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October 2020 Newsletter

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[Apply to Join Our Bargaining Team, Negotiate Wages](#)

Article XII, Section 7: Fiscal Year 2022 of our Collective Bargaining Agreement with the NIU Board of Trustees states:

The parties will meet to open the Agreement for the sole purpose of negotiating wages for Fiscal Year 2022 (contract year commencing July 1, 2021) no later than sixty (60) days prior to the commencement of the fiscal year.

This is our opportunity to negotiate wages for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021.

Your union, AFSCME Local 1890, will form a new bargaining team very soon to

Representative, Rick Surber, will work with our team and conduct formal negotiations with the NIU Director of Labor Relations in Spring, 2021.

Every member concerned about wages, concerned about receiving pay comparable to other state university employees, and those wishing to have their voices heard, should consider applying to represent our members on the next bargaining team.

Once applications and nominations are received, voting members will have an opportunity to elect our next bargaining team.

[To apply or to nominate another member, please complete this brief survey before midnight, October 30.](#)

[Local 1890 Welcomes New Stewards, Board Member and Trustee](#)

In September, three of our members completed AFSCME training and are now certified Stewards for Local 1890! Two additional members will complete steward training in October as well. Members needing assistance from a union steward should send an email to afscmelocal1890niu@outlook.com.

Please join us in welcoming our new Local 1890 Stewards:

Heidi Carlson – Senior Events Coordinator, Barsema Alumni Visitors Center
Beth Reiter – Laboratory Manager, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Jenna Villani – Office Manager, Gender and Sexuality Resource Center

Also in September, Local 1890 officers appointed Kristin Sherman, Administrative Aide, to serve as Member-At-Large and Lesly Schoo, Office Manager, to serve as One-Year Trustee. Lesly and Kristin both work for the External Programs office of the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

VOTE YES FOR FAIRNESS

[Every tax payer in Illinois, from NIU Office Support Specialists to billionaire hedge-fund managers, seems to have a strong opinion about changing the income tax structure from a flat tax rate to a graduated/progressive tax.](#)

NIU Associate Professor Emeritus Michael Peddle recently shared this fact-based information with Local 1890 past-president Ellen Cabrera, and we have obtained permission to share this info with our members:

"There is much misinformation being provided by multiple sources about the vote on the constitutional amendment to the Illinois Constitution to permit a progressive income tax. Here are a few strictly factual statements that differ from some of the rhetoric being presented on both sides of the issue.

1) The constitutional amendment would not change the powers of the state legislature to raise taxes or make other changes to the tax system without voter approval. The legislature already has this power and has for at least the past 50 years. The amendment would allow for multiple rates to be used in the income tax and would allow different types of income to be taxed at different rates unlike under the current system.

2) If the constitutional amendment is passed, the new rates are already known. The legislature passed the new rate structure and the governor signed it, conditioned on passage of the amendment to allow such a rate structure. It is true that the rates would be subject to change in the future through passage of another piece of legislation and signature by the governor.

3) No other changes to the Illinois income tax system are made by the amendment. As I said, the companion piece of legislation makes the rate changes for the personal and corporate income taxes. All pensions remain free of Illinois income tax (including private and Social Security), the property tax credit remains, the education expense tax credit remains, and the basis for the tax remains your federal AGI."

Reminder - your vote on this counts.

[Help Get the Word Out About the Fair Tax](#)

Help Make a Difference Between Now and Election Day

[Click here for details if you want to volunteer to help pass the Fair Tax in Illinois and Change the White House.](#)

[In Case You Missed It...](#)

This story from a recent issue of NIU Today highlights the good our union can do when we all work together!

[AFSCME Local 1890 Gift Supports NIU Student Emergency Fund](#)



[Video Highlights from AFSCME 44th International Convention](#)

Chief Steward Tom Kapraun, Vice President Rave Meyer and Trustee Kristin Sherman represented Local 1890 as delegates to the 44th AFSCME Biennial International Convention **Front-Line Heroes: Never Stronger** on Zoom on August 13 & 14.

Special guests who spoke to AFSCME delegates included Stacey Abrams, Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi, Reverend William Barber and Joe Biden.

