April 1, 2013

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

Human Resources
SEBAC Nomination Reminder – Last Day to Submit a Nomination is TODAY
System Policy Highlight: Nepotism in the Workplace
Continuing Education Courses Available in April
NEW - HR Liaison Network Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP) Approved!
Retirement Processing – Plan Ahead for Smooth Transition
Leave Without Pay (LWOP) – Revised COBRA Process
National Employee Benefit Appreciation Day – April 2, 2013
Scott & White Premium Reconciliation
Update on Jim Kuhlmann – Leave Administrator

Payroll Services
Important Payroll Reminders
Revised Handbook for Employers (M-274)
Inactive Wage Employee Report

Employee & Organizational Development
New Employee Welcome (NEW) – Registration Required by Noon Friday
EOD EduEssentials Monthly Newsletters
Training Compliance Reports – Effective April 1, 2012

Tip of the Week
Comments Encouraged for All, but Required for Some Performance Evaluation Ratings

HUMAN RESOURCES

SEBAC Nomination Reminder – Last Day to Submit a Nomination is TODAY
Please distribute this information to all employees within your department or unit, including graduate students, who are eligible for benefits. Today is the last day to submit a nomination for the Texas A&M University SEBAC representative. Employees are encouraged to submit nominations by the 5:00 p.m. deadline today. A SEBAC nomination form is available at http://employees.tamu.edu/SEBAC.aspx along with information about the representative’s duties and the election process. Once the nominations have been confirmed, a slate of candidates and information about voting procedures will be distributed. Questions can be directed to HR Benefits Services at benefits@tamu.edu or by phone at (979) 862-1718.

System Policy Highlight: Nepotism in the Workplace
We often refer to students and employees here as belonging to the “Aggie Family.” Potential conflicts of interest can exist when actual family members are employed, however. Human Resources reminds Texas A&M University departments and colleges that System Policy 33.03 addresses nepotism. Section 4.1 of the policy relates to employment of family members:
4.1 Departments or comparable administrative units may employ individuals who are related as spouse, as parent-child, or as sibling provided that neither relative has responsibility for direct or indirect supervisor of the other, or authority over any term or condition of the other’s employment, including salary or wages.

For clarification, “indirect” supervision is interpreted by System Internal Audit as “anywhere in the chain of command”. Employment of such relationships detailed in section 4.1 may be authorized by the President of Texas A&M (see section 4.3). Questions regarding this system policy can be directed to Employee Relations at (979) 862-4027.

Continuing Education Courses Available in April
There are only a few months left in fiscal year 2013. Have you earned your continuing education credit yet? If not, you should visit the Employee & Organizational Development (EOD) course schedule at http://EODinfo.tamu.edu/ online. Several HR Liaison and Employment Law courses are available during April: Fair Labor Standards Act – FLSA Timekeeping, Family Medical Leave Act – FMLA, Preventing Sexual Harassment Supervisory Overview and Nonresident Alien Tax Issues and the GLACIER Processing System. For more information on HR Liaison training including continuing education, visit http://employees.tamu.edu/managers/liaisonResources/liaisonTraining.aspx online.

NEW - HR Liaison Network Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP) Approved!
SAP 31.99.99.M0.03, HR Liaison Network has been approved. This SAP was created to assist departments with compliance and procedures with regard to the management of human resources administration through the formal designation of HR Liaisons. Please review the complete SAP at http://rules.saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/31.99.99.M0.03.pdf or from the HR Liaison Resources webpage.

Retirement Processing – Plan Ahead for Smooth Transition
Please distribute this information to all employees within your department or unit. Many employees choose to retire at the end of the Spring semester or the end of the academic year; therefore, May and August are extremely heavy months for retirement processing. If you are considering retiring during this period, you are encouraged to contact Retirement Services now to schedule your retirement counseling session. You will receive an email in advance of your scheduled appointment with appropriate forms and a list of paperwork/items you should bring with you to make the counseling session most productive.

