January 14, 2013

Please make the following information available to the employees throughout your department as appropriate.

**Human Resources**

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- Annual Performance Evaluations – Preparing for an Important Conversation
- Benefit Eligibility for Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellows
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**HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Status of PATH System Testing**

Human Resources is continuing to prepare for the implementation of the PATH (Portal Access for Total HR) system, the significant upgrade to TAMU Jobs online system for job postings, position descriptions and performance evaluations. Testing sessions for HR Liaisons have been further delayed as HR works closely with the vendor on some important changes to the test site.

Look for a special edition HR Liaison Network News later this week with important news, implementation dates, and training plans on the new system. The project page at [http://employees.tamu.edu/PATH](http://employees.tamu.edu/PATH) will be updated for your convenience and hope that you will encourage your supervisors and management to periodically reference that page as needed.

**Annual Performance Evaluations – Preparing for an Important Conversation**

We have been keeping you informed of the progress on the applicant tracking, position description, and performance evaluation implementations for several weeks and providing updates on the [PATH project page](http://employees.tamu.edu/PATH). The final module to be implemented will be performance evaluations. We anticipate (fingers crossed!) the module will be live and ready to access in April. Here are a few items you can remind your department supervisors about as we approach that delivery period.

- Encourage supervisors to review PDs to assure that they reflect the employee’s accurate job duties. This information will be uploaded into the evaluation, and supervisors will have the opportunity to rate
on the duties. To make this easier for supervisors, best practice suggests the use of duty titles. Each section of duties can be named with a duty title by entering a brief (1-3 word) descriptor in the duty title field on the PD.

- Assist supervisors in gathering/reviewing relevant performance information: manager’s notes, event calendars, professional development and training transcripts, awards and commendations during the past year, any other progress or performance notes, etc.
- Share ratings definitions with employees to familiarize both supervisor and employee with terms and definitions. The full language is found at http://employees.tamu.edu/docs/wpResources/724bPE-updatesFY13.pdf online.
- Assist supervisors in capturing/archiving last year’s goals and objectives for inclusion in this year’s evaluation, particularly if recorded in a paper format.
- Encourage participation in training sessions when available.
- Watch for updates on our progress on the PATH project page and pass along to department employees as appropriate.

Contact Employee Relations at employee-relations@tamu.edu or 862.4027 with your performance evaluation questions.

Benefit Eligibility for Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellows
A new semester started today and Benefits Services would like to remind our academic departments of the Postdoctoral and Graduate Student Fellow benefit eligibility and enrollment process. According to Section 1601.1021 of the Texas Insurance Code, postdoctoral fellows and graduate student fellows who meet the following criteria are eligible to participate in the Texas A&M University System insurance programs:

- Postdoctoral fellowships, or
- One or more graduate student fellowships awarded to the individual on a competitive basis that, either singly or in combination, are valued at not less than $10,000 per year, and
- Is currently receiving a stipend from an applicable fellowship.

Note: This process does NOT pertain to Graduate Assistants (GATs, GANTs, GARs, and GALs) since they are employees of Texas A&M University and continue to be eligible for the insurance programs.

Additional information on benefit eligibility, the certification process to be completed by the department and the enrollment process can be found at http://employees.tamu.edu/employees/benefits/students.aspx online. For questions, please contact Benefits Services at (979) 862-1718 or benefits@tamu.edu.

HR Liaison Network Spring Meeting Details
The HR Liaison Network Spring Meeting will continue to focus on this year’s theme, Building Relationships…collaborating campus-wide. Join us Thursday, February 7, 2013 in the General Services Complex (room 101), as we discuss the important and timely topics of safety on campus, veteran’s services, and provide details on the PATH (Portal Access for Total HR) implementation, including navigation of the modules, workflows and added features. Registration will open in TrainTraq on Monday, January 21. Changes are coming – make sure you are prepared!

