As 2017 leaves us, we thought we should let you know how important your support has been, not just this year but all years. Your support will continue to be essential as we address many of the issues before the General Assembly.

The fiscal problem of the State is of the greatest concern moving into 2018 - far greater than it has ever been. Repaying the pension money to the five State systems will continue to take more of the State budget than the taxpayers can afford. Therefore, we are hopeful you will be able to witness SUAA taking a major role in solving the pension deficit. We are confident that the current legislators will want to take action. We will be calling upon you to help with grassroots education and other efforts as we move forward with a plan for Pension Obligation Bonds.

In the meantime let’s review what SUAA worked on in 2017:

- Provided testimony against the pension fixes
- Legislative Alerts to members to help defeat certain bills within the Grand Bargain - grassroots participation
- Worked to get a State Budget passed
- Pension Obligation Bonds moved to the forefront
- Constant interaction with legislators
- Participated in Rallies at the Capitol to support higher education
- Spoke publically to support current employees
- Continued our Higher Education Campaign - Higher Education Creates Jobs
- Legislative Tracking of bills focusing on pensions, healthcare and higher education
- Researched Taxing Pensions
- Provided representation at the SURSMAC meetings
Provided representation at the CIP and State Health Insurance Stakeholders Meetings
Continues work to make beneficial changes to Tier II
Continues work to defeat a Tier III
Co-hosted a Legislative Reception with SURS in Springfield
Held informative Annual Meeting and Fall Meeting
Kept membership informed through Mini Briefings
Created video for Membership Recruitment
Created a new website
Invested in a new database program
Provided assistance to chapters
Benefit Fairs throughout the State on a variety of campuses
Worked with the SUAA Foundation
Set up cell phone APP strictly for SUAA members and chapters
Travel destinations for SUAA members - Iceland and Panama

There are many other activities that took place in which SUAA was represented or participated in the event. Our commitment to make sure SUAA is in the forefront continues. The overturning of Senate Bill 1 (Public Act 98-0599) was not a save all. SUAA continues to take advantage of all opportunities to protect its membership.

This next General Assembly session - 2018 - is going to be hard to predict. At this moment we have about 35 legislators who are not running for office in the 2018 General Election. There are also a reduced number of days that the House and Senate will be in Springfield. What will be the pertinent issues?

We hope you will get out to meet the newbies running for office in your district. Beginning in January, SUAA will have a complete rundown of who is running for office throughout the State. Please send us all information on the candidates you have knowledge of. This will be helpful in providing a balanced opinion of those who will be representing SUAA members in the districts.

Many of you are aware that Dick Lockhart, our contractual lobbyist, has retired. John Carr, who worked with Dick for several of the last few years, is going to continue his relationship with SUAA. We are especially excited about our new agreement. The three of us (Dick, John and Linda) have worked well together over the years. There will be no gap in the services - no learning curve which is beneficial to us all.

Just around the corner is the Deadline for Applications to Repay Survivor Refunds. December 28th. For more information click here.

SURS Board of Trustees Election - for more information click here.
This has been a hard year legislatively for the State of Illinois - such a lack of progress. But for some of us the year was personally devastating. We thank you for your continued support, your cards of encouragement, emails, flowers and contributions. The generosity of our membership has been overwhelming. We are very fortunate to have such responsive chapters and members. Our hearts runneth over. In the quake of heartbreak came new beginnings as two tiny births brought much joy around the office. The grandbaby girls were born within a week of each other.

Whatever your beliefs are, the SUAA staff wishes you a joyous holiday and enough blessings for everyone in the New Year. May 2018 be a year of great change and contentment.