In addition, please be aware that if you participate in the Teacher Retirement System (TRS), it will take approximately two months to receive your first annuity payment. The university provides the final report of earnings at the end of the month in which your last paycheck was received. All earnings must be reported to TRS before the retirement can be certified and the TRS paperwork processed. You are encouraged to plan for this time delay.

Leave Without Pay (LWOP) – Revised COBRA Process
As we approach the end of the academic semester, the number of employees who take leave without pay increases dramatically. In order to streamline the process and ensure compliance with Federal COBRA regulations, Benefits Services has revised the LWOP COBRA process. Effective today, please attach a copy of the COBRA form to the Employee Payroll Action (EPA). Benefits Services will retrieve and review the form directly from Canopy. This will eliminate the department having to send a copy of the COBRA form to HR.

More LWOP processing reminders:
- Provide the original COBRA form to the employee following procedural guidelines.
- Indicate in the EPA comments section the expected duration of the LWOP.
- Indicate in the EPA comments section if the LWOP is covered under FMLA and the date FMLA expires, if applicable.
• Remember that a return from LWOP EPA is needed, even if the action is impacting the next fiscal year’s budget.

Questions can be directed to HR Benefits Services at benefits@tamu.edu or by phone at (979) 862-1718.

Top

National Employee Benefits Day – April 2, 2013
Tuesday, April 2, 2013, is National Employee Benefits Day. This is a day to acknowledge benefits professionals for their dedication to providing quality benefits and the important role they play in their colleague’s well-being. Benefits Services staff strive to provide quality and timely service to faculty, staff, students and retirees. Please take a moment to let us know how we’re doing by contacting your Benefits Representative directly or Sarah Tobola at s-tobola@tamu.edu.

Employee Benefits Day is also a great time to remind employees to be knowledgeable about the benefits available to them as employees of Texas A&M University. A wealth of information is available under the benefits section of the HR website at http://employees.tamu.edu/employees/benefits/default.aspx; employees are encouraged to review the information periodically.

Top

Scott & White Premium Reconciliation
Benefits Services received our last premium discrepancy file from Scott & White and is finishing up the review and verification of premium payments due. As the reconciliation process is completed, departments who have incurred a Senate Bill (SB) 51 premium penalty will receive a SB-51 Payment Authorization Form from Benefits Services to identify the funding source (which cannot be a General Revenue account) to charge the expense. Please return the form to Benefits Services within 5 days of receipt in order to process payment to Scott & White. Questions related to SB-51 should be directed to Sarah Tobola, Employee Benefits Manager, at (979) 862-4956 or s-tobola@tamu.edu.

Top

Update on Jim Kuhlmann – Leave Administrator
Many HR Liaisons continue to ask for updates on Jim Kuhlmann, our Leave Administrator. He is currently on extended leave and while we cannot release medical information, there is a way to stay connected with him. Jim has authorized Human Resources (HR) to share the following Facebook link, https://www.facebook.com/helpJIMwalk where you can “friend” him in order to receive periodic updates. HR continues to wish Jim all the best as he recovers and will forward any cards or well-wishes received on his behalf from the HR Liaison Network (attention Sarah Tobola or benefits@tamu.edu).

Top

PAYROLL SERVICES

Important Payroll Reminders
The April processing schedule is posted and available at http://payroll.tamu.edu/media/78087/calendar-cs-2013-04.pdf online. Login at http://imgweb.tamu.edu/finance_dept/ to view reports online. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Payroll Services at payroll@tamu.edu or 845-2711.