GetFitTexas! State Agency Challenge
President Loftin announced the University’s participation in the GetFitTexas! State Agency Challenge in his weekly update message last Wednesday. Please encourage your employees to participate in this challenge to increase their physical activity and overall fitness levels. The program is super easy and kicks off today, January 14! Additionally, departments are encouraged to promote the program by creating a department or college team for their employees. Let’s see just how many teams Texas A&M University can establish! Creating a team allows for some easy communication with your team members.
To register:
1. Visit www.getfittexas.org
2. Select Join Program under GetFitTexas! Online Activity Tracker
3. Select I am a State Agency Employee
4. Enter personal information
5. Select Texas A&M University – Main
6. Complete remainder of registration questions and set up username and password
7. Log activity and have fun!
8. Join any and as many teams you want by using the Teams icon from tool bar
9. See the website http://www.wellness.state.tx.us/GetFitTexas/ for more information on the program.

To create a team:
1. Visit www.getfittexas.org
2. Sign-in as a participant
3. Select the Teams icon from the tool bar
4. Select the Create Team tab
5. Create team name – to make it easy for your employees to find you, you might just use your department name or abbreviation (for example, Human Resources used TAMU Human Resources)
6. Complete fields – you do not need to offer an actual “incentive” and can just list feeling better and having more energy as the incentive
7. Make sure you choose Texas A&M University – Main as your State agency
8. Save team information
9. Invite employees and co-workers to join your team
10. Communicate with team members periodically as encouragement throughout the program

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PAYROLL SERVICES

Important Payroll Reminders
The January processing schedule is posted and available at http://payroll.tamu.edu/media/64094/Calendar-CS-2013-01.pdf online. Login at http://imgweb.tamu.edu/finance_dept/ to view the reports online. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Payroll Services at payroll@tamu.edu or 845-2711.

Tuesday, January 15, 2013
• Monthly EPAs Due by Noon
Wednesday, January 16, 2013
• Electronic Monthly Payroll Available
• PVDs Available On Line for #13-10, Pay Day 1/18
Thursday, January 17, 2013
• Electronic Monthly Payroll Due by 4pm
Friday, January 18, 2012
• Biweekly Pay Day #13-10
• EPAs Due at Noon for #13-11, Pay Day 2/1

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Tax Season Opens January 30, 2013
The IRS has announced that it will begin processing individual tax returns on January 30, 2013 to allow it to update and complete programming to comply with the January tax law changes. For more information, visit http://www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/IRS-Plans-Jan.-30-Tax-Season-Opening-For-1040-Filers online.

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New Employment Authorization Document Category
Under President Obama’s executive order, undocumented childhood arrivals are given the ability to work in the United States. A visa does not currently exist for this category; instead, the individual will present an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card with category code C33. The EAD can be used as a List A
document on the Form I-9. For the Employee Personal Data form, enter Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DA) as the visa type. If you have any questions, please email internationaltax@tamu.edu.

**EMPLOYEE & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Online Training Conversions**
Several of the older online courses in TrainTraq that were developed by the A&M System Offices will be converted to a more up-to-date format over the next few months. The content, images, and TrainTraq course numbers will stay the same; only the appearance will change. Courses scheduled for release after the close of business on Wednesday, January 16, are:

- 11010: HUB Purchasing Requirements
- 11015: Retention of State Records
- 2001: Time Off Issues for Supervisors
- 11008: Position Descriptions
- 1006: Sexual Harassment: What Supervisors Need to Know

Please contact EODinfo@tamu.edu if you have any questions.

**TIP OF THE WEEK**

**Whether the Weather Impacts the Workplace**
It’s not a big shocker that many people here in central Texas are unaccustomed to traveling in icy or snowy conditions. Did you know the university has procedures on stand-by that allows the closure of campus due to inclement weather? For information on how it could impact the workplace or your employees, visit http://employees.tamu.edu/employees/benefits/leave/weatherClosure.aspx on the HR web site. It’s a good idea to remind employees to stay tuned to local news, weather forecasts, or check the university’s web site when a wintery wonderland creeps up on the radar screen.