...specifies that the primary goal of the Health Care Ombudspersons shall be to answer questions and generate information useful to participants in the program of group health benefits provided under the Act and, when possible, to resolve any issues between members and third-party providers of services established under this Act.”

The bill was assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee in February but has not yet been heard in committee. The Senate committee deadline was March 13th, but, on that day, the bill received a deadline extension until April 24th, thanks to the work of SUAA Contractual Lobbyist Andrew Bodewes. We will continue to update our members on the progress of SB 3413.

On a final note, congratulations to the Fighting Illini men’s basketball team for beating the University of Pennsylvania 105-70 and advancing to the Round of 32 in the NCAA Tournament!

Thank you, and have a wonderful weekend!

This email was sent to mainz@illinois.edu by SUAA@SUAA.org

State Universities Annuitants Association • 217 E Monroe Street Suite 100, Springfield, Illinois 62701,
United States • [2175234040](tel:2175234040)

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Mainz, Vera V

From: Williamson, H F Jr <billw@illinois.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 5:02 PM
To: Suaa Leadership
Subject: Fw: BTRA 2026 conference registration now open (July 21-24, 2026) - University of Minnesota campus in the Twin Cities by the Mississippi River

Dear Colleagues:

Here is the first invitation to attend this year's BTRA meeting which is being held in Minneapolis, July 21-24. Tanya Gallagher and I encourage others to consider attending the meeting given how valuable we feel the experience can be. All of your expenses (e.g., travel, registration) are covered by our Chapter. If you have any questions, please chat with Tanya and me before or after meetings of our Executive Committee. The registration deadline is not until June 21.

Bill Williamson

From: btra2026 University of Minnesota <btra2026@umn.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 2:49 PM
Subject: BTRA 2026 conference registration now open (July 21-24, 2026) - University of Minnesota campus in the Twin Cities by the Mississippi River

TO: Big Ten Retiree Association (BTRA) representatives

The University of Minnesota Retiree Association is looking forward to hosting the Big Ten Retiree Association conference July 21 - 24 this year in Minneapolis.

Conference Registration

The registration site is now open in our association's registration system.

<https://umra.wildapricot.org/event-6372904>

Please register by June 21 to avoid an additional late fee. After that date, there will be an additional late fee. We encourage you to register as soon as possible to help us with planning the space needed for our enlarged association.

We are expecting each of our 16 associations to send 2 delegates to the conference. If you are going to send more or less, I would appreciate it if you would let me know sometime soon. I am only sending this email to the official delegates from each association. If I have the wrong people listed or you have others who would like to attend, please send this email to them. Also, let me know if you are changing your official delegates. Everyone is shown in the "TO:" line of this email so you can see who is included.

Note: The registration site mentions membership card delivery and says that guest registration is required. These are system issues that can be ignored.

Hotel

We have a block of rooms reserved at the Graduate Hotel on campus, which is where our conference sessions will be held. Make your reservations by June 30 using the hotel's system at

<https://book.passkey.com/gt/220850690?gtid=f30cca97280afe38e18a61ce3446abf8>

Conference Website

The [conference website](#) is where you will find the agenda for our delegates and other full conference attendees and hotel room registration information. Soon you will also see the agenda for our travel companion program which I think people will very much enjoy. Companions will be included in some parts of our delegate agenda, too. We will continue to add more information to the conference website, so please check it on a regular basis.

We encourage you to come early or stay after the conference to enjoy some of the things to see and do in the Twin Cities area.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or suggestions.

The Planning Committee and I are looking forward to seeing all of you this summer at the University of Minnesota campus in the Twin Cities right next to the mighty Mississippi.

Eric

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Eric Hockert

[Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education](#) (AROHE) (President)

[Big Ten Retirees Association \(BTRA\)](#) Board Chair (FY26)

[Big Ten Retirees Association \(BTRA\)](#) 2026 Conference Planning Group Chair

[University of Minnesota Retirees Association](#) (UMRA) (Past President FY24)

[Age-Friendly University of Minnesota Council](#) (Member)

[Age-Friendly University Global Network](#)

[AARP Minnesota](#) (Legislative Advocate)

[University Retirees Volunteer Center](#) (URVC) (Past Board Chair)

[Office for Technology Commercialization](#) University of Minnesota (Retired)

“What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.” — **Aristotle**

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?” – **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Get involved. Volunteer. Help others. URVC.umn.edu