AFSCME President Lee Saunders and Secretary-Treasurer Elissa McBride both gave inspiring keynote addresses and were overwhelmingly re-elected for another term in their leadership positions.

Visit <https://2020.afscme.org/> to see and hear video highlights, including Joe



AFSCME

44th International Convention

[COVID-19 Safety at Work: Special MASKS Edition](#)

**The scientific evidence is overwhelmingly clear,
wearing a FACE MASK helps stop the spread of the virus.**

Need more information about MASKS?

[Click here to watch a one-minute video from the CDC
\(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\):
Know How to Wear Your Face Mask Correctly](#)

Information about FACE MASKS that NIU has provided online includes:

[Facing Wearing Your Face Mask](#)

[Keep Working/FAQ](#)

[Scroll down to Wearing a Protective Face Mask](#)

[Q. Is there a proper way to wear a face mask?](#)

[PDF - Guidelines and Protocols for Returning to Work on Campus](#)

[See Page 3, Item 2 - PPE Requirements](#)

[Wear Your Mask poster to display in your work space, 8.5 x 11](#)

Put On Your Mask

We Wear Because We Care

[October 2020 General Meeting](#)

Please join us at our first General Meeting of Fall 2020 on Zoom. The agenda will include updated reports from our executive board members, a status update on the \$250,000 in wage adjustments to address market deficiencies, information about our upcoming wage re-opener negotiations and more!

Have an item for the meeting agenda?

Email agenda items to afscmelocal1890niu@outlook.com no later than 4:30 pm on Monday October 26.

Our Next General Meeting is Tuesday October 27 on Zoom at noon and 5:00 pm. See you online!

[RSVP for General Meeting, October 27 at noon](#)

[RSVP for General Meeting, October 27 at 5:00 pm](#)

Or, email your RSVP to afscmelocal1890niu@outlook.com.
Please enter the meeting date and time in the subject line.

Your Local 1890 officers and stewards remain accessible to help you with information and support. Should you have questions or concerns, contact us at afscmelocal1890niu@outlook.com.

LOCAL 1890 OFFICERS

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Angie Gasero

Vice President

Rave Meyer

Recording Secretary

Jennifer Gregory

Treasurer

Claire Duvall

Members at Large

Beatrice Kooken

Kristin Sherman

Membership Chair

Debbie Williams*

Chief Steward

CONTACT LIST

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Concerns about workplace issues

Tom Kapraun - tkapraun@niu.edu

General questions

Angie Gasero - afscmelocal1890niu@outlook.com

AFSCME Staff Representative - Rick Surber

- rsurber@AFSCME31.org

Local 1890 email: afscmelocal1890niu@outlook.com

[Local 1890 Facebook Group](#)

*certified stewards



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November 2020 Newsletter

- [FY21 Salary Market Adjustments Update](#)
- [Your Voice Makes Our Voice Stronger, Together](#)
- [Ending 2020 on a Positive Note](#)
- [COVID-19 Surveillance Testing at NIU - Protection for Your Confidential Health Information](#)
- [Meet Your Local 1890 Stewards and Understand Your Weingarten Rights](#)
- [Great Labor Moments in NIU History](#)
- [Next Zoom Open Forums Tuesday 12/1 at Noon and 5 pm](#)

[FY21 Salary Market Adjustments Update](#)

Our contract states that in FY'21, NIU must allocate \$250,000 to adjust for market deficiencies in job classifications represented by AFSCME Local 1890. At the beginning of October, NIU reviewed and compared the State of Illinois Civil Service System's newest salary survey market data. In order for NIU to adjust salaries for as many employees as possible, their goal this year was to target a pay rate adjustment of 83.216% of the statewide market average per classification. The employees who received a salary increase this year were selected because their pay was at a rate below the 83.216% threshold in their classification. Increases were distributed to employees on October 15, and included back pay retroactive to the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1.

XII, Section 10 of our [collective bargaining agreement with the NIU Board of Trustees](#):
The University will allocate \$250,000 for fiscal year 2020 and \$250,000 to fiscal year 2021 toward market-deficient employees, as determined by the University.

If you have further questions, [use this link to send us an email.](#)

We will host a discussion during [the next Zoom Open Forums on Tuesday December 1](#) to answer questions and share more information about how NIU made the wage increase determinations.