Monday, April 1, 2013
• Monthly Pay Day
• Supplements & EPAs Due at Noon for Supplemental Pay 4/5/13
• EPAs Due at Noon for #13-16, Pay Day 4/12/13

Tuesday, April 2, 2013
• PPRs Print for #13-16, Pay Day 4/12/13

Wednesday, April 3, 2013
• PPRs Available On Line for #13-16, Pay Day 4/12/13

Thursday, April 4, 2013
• Supplements PVDs Available On Line

Friday, April 5, 2013
Supplemental Pay Day
Supplements Due at Noon for #13-16, Pay Day 4/12/13
Uploads Due at 1pm for #13-16, Pay Day 4/12/13
TimeTraq Due 4pm for #13-16, Pay Day 4/12/13

Revised Handbook for Employers (M-274)
The Handbook for Employers, Guidance for Completing Form I-9 (M-274), has been updated to include information about the revised Form I-9 (Rev. 03/08/13) N. The name of the Handbook has also changed slightly – the word “Guidance” has replaced “Instructions.” Helpful new images have been added to illustrate how employees and employers can complete Section 1-3 of the new form. Also, please see page 23 for updated guidance on recording changes of name and other identity guidance.

Inactive Wage Employee Report
The Inactive Wage Employee Report is now available on the Payroll Services imaging system at http://imgweb.tamu.edu/finance_dept/ online. The report gives you the opportunity to delete inactive employees from your accounts. For instructions, please refer to the attached letter.

EMPLOYEE & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

New Employee Welcome (NEW) – Registration Required by Noon Friday
Please forward this information to all hiring supervisors and encourage them to register their new employees. The next session of New Employee Welcome (TAMU NEW) will be held Wednesday, April 10 from noon to 4:30 p.m. (lunch included) in the General Services Complex. All employees welcome. Registration is required by noon Friday, April 5. Employees can register on EOD’s registration site: https://training.tamu.edu/Schedule#EmployeeOrientations. If you would like to hold a seat for an incoming employee who is not yet on TrainTraq, please call EOD at 845-4153.

EOD EduEssentials Monthly Newsletters
Beginning with our recently released April 2013 edition of EduEssentials, we have made the change to start sending our monthly newsletter in an all-new email format. Instead of developing a separate PDF document accessed via a web link, we are now embedding the newsletter text directly into the email. We hope employees find it more convenient since this will eliminate the step of clicking to open the newsletter. Please let us know what you think about our new delivery format. If you did not receive an EduEssentials, which was emailed on Friday, March 29, please let us know at EODinfo@tamu.edu and we’ll be glad to send it to you.

Featured classes this month include Performance Development Process; Microsoft Outlook Advanced; PowerPoint Essentials; Word Essentials and Mail Merge; Access Essentials and Intermediate; Photoshop Advanced Layering and Composition; Adobe Acrobat X Pro; OneNote; and Protecting Our Coast – The Texas Sea Grant Program (Coffee Conversations series). Our full array of offerings can be found by selecting “Training Calendar” at http://eodinfo.tamu.edu/. Let EOD help you do your job better!

Training Compliance Reports – Effective April 1, 2012
Attached are the monthly compliance reports for System-required employee training: 1) Required Employee Training Assignments Report, and 2) Required Employee Training Departmental Progress Report. The latter report lists, by ADLOC/Departments (M Workstation), the completion and past due percentages on all five required courses.

Summary
- 91 (54%) of the 169 M Workstation ADLOCs have 100% of employees up-to-date or current on training assignments.
- The total number of past due assignments decreased 0.1% from 2,920 to 2,916
The total number of past due employees increased 2.5% from 943 to 967
The total number of past due Faculty employees increased 7.7% from 196 to 211
The total number of past due Budgeted Staff employees increased 8.6% from 128 to 139
The total number of past due Wage Staff employees increased 2.5% from 480 to 492
The total number of past due Graduate Assistant employees decreased 40.4% from 52 to 31
The total number of past due Student Worker employees increased 8.0% from 87 to 94

Required Employee Training Compliance Key Performance Measure
- Percentage of employees in M Workstation ADLOCs up-to-date or current on five required courses:
  - Creating a Discrimination-Free Workplace, EEO – 95.9%
  - Ethics – 95.7%
  - Information Security Awareness – 94.9%
  - Orientation to the A&M System – 96.5%
  - Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse – 96.3%