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The Annuitant

A publication of the UIUC Chapter
State Universities Annuitants Association

Spring 2026

**Kam Cox, Associate Athletic Director for
Business Operations, to Address SUAA-UIUC Meeting
Sunday, April 19, 2026 at the
I-Hotel and Conference Center, Quad Room**

2:30 p.m. Reception / 3:00 p.m. Program

Our guest speaker will be Kam Cox, Associate Athletic Director for Business Operations. When he joined the Fighting Illini, Kam became the first specialist in name, image, and likeness (NIL) law among Power Four schools. He has played a key role in shaping the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics' approach to student-athlete compensation, governance, commercial partnerships, and other strategic initiatives. Kam will discuss NIL-related developments, share insights on how NIL is impacting Illinois, and explore what these changes mean for the future of college athletics.

A reception will begin at 2:30 p.m., followed by the presentation at 3:00 p.m. The presentation will be followed by the Annual Meeting of the Chapter which will include the election of members of the Executive Committee for 2026-2029 terms.

We hope you will be able to join us in person for this meeting.

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Search for SUAA UIUC:

<https://www.facebook.com/SUAA.UIUC/>

Best way to keep up!

Spring 2026 President's Message

Matt Wilson

As winter loosens its grip and fresh growth starts to show, spring feels like an open invitation—to gather again, to learn something new, and to reconnect with our University community.

That sense of renewal continues into **Spring 2026** as the SUAA–UIUC Chapter builds on recent momentum. At our latest gathering, members heard from **David Bambrey**, President of the University of Illinois Alumni Association at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He highlighted the wide range of Alumni Association programs available to all retirees and University of Illinois employees, including the Speaker Series, Explorers travel programs, and an online book club. Additional information on these and other resources is available at www.uiaa.org.

Looking ahead, please make plans to join us for the **Spring Meeting**, which will be held at the I-Hotel and Conference Center on **Sunday, April 19**. The reception will begin at **2:30 p.m.**, followed at **3:00 p.m.** by a presentation from Kam Cox, Associate Athletics Director for Business Affairs. Kam, a lawyer and experienced administrator, was hired by Athletics Director Josh Whitman, to help guide the University through the rapidly evolving landscape of NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) in college sports. I expect it to be an interesting and lively discussion. The presentation will be followed by the Annual Meeting of the Chapter which will include the election of members of the Executive Committee. The following people have been nominated to fill 2026-2029 terms on the Committee: Melinda Carr, Tanya Gallagher, Vera Mainz, and H. F. Williamson.

Please also note that the **2026 statewide SUAA Annual Conference & Business Meeting** will be held at the I Hotel in Champaign on **Friday, June 26, 2026**. This conference will provide an excellent opportunity for SUAA members from across the state to hear from Bryan Soady, SUAA Executive Director, and his team about their ongoing advocacy efforts in Springfield and around Illinois.

SUAA and your UIUC chapter are working hard to preserve and protect a strong public pension system, healthcare benefits, and the general well-being of our membership. I once again encourage you to join one of our committees (Legislative, Communications, Membership, Program and Benefits). We are always looking for more volunteers and to increase engagement with our fellow members. If you have interest in serving on any of our committees, please send an email to president@suaaui.org

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to let you know that our chapter is no longer publishing a paper newsletter. Moving to a fully electronic format will save on printing and mailing costs while also improving efficiency and timeliness of our communications.

We hope you'll join us this spring and early summer as we continue to stay informed, engaged, and connected.

SUAA-UIUC CHAPTER LEADERSHIP - 2025-26

*(Committee assignments are shown in italics *indicates a member of the Executive Committee)*