[Your Voice Makes Our Voice Stronger, Together](#)

We want to hear YOUR voice. After all, it is YOUR VOICE when joined with many other members' voices that creates OUR VOICE at NIU. We all become more powerful and STRONGER, TOGETHER. We want you to know that only dues-paying members are allowed to vote on the issues directly affecting all of us - for instance, negotiating wages, grievance procedures, and working conditions, among other things.

You can easily add YOUR voice to OUR Local 1890 voice.

[Use this link to join our union.](#)

[Ending 2020 on a Positive Note](#)

This year has been a struggle for many individuals and families. AFSCME Local 1890 continues to fight for your job, your rights, and your livelihood. Although 2020 has been a challenge for all of us, there are many individuals and families in need of assistance. We would like to donate funds to give back to the community. We want to make a donation where YOU decide.

As proud Huskies and members of Local 1890, please choose where you would like to see your union make a year-end donation.

Northern Illinois Food Bank

American Red Cross - Northwest Illinois Chapter

United Way

[Vote by completing this 2020 End-of-Year Donation Survey.](#)

Happy Holidays to all AFSCME Local 1890 members and best wishes for a healthy and safe 2021.



[COVID-19 Surveillance Testing at NIU - Protection for Your Confidential Health Information](#)

In October, some members had concerns about privacy issues related to the surveillance testing release form that Northwestern Medicine was asking participants to sign. Local 1890 President, Angie Gasero, addressed these concerns with NIU General Counsel, Bryan Perry, in a subsequent labor-management meeting. As a result, our AFSCME Staff Rep, Rick Surber, worked with NIU management to add language specifically addressing health information privacy for all NIU employees. The following updated language is now included in the Northwestern Medicine authorization form:

By completing this authorization form, the university agrees to only receive the outcome of your test and shall not access any other aspects of your medical history.

This is another great example of what can happen when a union member speaks up about an employment issue. Thanks to our members asking about health privacy, now every NIU employee's confidential health information is more secure. Your union leadership is committed to seeking fair solutions while protecting our rights.

[Meet Your Local 1890 Stewards and Understand Your Weingarten Rights](#)

needing assistance from a union steward should send an email to afscmelocal1890niu@outlook.com or contact a steward directly by email.

[Tom Kapraun, Chief Steward](#) – Office Manager, Department of Statistics

[Debbie Williams](#) – Office Manager, The Graduate School/International Affairs

[Sarah Lindell](#) – Administrative Assistant, International Affairs

[Angie Gasero](#) – Office Assistant, Sigma Tau Delta - International English Honor Society

[Rave Meyer](#) – Administrative Aide, Department of Environmental Studies

[Heidi Carlson](#) – Senior Events Coordinator, Barsema Alumni Visitors Center

[Beth Reiter](#) – Laboratory Manager, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

[Jenna Villani](#) – Office Manager, Gender and Sexuality Resource Center

[Kristin Sherman](#) – Administrative Aide, CV&PA External Programs

Reminder - the rights of unionized employees to have a union representative during investigatory interviews were announced by the U.S. Supreme Court in a 1975 case (NLRB vs. Weingarten, Inc. 420 U.S. 251 (1975)). These rights have become known as the Weingarten rights.

Use this link to read a summary of your [Weingarten Rights](#).

[Great Labor Moments in NIU History](#)

[Governor signs bill allowing public university employees to be represented by unions \(1984\)](#)

On September 23, 1983, Gov. Jim Thompson signed a bill guaranteeing collective bargaining rights to any employee of a higher education institution in Illinois. The law took effect Jan. 1, 1984, and Thompson announced his appointments to the newly formed Illinois Education Labor Relations Board, or IELRB, shortly thereafter. (125keymoments.niu.edu, accessed 11.14.20)

[Read the Amazing Story of Persistence and Bi-Partisanship Here](#)
and see the complete list of unions currently active at NIU!

[Next Zoom Open Forums Tuesday 12/1 at Noon and 5 pm](#)

Please join us at our final Open Forum Meetings of 2020 on Zoom. Bring your ideas, questions and concerns to share with Executive Board officers, stewards and other members who attend. Some topics to be discussed are the Spring wage negotiations and

[RSVP for Zoom Open Forum, December 1 at noon](#)

[RSVP for Zoom Open Forum, December 1 at 5:00 pm](#)

Or, email your RSVP to afscmelocal1890niu@outlook.com.
Please enter the Zoom meeting date and time in the subject line.

