Director of Labor and Employee Relations

Leadership Profile

August 2023
Executive Summary

Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIU) is seeking an experienced labor and employee relations professional to join the university team as Director of Labor and Employee Relations. Reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, this pivotal role will involve managing and overseeing our comprehensive Labor and Employee Relations program.

The Director will serve as the university’s chief spokesperson during collective bargaining negotiations with labor unions representing our civil service and administrative professional employees, and as a member of the negotiating team during negotiations with faculty and graduate assistant labor unions ensuring successful outcomes as determined by the administration, by and through direction from the SIU Board of Trustees.

Acting as the university's liaison and information resource for union-related matters specific to our staff, the Director will foster positive relationships and provide guidance and support. The role requires close collaboration with the Human Resources Department, Legal Counsel, and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs regarding employee matters such as the resolution of grievances and other disputes concerning the application of law, policy, procedures, and contract compliance. Additionally, the Director will administer our progressive disciplinary program, maintaining a fair and consistent approach.

The Director will have oversight of the Project Labor Agreement with the Egyptian Trades Council, ensuring compliance of that agreement and promoting productive working relationships between the many union groups and their members that provide skilled labor for critical projects to maintain and improve campus infrastructure. Furthermore, the Director will coordinate tracking and compliance of the annual state-mandated ethics training for all campus employees, working closely with the SIU System Ethics Officer.

The ideal candidate will possess a bachelor's degree and a minimum of five years of progressive experience in human resources and/or employee and labor relations. A successful candidate must have at least two years of experience as a chief negotiator or at least four years as a member of a negotiation team. Preferred qualifications include a Juris Doctorate or a Master’s Degree in Labor Relations or Human Resources, a National Public Employer Labor Relations Association (NPELRA) certification, and experience with a university and/or civil service environment.

This position is security-sensitive, and the selected candidate will undergo a pre-employment criminal background investigation.

If you are a motivated and skilled professional with a strong background in labor and employee relations, negotiation expertise, and a commitment to fostering a positive working environment, we invite you to apply for this leadership role at our university.

To submit a nomination or express a personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.
Role of the Director of the Labor and Employee Relations

The Director of Labor and Employee Relations at our university plays a crucial role in managing and overseeing the university's comprehensive Labor and Employee Relations program. Reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, the Director has the following key responsibilities:

1. **Collaboration and Support:** The Director must forge and sustain strong collaborative ties with the Human Resources Department, Legal Counsel, and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, to ensure the proficient formulation and implementation of university policies and procedures and the adherence to legal and contractual obligations.

2. **Collective Bargaining Negotiations:** The Director serves as the university's chief negotiator during collective bargaining negotiations with Civil Service and Administrative/Professional staff labor unions representing university employees. The Director also serves as a bargaining team member for the university during collective bargaining negotiations with Faculty and Graduate Assistant labor unions. This involves effectively representing the university's interests, ensuring productive communication, and striving for favorable outcomes.

3. **Grievance Resolution and Arbitration:** The Director is responsible for resolving grievances and disputes related to the application of policy and contracts for the Civil Service and Administrative/Professional staff. They work to address issues promptly, fairly, and in alignment with established guidelines and procedures. Collaboration with the Associate Provost for Academic Administration is required during the investigation of grievances for Tenure Track Faculty, Non-Tenure Track Faculty, and Graduate Assistants. The Director will also provide assistance to the General Counsel’s office with grievance arbitrations.

4. **Progressive Disciplinary Program:** The Director administers and oversees the university's progressive disciplinary program for the Civil Service and Administrative/Professional staff. They ensure consistent enforcement of disciplinary measures and promote a positive work environment while addressing performance or conduct-related issues.

5. **Union Liaison and Resource:** Serving as the university's primary liaison and information resource, the Director facilitates effective communication and collaboration between the university and labor unions. They provide guidance, support, and information on matters specific to the Civil Service and Administrative/Professional staff, fostering positive labor relations.

6. **Performance Evaluations:** The Director will provide administrative direction to units regarding delinquent performance evaluations of staff.

7. **Ethics Training and Compliance:** The Director coordinates and supervises the annual state-mandated ethics training for all university employees to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines and promote a culture of integrity throughout the organization. Assistance with other mandated training initiatives may also be required.

8. **Project Labor Agreement Oversight:** The Director oversees the implementation and compliance of the Project Labor Agreement between the university and the Egyptian Trades Council. They maintain positive relationships with labor partners and monitor adherence to agreed-upon terms.
Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The ideal candidate for the Director of Labor and Employee Relations position will possess not only the required professional qualifications but also a set of essential personal qualities. Strong oral and written communication and negotiation skills are crucial for effectively representing the university’s interests during collective bargaining negotiations. Excellent problem-solving abilities enable the candidate to address grievances and disputes with fairness and efficiency. A detail-oriented approach, coupled with a commitment to accuracy and precision, ensures that policies and contracts are applied correctly. The ability to work both independently and collaboratively within a team setting is essential for success in this role. Upholding strong ethical standards and integrity is paramount, fostering trust and credibility. A proven track record of successful resolution of grievances demonstrates the candidate’s ability to navigate complex labor-related issues. Thriving in a fast-paced and dynamic work environment, the ideal candidate possesses exceptional organizational and time management skills. They approach work with a collaborative and team-oriented mindset, demonstrating strong leadership and decision-making abilities. These personal qualities combined create a well-rounded professional capable of effectively managing labor and employee relations within the university.