– OFFICERS –

President Matthew J. Wilson* - *Program*

Vice President Donald Uchtmann* – *Investments*

Secretary Vera V. Mainz*

Treasurer Melanie Loots* – *Membership*

– OTHER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE –

Robert Flider* - *Legislative*

Bettina Francis* – *Communications*

Tanya Gallagher* - *Communications*

Michael Hirschi* - *Benefits, Communications*

Debra McCall* - *Program*

Megan Pearson* - *Membership*

Katie Ross* - *Benefits, Membership*

H. F. Williamson* - *Benefits, Membership*

– OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS –

William Adams – *Legislative*

Melinda Carr - *Membership, Communications*

Thomas Conry - *Legislative*

John C. Marlin - *Legislative*

Steve Rugg – *Legislative*

Rick Schoell - *Legislative*

Richard Winkel - *Legislative*

– LIAISONS –

Cheryl Heck - *Campus*

Kathleen Holden - *Clark-Lindsey*

Rose Paul - *Staff Advisory Committee*

Deb Stone – *Campus Benefits*

– STATE SUAA LEADERSHIP –

H. F. Williamson - *SUAA Foundation Director*

– CHAPTER WEBSITE –

www.suaa-ui.org

Summary of SUAA-UIUC Fall Chapter Meeting Notes

The Fall Chapter meeting for the UIUC Chapter of SUAA was held on October 29, 2025, at the iHotel and Conference Center. The SUAA UIUC Secretary has provided the following notes as an overview of the program.

President Matt Wilson started the program at 6:00 p.m. and introduced David Bambrey. Bambrey joined the University of Illinois Alumni Association in 2018 and was appointed President in 2023. David came to us from Athens, Ohio, where he served as Vice President for Alumni Relations at The Ohio State Alumni Association.

Bambrey gave a brief history of the UIUC Alumni Association (UIAA). It was founded in 1873 and was once a system level organization, but is now specific to UIUC alumni. It is based out of the Alice Campbell Alumni Center. Bambrey noted that there are approximately 575,000 living alumni, with about 260,000 based in Illinois. UIAA offers three main programs: 1) tours via the EXPLORERS travel program - <https://uiaa.org/explorers/> ; an on-line professionally moderated Alumni Book Club - <https://www.pbc.guru/uIllinois> ; 3) on-line speaker series via zoom; about 6 a year - <https://uiaa.org/category/speaker-series/> . Annual memberships in UIAA are \$55/yr. The talk ended at 6:35 p.m.

The General Meeting was started by President Matt Wilson at 6:40 p.m. Wilson thanked Debbie McCall for organizing this event. He gave a brief SUAA update.

1. Don Uchtmann gave a membership committee report on behalf of Bill Williamson. At the end of September 2025, SUAA-UI had 1347 members. He noted that we get new members every year, but others pass away. Our membership puts us second among the 53 SUAA chapters. We have members in every legislative district in the state. We all need to work on recruitment of members and renewal of current members. Our advocacy is very important and depends on membership; our organization and our lobbyist is paid via our dues. Our goals are to be a strong, effective advocate for protecting our tier 1 pensions; to make tier 2 pensions a better system; to make sure that the self-directed plan members continue to get state payments; to give more provider options for health care, including during the TRAIL transition to new provider options. The issue of health care advocacy crosses all options for pensions. Uchtmann also noted that higher education is being threatened in ways it has not encountered before. At the recent State SUAA meeting, there was an emphasis that we need to advocate at the federal level.
2. Katie Ross gave a report for the benefits committee. Ross is an Assistant Vice President in the System Human Resources office and has been a member of SUAA for many years. She is well-versed in active employee benefits. Ross is working on the [suaa-ui facebook page](#) by putting out information on our chapter and also some information on SUAA-UIC chapter offerings. Ross provided the dates of the TRAIL MAPD program open enrollment, the actions that can be taken during that timeframe, and a description of “split family” coverage. She also provided a reminder from CMS about applying for Medicare 3 months before your 65th birthday, and availability of a Medicare checklist on the CMS website.
3. The Meeting ended 6:52 p.m.
4. A recording of this meeting will be available on the [SUAA UIUC website](#).

SUAA – UIUC Executive Committee Election

Nominating Committee: Melanie Loots, Tanya Gallagher and H.F. Williamson

At the annual meeting in the spring, four SUAA-UIUC chapter members are elected to the twelve-member Executive Committee for three-year terms. Executive Committee members may serve for two consecutive terms if reelected. The Nominating Committee, appointed by the Executive Committee, has proposed a slate of four members according to Article 4.2 of the chapter bylaws. The biographies of these nominees are presented below. Additional nominations shall be requested from the floor. Such nominations require the consent of the nominees. All nominees must be chapter members.