See You Online!

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December 2020 Newsletter

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- [Spring 2021 Bargaining Team](#)
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- [Reporting Bias and Employment Questions for Labor-Management Meetings](#)
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- [Getting It Right - Accurate Information is Our Goal](#)
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[Local 1890 Donates \\$720.21 to Northern Illinois Food Bank](#)

In this difficult year, the Executive Board voted to make a donation to a worthy community organization in need, which would be chosen by members via a survey in our last newsletter. Members participating in the survey overwhelmingly voted to make a significant end-of-year donation to the Northern Illinois Food Bank. Although their funding has decreased, the [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) has seen a dramatic increase in those needing assistance in our area. We are proud and honored to be able to help in our community with a donation of \$720.21 to represent the hope for positive change that we have for the new year in 2021.

Thank you to all who voted and made their voice heard.

[Spring 2021 Bargaining Team](#)

In October, we accepted applications for members interested in joining the next bargaining team to negotiate our wage re-opener for FY'22. We're happy to announce that based on the applications and nominations that were received, there is no need to eliminate anyone by having an election. Therefore, the following 12 members of Local 1890 will represent us at the bargaining table this coming spring:

Heidi Carlson - Senior Events Coordinator*
Chase Cavanaugh - Broadcast News Specialist
Bea Kooken - Office Manager
Liz Mehren - Admissions/Records Supervisor
Rave Meyer - Office Manager
Rebecca Rahe - Admissions/Records Officer
Lesly Schoo - Office Manager
Kristin Sherman - Administrative Aide
Kadie Threlhoff - Office Manager
Jenna Villani - Office Manager
Tom West - Housing Representative
Debbie Williams - Office Manager

Thank you to the members who have made the commitment to represent us.

In spring 2021 they will receive training from AFSCME Council 31 and work together with Local 1890 staff representative Rick Surber to research, prepare, and negotiate wage issues for the upcoming fiscal year 2022.

*job classifications taken from the [NIU Directory](#)

[\\$250,000 Allocation - More Info from NIU](#)

NIU provided our Executive Board with additional information regarding the contracted salary adjustments distributed in October. President Angie Gasero shared these interesting statistics with Local 1890 members at Zoom Open Forum Meetings on December 1:

- Employees from 21 job classifications received wage increases.
- This year's allocation provided increases for 154 employees.
- Of the 154 employees affected, approximately 50% were identified at below the 83.216% wage threshold from the following job classifications: Office Support Specialists, Office Managers and Child Development Supervisors.
- Increases ranged from .005% to 10%, with an average increase of 5.4%.

Reminder - these pay increases are the direct result of language in [our contract negotiated with NIU and approved by the Board of Trustees](#).

Reporting Bias and Questions for Labor-Management Meetings

Bias is an important issue on campus and there are many opportunities available for training. However, when a member asked us whether NIU employees have a way to report incidents of bias from their supervisor against them, we knew that the answer is "yes". ADEI at NIU provides an online Bias Reporting form to be used for a non-emergency or non-urgent incident involving bias.

[All campus stakeholders may use this link to find the Bias Reporting form on NIU's website.](#)

Your union can assist with questions about employment. We meet regularly with NIU management representatives who have been helpful in addressing NIU employment policy questions. Our AFSCME Council 31 Staff representative, Rick Surber, is also here to assist us - his knowledge and experience, hard work, and dedication helps us address issues and enforce our contract.

Need help with an employment question?

[Use this link to send us an email.](#)

New Monthly Feature - Ideas for Improving Communication

Communication is harder than it sounds. People talk, others listen, and everything is fine, right?

Not so much. Communication is an exchange. If one part of that exchange falls short, both parties understanding of what was communicated suffers.