Required Education and Experience

- Applicants must have a Bachelor’s degree with a minimum of five years of progressive experience in human resources and/or employee and labor relations.
- Applicants must have two (2) years’ experience as a chief negotiator or four (4) years’ experience as member of a negotiation team.
- Consulting experience can also be considered as managerial experience.

Preferred Qualifications

- Juris Doctorate or a Master’s Degree in Labor Relations or Human Resources
- Certification with the National Public Employer Labor Relations Association (NPELRA)
- Knowledge of the State University Civil Service System statutes and rules
- Familiarity with university and civil service environments
About Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Overview

Founded in 1869, SIU Carbondale is the flagship campus of the Southern Illinois University System, one of two public university systems in Illinois. SIU is a strong, diverse, student-centered, research-intensive, and comprehensive public university accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Located 100 miles southeast of St. Louis, Missouri, SIU is a Carnegie-classified high research public university that ranks No. 8 among College Gazette's "10 Best 'Hidden Gem' Public Universities in the U.S."

The University is committed to providing a welcoming environment and the highest possible quality of education that will prepare all its students to become productive citizens in a multicultural world. Recognized for its wide array of academic programs, its research agenda, and its strong presence in global education, the University is a partner in many international linkages and exchange agreements. The University is also known for its service to veterans and first-generation students, its commitment to students with disabilities, and its focus on inclusive excellence, entrepreneurialism, and sustainability.

Just six hours south of Chicago and within easy driving distance of St. Louis, Memphis, Nashville, and Indianapolis, SIU draws students from the Midwest and also all 50 states and nearly 100 nations. The University offers about 100 undergraduate degrees, with more than 170 specializations and over 100 minors. Programming also includes about 69 master's degrees and more than 35 doctoral degrees, in addition to professional degrees in law and medicine.

Under the leadership of Chancellor Austin Lane, the University has embarked on the ambitious strategic plan, Imagine 2030. The plan focuses on five overarching themes, Student Success & Engagement, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Branding & Partnerships, Research & Innovation, and Sustainability. Each of these “strategic pillars” will be used as key focus areas to guide resource allocation with staffing, funding and execution.
Carbondale, Illinois

Carbondale is where education, culture, and nature come together. Carbondale is a city in Jackson County, Illinois, within the Southern Illinois region informally known as "Little Egypt." It is a few miles away from the mid-Mississippi River. The city was developed in 1853 because of the stimulation of railroad construction in the area. Today the major roadways of Illinois Route 13 and U.S. Route 51 intersect in the city.

The physical beauty of the region is a major attraction to students, faculty, and visitors. Sixty miles to the south of Carbondale is the historic confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, the two forming the border of the southern tip of the state. Situated 10 miles southeast of the campus are two state parks and four large recreational lakes. Much of the area is a part of the 240,000-acre Shawnee National Forest, which features strikingly beautiful oak-hickory forests, flourishing wetlands, lush canyons, razorback ridges and unique geological features. A rare convergence of six natural ecological regions results in a diversity of plant and animal species.

The city is the most populous in Southern Illinois outside the St. Louis Metro-East region and the most populous city in the Carbondale-Marion-Herrin, Illinois Combined Statistical Area. As of the 2010 census, the city had a population of 25,902, and it is the state's 20th-most-populated city outside the Chicago Metropolitan Area. In addition, the CSA has 126,575 residents, the sixth-most-populous combined statistical area in Illinois.

SIU is fortunate to partner closely with the region’s largest private employer, Southern Illinois Healthcare, on many initiatives including for support to expand academic programs and increase enrollment. Likewise, the University enjoys strong relationships with state and local elected officials in the region, the Carbondale Chamber of Commerce and civic, education, and business leaders throughout southern Illinois.

More information about Carbondale and the southern Illinois region can be found on these sites:

- City of Carbondale
- Shawnee National Forest
- Giant City State Park
- Carbondale Main Street
- Area Dining
- Southern Illinois
- Outdoor Adventures
Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as three separate documents, a CV or resume, three references and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by September 22, 2023.

Application materials should be submitted using the link below.


Inquiries can be directed to:

Deborah Nelson
dnelson@siu.edu

SIU Carbondale is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer of individuals with disabilities and protected veterans that strives to enhance its ability to develop a diverse faculty and staff and to increase its potential to serve a diverse student population. All applications are welcomed and encouraged and will receive consideration.