Melinda Carr, an ordained minister, retired in 2016 after 30 plus years. In her most recent position as Assistant Director for Communications in the University Office of Business & Financial Services, she supported internal and external communications for the three campuses including publishing OBFS news and developing marketing plans. She is returning to the Executive Committee to support the chapter during the transition to a new communications process. She has served in various roles since 2019 including as Secretary, as a member of the Membership and Communications Committees, Co-Editor and then Editor of the Annuitant. Before joining the Executive Committee, she served as Co-chair of SUAA State Membership. She holds a B.A. in English/Journalism from Tougaloo College and a M.S. in Journalism from UIUC. Carr has also served on various nonprofit boards including the Ministry Staff at New Free Will Baptist Church where she is Assistant Pastor and other community outreach and advocacy work as Vice President of the Ministerial Alliance of Champaign-Urbana & Vicinity.

Tanya Gallagher is Professor Emeritus of Speech and Hearing Science, Timothy J. Nugent Emeritus Professor in Rehabilitation Research, and Dean Emeritus of the College of Applied Health Sciences from 1998-2016. She received her BS, MA, and PhD degrees from the University of Illinois and, prior to joining the faculty in 1998, served on the faculties of the University of Michigan Medical School and the McGill University Faculty of Medicine. Tanya has held several leadership positions including serving as the President of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Foundation, the President of the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics, the President of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Clinical Trials Research Group, and as an advisor to the National Center for Treatment Effectiveness Research in Communication Disorders. She has received the most prestigious awards in her field, has published extensively and is an internationally recognized scholar in language disorders and treatment outcomes. Tanya is currently a member of the State SUAA Executive Committee, co-chair of the Chapter's Communications Committee and a representative to the Big 10 Retiree Association. She is currently serving as a member of the Board of Directors of SUAA. She is seeking her second term on the Executive Committee.

Vera Mainz retired after 25 years as Director of the NMR Lab in the School of Chemical Sciences at the UIUC in 2010. She received a B.S. in Chemistry and Mathematics from Kansas Newman College, a Ph.D. in Inorganic Chemistry from the University of California Berkeley, and held a postdoctoral position at UIUC. Vera was the LAS representative to the UIUC Council of Academic Professionals (CAP) from 1994-2007, and served as the CAP Grievance Officer from 1999-2007. She served as the CAP Liaison to the UIUC University Senate Statutes and Procedures Committee from 1998-2020. Her honors include the LAS Academic Professional Award in 1994, the School of Chemical Sciences Outstanding Academic Professional Award in 1999, and the Chancellor's Academic Professional Excellence (CAPE) Award in 2001. She has been a member of the American Chemical Society (ACS) since co-founding a student chapter of the ACS on her college campus in 1975. She joined the HIST Division of the ACS in 1994 and has served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Division since 1995. Vera's interest in the history of chemistry led her and her husband to co-curate two exhibits at the University of Illinois Rare Book Room. Vera was a member of the ACS Fellows Class of 2012, which honored her contributions to the ACS. She seeks her first term on the SUAA-UIUC Executive Committee.

H. F. (Bill) Williamson was appointed in 2024 to fill a 2023-2026 vacancy on the SUAA-UIUC Executive Committee and is seeking a second term. He previously served two terms on the Committee including three years as the Chapter President. He has also been a long-time Chapter representative to the Big 10 Retiree Association. At the state level, he is on the Board of Directors of the SUAA Foundation and has been its previous Chair. Bill retired in 2002 after 38 years as a faculty member in the Department of Economics. He was also Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs in the College of Commerce and Business Administration (now Business) at the time of his retirement.

Faculty/Staff Assistance and Well-Being Services (FSAWS)

The services of this University of Illinois Human Resources office are available free of charge for retirees, employees, and members of their households. Services include assessments, short-term counseling, crisis services, and referrals to appropriate resources.