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

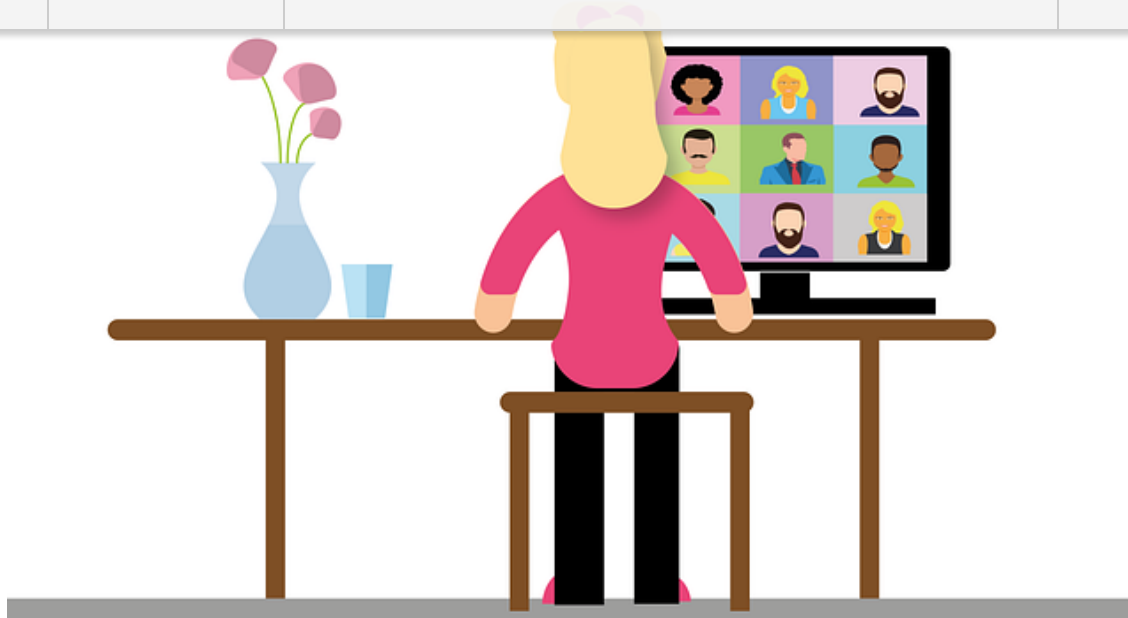
~George Bernard Shaw

Top three facts about communication

1. Communication is more than just the spoken word.
2. Communication involves more than one individual.
3. Communication is on the listener's terms.

"I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

~Robert McCloskey



New Member Survey Question: What is your 2nd Job or Side Hustle?

Members of Local 1890 often mention their 2nd jobs - the jobs they go to after finishing their work day at NIU. Do you have a second job to make ends meet or a “side hustle”? If so, what is it? Please use this survey form to tell us more. You do not need to give your name. We hope to share some interesting insights about our members' hard work in a future newsletter.

[Use this link to complete our 2nd Job Member Survey.](#)

Getting It Right - Accurate Information is Our Goal

Local 1890 strives to bring you accurate and reliable information in our newsletter. Unfortunately, we made an error in our last newsletter and it was brought to our attention at the 5:00 p.m. Open Forum on December 1st. We strive for accuracy. If you notice something amiss in our newsletter, please let us know. We apologize for the error and the resulting misinformation.

Next General Meeting January 26, 2021 - Save the Date!

Please save the date and plan to attend our first Local 1890 General Meeting of 2021. Bring your ideas, questions and concerns to share with Executive Board officers, stewards and other members of our local. Thank you to all members who attended membership meetings this year! Your input is appreciated and invaluable to us.

In this year of unimaginable challenges, we want to take this time to applaud you for all the hard work you have done and to thank you for contributing to the success of our team. The Executive Board would like to wish you all a very happy and restful winter break! YOU EARNED IT.



First row: Rick Surber, Angie Gasero, Rave Meyer, second row: Kristin Sherman, Claire Duvall, Bea Kooken, third row: Ellen Smith, Debbie Williams, Tom "Must Be Santa" Kapraun, fourth row: Jennifer Gregory.

Your Local 1890 officers and stewards remain accessible to help you with information and support. Should you have questions or concerns, contact us at afscmelocal1890niu@outlook.com

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You can easily add YOUR voice to OUR Local 1890 voice.
[Use this link to join our union.](#)



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