

PROPOSAL TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL:

Proposed Name Change from the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations (ILIR) to the School of Labor and Employment Relations (LER)

SPONSOR:

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Change in the name of the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations (ILIR) to the School of Labor and Employment Relations (LER).

JUSTIFICATION:

When the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations (ILIR) was founded just over sixty years ago, industrial relations dynamics represented both a major challenge for society and the potential vehicle for creating a middle class in the United States. As a result, "industrial relations" was incorporated into the name. We were also established as an "institute." At the time, peer programs were established in New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Minnesota, California and other locations with terms that included "school," "center," and "institute."

Now, over sixty years later, the term "institute" is primarily used at Illinois and other places to refer to research groups and the term "school" is a more accurate description of a degree-granting program such as ours. Thus, the first portion of this submission will address the proposed change from "institute" to "school." At the same time, the prospect of using the term "school" also affords us the opportunity to consider the entire name (and particularly the term "industrial relations"), which is addressed in the balance of this submission.

From its founding in 1946, ILIR has operated as a full-fledged academic program. We have provided a Master's degree from the outset and a Ph.D. program was added in 1966. Today, we have over 175 students in our Master's degree program and over 15 students in our Ph.D. program. Joint degree programs were established with the College of Law in 1976 and with the College of Commerce in 1998. In October 1997, the name of the degree was changed to Master's of Human Resources and Industrial Relations to reflect the evolution of the field. We are proud of the fact that our selectivity, placement rates (over 90% of students have jobs before they graduate), conversion rate on internships (over 50% are offered jobs), and other indicators place us as the leading masters program in our field.

Throughout our existence, we have operated with a mix of tenured faculty, some of whom are 100% in ILIR and others of whom hold joint appointments with units such as Business,

Economics, Law, and Psychology. Additionally, we have operated from the outset with extension divisions, which are the Labor Education Program (with offices in Champaign and Chicago), and the Center for Human Resource Management (operated jointly with the UIUC College of Business and the UIC College of Business). Historically, the Institute has been headed by a “Director” who served on the University’s Council of Deans and operated with the same discretion and authority of a College Dean. That position was reclassified as “Dean” a year ago, with same continuing scope and authority.

Within our faculty, the research expertise spans the following domains:

- I. Human Resource Management and Organizational Behavior
- II. Industrial Relations, Labor Studies, and Industry Studies
- III. Labor Economics and Labor Market Institutions
- IV. Labor and Employment Law, Public Policy, and Ethics
- V. International, Cross-Cultural and Sociological Studies
- VI. SocioTechnical Systems

Additional information on our expertise is at <http://www.ilir.uiuc.edu/faculty/expertise.html>. Thus, the proposed shift from “institute” to “school” reflects the reality of our operating as degree-granting, research faculty from the outset. Looking across other academic units in the University of Illinois that are headed by a Dean, we are the only one that is not a College or a School. Making this change will better align our name with our operations and be more consistent with practice across the University. When this was discussed in two separate faculty meetings, there was clear and strong support for the shift from “institute” to “school.”

The balance of the name – presently “labor and industrial relations” – has been the subject of much more extensive dialogue. We followed a comprehensive process of considering over 40 options, with input from staff, alums, students, corporate and labor partners. Taking into account from all of these sources, the faculty has voted to substitute “employment” for “industrial” in a new school name which is:

School of Labor and Employment Relations (LER)

This reflects a broadening of the challenges and opportunities facing our field – from industrial relations to employment relations. At every stage of this process, there was strong support for multiple options, including the final vote by the faculty. In this vote, “School of Labor & Employment Relations” received 12 votes and “School of Labor and Human Resources” received 9 votes. The ILIR By-laws provide detailed rules on who can and can't participate in a faculty vote and this vote was conducted in compliance with these rules.

We are deeply appreciative of the engagement of so many of our stakeholders in this process. The on-line survey, for example, had responses from 316 alums, 96 corporate partners, 96 students, and 33 Labor Education Program participants. Moreover, that vast majority of the responses came within the first 24 hours. Four choices were presented in the surveys, including just substituting “school” for “institute” and three others, which were:

- School of Labor and Industrial Relations (LIR)
- School of Labor and Human Resources (LHR)
- School of Labor and Employment Relations (LER)
- School of Labor, Employment and Organizational Studies (LEOS)

For the faculty, LEOS was the top choice, with LHR and LER tied for second. For the alums, LIR had the highest rating, followed closely by LHR and LER. For the corporate partners, LHR was the top choice, while LER was the top choice for labor stakeholders. Students preferred LIR or LHR. In all cases, the ratings for the various options were surprisingly close. For example on a five point scale (with 1=excellent and 5=unacceptable), the average rating by alums for LIR was 2.78, LHR was 2.90 and LER was 3.00. While LEOS was the top choice for the faculty, subsequent dialogue among faculty and staff highlighted the challenges of marketing LEOS as a name. As a result, we concluded that this was not a viable option and the faculty vote was only on LIR, LHR and LER. In the first vote, maintaining the name Labor and Industrial Relations was eliminated and the final vote was between LHR and LER – with Labor and Employment Relations garnering the majority.

It should be noted that there are some other programs on campus that use the term “human resources,” but there are none that use the term “employment relations.” As such, the proposed name change should not pose complications for other units on campus. Over the past sixty years, the name “Labor and Industrial Relations” served the University of Illinois well; we have every expectation that the new name “Labor and Employment Relations” will also have long and distinguished service as our name for the years to come.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS: (See Appendix I)

- a. Additional staff and dollars needed: Cost of new signage, printed materials and other changes mitigated by the concurrent change from “uiuc” to “Illinois” in e-mail addresses.
- b. Internal reallocations (e.g., change in class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratio, etc.): NA
- c. Effect on course enrollment in other departments and explanations of discussions with representatives of those departments: NA
- d. Impact on library, computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.: NA

GUIDELINES FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: (See Appendix II)

CLEARANCES:



Submitted by Dean Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld, ILIR: _____

STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG: NA

EFFECTIVE DATE: Target date for implementation: May/June 2008