FSAWS also coordinates the Faculty/Staff Emergency Fund for employees in a financial crisis. Retirees are not eligible to receive FSAWS emergency funds; retirees in need can apply to the SUAA Foundation for assistance. However, anyone can support the FSAWS program either by mailing a personal check (indicate Faculty and Staff Emergency Fund in memo line) to: University of Illinois Foundation, 1305 West Green Street, MC-386, Urbana, IL 61801 or with a designated gift made via <https://giving.illinois.edu>.

FSAWS is located at 1011 West Springfield, Urbana. Appointments are strongly encouraged; phone (217) 244-5312 for an appointment. For more information, visit their website: <https://humanresources.illinois.edu/about/culture-learning-engagement/faculty-staff-assistance-and-well-being-services/>

Important Sources of Information about Your Pension & Benefits

State Universities Retirement System (SURS)

URL: <http://surs.org/>

Phone: (800) 275-7877 or (217) 378-8800 | **Fax:** (217) 378-9800

Address: 1901 Fox Drive, Champaign, IL 61825-2710

SURS is our pension system. Once registered on the website, current employees will have access to historical pay and pension calculators to help plan for retirement. Information on programs such as buyouts is also available. After retirement, annuitants can view information about pension payments and deductions and can update addresses, beneficiaries, phone number, email address, and federal tax withholding status.

MyBenefits Marketplace

URL: <https://mybenefits.illinois.gov/>

Phone: (844) 251-1777 or (844) 251-1778 (TTY)

MyBenefits is a website designed to help employees or annuitants make changes to their insurance coverage during the Benefits Choice period. Members can also call a State group insurance customer service representative at the number above. This is also where you sign up for TRAIL (Medicare Advantage Plan).

Social Security and Medicare (Champaign Office)

Social Security URL: www.ssa.gov

Medicare URL: www.medicare.gov

Phone: (877) 819-2593 | (800) 325-0778 (TTY) | **Address:** 101 S Country Fair Dr, Champaign

Central Management Services (CMS) (For State Employees)

URL: illinois.gov/cms/benefits

Phone: (800) 442-1300 or (866) 277-5669 (TTY) | **Email:** CMS.Ben.BCS@illinois.gov

CMS negotiates all benefit packages for employees and retirees. When browsing through the information on the CMS website, remember that UIUC employees are considered “State Employees” and are enrolled in the “State Employees Insurance program.” CMS has detailed insurance coverage information as well as claims delays and Benefits Booklets for Benefits Choice periods.

State Universities Annuitants Association (SUAA)

URL: www.suaa.org

Phone: (217) 523-4040 | **Email:** suaa@suaa.org

Address: 217 East Monroe Street, Suite 100, Springfield, IL 62701

SUAA advocates on behalf of SURS retirees, current employees, and their dependents and survivors to preserve retirement and healthcare benefits. Members have special access on the website. Visit the website to join or renew.

TRAIL (Total Retiree Advantage IL)

URL: illinois.gov/cms/benefits/trail (follow link to “State Insurance Program”)

Phone: (844) 251-1777 or (844) 251-1778 (TTY) (same as MyBenefits)

Fax: (844) 676-1725 | **Email:** cms.ben.medicarecob@illinois.gov

TRAIL manages a suite of State Medicare Advantage plans for retirees who are eligible for Medicare. The website has open enrollment materials and shows coverage information and monthly costs based on years of service.

Help Us Recruit New Members to SUAA!!

SUAA's strength and effectiveness depend directly on the number of members. If you are already a member, encourage your colleagues, friends, and family members who are SURS participants to join. Show them this newsletter and send them a link to our chapter's website (www.suaa-ui.org) so they can see the work that is being done on their behalf in Springfield and here in Champaign-Urbana. If you are a user of social media, "like" the SUAA UIUC Facebook page and "share" its postings so your friends can see them.

We encourage you to have your dues deducted from your paycheck (if still employed) or your pension (if retired). Your membership will renew automatically each year without you having to write a check or spend money on a stamp. Dues are only \$3.92 per month. Download the membership form today from the www.suaa-ui.org/join.htm website; complete, sign, and submit the form as directed. Your dues will be deducted monthly when your current membership expires.

If you are not yet a member – Your support through membership dues is important as we continue work to protect the future of our pension system, health benefits, higher education, and general welfare of our membership. Visit our web page at www.suaa-ui.org/join.htm for easy instructions.

Dues are only \$47 per year – \$39 goes to the state SUAA organization and \$8 stays with our local chapter.

Your support is essential, and we hope that this information will persuade you to join us! Your membership will renew automatically each year without you having to write a check or spend money on a stamp. Dues are only \$3.92 per month. Download the membership form today from the www.suaa-ui.org/join.htm website; complete, sign, and submit the form as directed. Your dues will be deducted monthly.

What has SUAA done for you?

PROMOTED HIGHER EDUCATION'S FUTURE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

- Supported legislation in Springfield to strengthen health care and pension benefits for SURS members.
- Advocated for protecting and preserving the College Insurance Program (CIP health benefits).
- Protected faculty forced to take furloughs during the state's budget crisis.
- Worked to preserve Illinois' higher education system as a critical, quality commodity for Illinois, through the Higher Education Creates Jobs campaign and other advocacy.

Among other advocacy roles, SUAA continues to actively lobby the Legislature to prevent changes to the Constitution that would harm SURS retirees and active members, such as eliminating the "pension clause."

To join as a new member, to renew your membership, or to change to payroll deduction, visit our webpage at www.suaa-ui.org/join.htm for easy instructions.

Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2025

Melanie J. Loots, SUAA-UIUC Treasurer

SUAA represents employees and retirees of Illinois public universities and colleges. The UIUC Chapter has no employees, only volunteers. The SUAA office in Springfield employs individuals whose primary duty is advocacy on behalf of SURS annuitants to protect the retirement, survivor, and health insurance benefits of SURS annuitants. Of your \$47 annual dues, \$39 is for SUAA and \$8 for our Chapter, SUAA-UIUC. The 2025 revenues and expenses for SUAA-UIUC are shown below.

Total Revenues*		\$18,843.15
Dues	\$12,410.44	
Interest	\$4,931.36	
UIUC Support for CCFD Insert	\$1,501.35	
Total Expenses*		\$9,299.21
The Annuitant newsletter (printing)	\$1,428.79	
Meeting Expenses (local, regional, state)	\$7,650.14	
Website Maintenance and Fees	\$818.63	
Supplies	\$78.46	
Gain (Loss) In Reserves*		\$9,543.94

**Totals may differ from sum of line items due to rounding.*

Free Emergency First Aid App

Health emergencies are most often encountered among our families and friends. The American Red Cross offers a free mobile app that provides expert advice for common emergencies, along with clear and up-to-date directions for CPR, AED, and other essential skills. Red Cross mobile apps are available at the Amazon, Apple, and Google stores. Please see <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps.html> for more information.

In Memoriam

Below is the name of each SURS participant from the Urbana-Champaign campus and allied agencies who passed away between July 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025. Source: Freedom of Information Act request from SURS -*Melinda Carr*

Aiken, Michael T.	Dungan, Moses Ray
Almy, Gertrude	Eades, John A.
Anderson, Bonnie E.	Edgar, James Robert
Anglin, Eugene M.	Edwards-Ring, Jennifer
Arnold, Donald E.	Ehlers, Marlyn M.
Atwood, Tammy Jean	Engel, Rhoda R
Austin, Orlo B.	England, Joanne E.
Barkley, Clare E.	Erwin, Paula Peters
Barnett, Martha M.	Etter, Stanley L.
Berg, Ira David	Ferguson, Anita Marie
Bohlen, Andrew E.	Ferguson, Ann M.
Bonebrake, Larry S.	Fitzsimmons, Richard L
Borelli, Raymond F.	Flickinger, Michelle E.
Braunfeld, Peter G.	Fondia, Charles L.
Briggs, Seth	Foster – Guardian, Stephan R.
Bright, Latrelle Sharmaine	Francis, Theo Anne
Brown, David Fleming	Gadbury, Gregory J.
Brummet, Margaret A.	Gamble, Judy M.
Burwell, Richard L.	Gannon, Garry D.
Campbell, June H.	Garrett, Dortha J.
Campbell, Richard L.	Graen, George B.
Cardiff, Marcia K.	Grashel, John William
Castleton, Denise F.	Greten, Roger H.
Chalip, Laurence Hilmond	Griggs, Mildred Barnes
Chang, Li	Grimes, Thomas A.
Chappel, Diane Kay	Grooms, Jason T.
Ciemny, Chester J.	Gross, David L.
Cochran, Gary Edward	Hale, Barbara C.
Coleman, Karen Joy	Hammer, John H.
Compton, Mary B.	Hart, Jason T.
Conley, Adam T.	Hartman, Julia A.
Conley, Thomas M.	Henderson-Young, S. D.
Conrad, Susan L.	Holt, Donald A.
Cromwell, Vickie	Isler, Todd C.
Cutchin, Betty F.	Jackson, Jo Ann
Darbonne, Edward E.	James, David F.
Darnell, Ernest	Janz, Sally M.
Davis, Linda Jean	Kaler, Maxine G.
Davis, Margaret J.	Kaufman, Robert P.
Deloache, Judy S.	Kennedy, Linda J.
Ding, Kequan	Kilhoffer, Kenneth Paul
Drake, Lawrence I.	Kirlik, Alex, C.
Drennen, Mamie Disanga	Kruse, Marilyn G.

Krzysko, Andrea M.	Ruan, Zhong-Jin
Kunzeman, M. Rose	Sah, Chih-Tang
Laliberte, Daniel M.	Saks, Margaret E.
Larsen Klein, Joan	Salamon, Sonya B.
Lawrence, Frederick V.	Saldeen, Corinne
Ledbetter, Alice D.	Salmonson, Beryl J.
Long, Stephen Patrick	San Miguel, Raul
Malmgren, Carl H.	Sanders, John E.
Malo, George Edward	Sapp, Albert L.
Marikos, Nordis Ann	Sargent, Malcolm L.
Marlow, Mary Lou	Schoeplein, Robert N.
Marshall, Russell F.	Schwanke, Diana M.
Marshall-Colon, Amy	Scott, Michael W.
May, Leola	Shierry, Helen J
McColley, Robert M.	Sholem, Stanford H.
McCormick, Frances J.	Sieber, Jessica R.
McCulloh, Leon R.	Simmons, Ralph O.
McKay, Edward Donald	Sims, Melvin D.
McLoughlin, Patrick J.	Skirvin, Robert M.
Merkle, Harold L.	Smith, Ronald D.
Miller, Linda D.	Snyder, Diana M
Minnear, Marie E.	Speck, Wayne E.
Minor, Blanch	Stephens, Curtis
Moeller, Josephine F.	Susedik, Nancy M.
Morey, Patricia L.	Swiader, Elaine Lee
Morrisette, Sharon	Swift, Geraldine
Morrison, Aubrey P.	Sypult, Sharon Ann
Nelson, Diana Lynn	Trone, Thomas N.
Newby, Gregory, B.	Tucker, James D.
Georgianna, Lewis Noel	Villhard, Janice Emma
O'Banion, Terry U.	Walters, Joyce E.
Olson, Janet Marie	Ward, Tom R.
Orr, Audrey L.	Wardrop, James L.
Patton, Amanda Louise	Weidinger, Melvin J.
Paul, Shari M.	Welborn, Mary C.
Peck, Sue A.	Wentworth, Richard L.
Pershing, Roscoe L.	Wentz, James P.
Piacenza, Lorenzo	Wheatley, Kay Janice
Portnoy, Stephen L.	Whelan, Margaret F.
Powell, David L.	White, Donna Louise
Powers, Nicholas J.	Whitt, Gregory S.
Prouty, Kathy	Williams, Lawrence A.
Rash, Norma J.	Wilt, Robert J.
Reed, Rachel F.	Wimmer, Wendy Renee
Reitmeier, Raymond Robert	Winterbottom, Don B.
Renfrew, Bonnie L.	Witt, Robbie Sue
Renken, Mark W.	Wyninger, Richard E.
Riahi, Daniel N.	Zangwill, Willard I.
Ridenour, Eva E.	Zeilenga, Craig A.
Rinkel, Gene K.	Zindars, Judith Ann
Robbins, Billie Sue	