**September 9, 2013**

**HUMAN RESOURCES**
- Consultant for Administrative Services Review to Survey Employees
- Save the Date – Retirement & Financial Planning Fair
- Benefits Eligible Employees Need to be Entered into iBenefits
- International Students Health Waiver Process
- Years of Service Verification Process Soon to Begin
- Insurance Identification (ID) Cards
- Vacation Leave Lapse
- Using Sick Leave for Parent-Teacher Conferences and other Educational Activities
- Annual Required Notices to Employees

**PAYROLL SERVICES**
- TimeTraq Timesheet Adjustments
- Overtime for Short Reporting Periods
- One-Time Merits
- EPA Processing

**EMPLOYEE & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
- Coffee Conversations – Fall 2013 Schedule
- Training Compliance Reports for September – As of September 1, 2013

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- Second Waiver Deadline Extension – Health Insurance

**TIP OF THE WEEK**
- Helping New Employees Access SingleSignOn

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**Consultant for Administrative Services Review to Survey Employees**

As mentioned in the HR Liaison Network News of August 26, 2013, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) was contracted by The Texas A&M University System to conduct a review of the administrative operations of Texas A&M University and the Health Science Center. Kathy Symank, Associate Vice President for Human Resource and Administrative Services, was designated as the point of contact for A&M’s participation in the PwC project.

PwC has begun collecting information for their review and we want to thank those of you who may have helped A&M meet the short turnaround deadline for the first set of data. PwC will now proceed with collecting information via an email survey about primary responsibilities of about 5,600 positions and will meet with selected executive leadership and managers on the survey to be conducted by PwC very soon. Again, as HR Liaisons are typically involved in employee-related data, we want to keep you informed and encourage your support and participation when necessary.

If you have questions, please email HR-feedback@tamu.edu or call Human Resources at (979) 845-4141.
Save the Date – Retirement & Financial Planning Fair

Please share the following information with all employees in your department.

October is Financial Planning Month; plan now to get your finances in order! Texas A&M Human Resources invites employees to attend the 2013 Retirement & Financial Planning Fair on Tuesday, October 1 in the Memorial Student Center. The fair will include several free informational sessions and a vendor exhibit hall. These sessions may help you prepare for your retirement whether you are just starting a savings plan or are approaching retirement age. Details about advance registration and a session schedule will be posted soon on the HR website. 

Save the date for Tuesday, October 1 and join us at the fair!

Top

Benefits Eligible Employees Need to be Entered into iBenefits

Employees working at least 50% effort for at least 4.5 consecutive months in a budgeted or graduate assistant position are considered benefits-eligible and should be extended benefit coverage. When you hire or transfer an employee into a benefits-eligible position, the department should enter the employee into iBenefits for their benefit enrollment. An Employee Payroll Action (EPA) does not need to be completed in order to get an employee into iBenefits. However, the UIN base record does need to be established in the payroll system (BPP) before you will have access to creating the document. If the UIN does not come up when creating the iBenefits document, you may need to utilize UIN Manager to create a UIN or add the UIN to the payroll system (BPP). If the UIN number is accepted, but you receive an error message that no document type is available, contact your designated benefits representative for additional assistance.

Top

International Students Health Waiver Process

Internal Student Services (ISS) announced a second extension of the health insurance waiver process for international students (see the announcement section below). In order to help the international students enroll and verify insurance coverage to ISS, HR Liaisons should ensure that all benefits-eligible international students have been entered into iBenefits and been provided the iBenefits enrollment instruction document.

These international students will have two primary options:

1. Keep the student health insurance enrolled though ISS and charged to their fee statement with an effective date of 8/17/13. Select their employer insurance coverage in iBenefits to start on their employer contribution date of 12/1/13. They will receive a refund of the duplicate December coverage.

2. Enroll in their employer insurance coverage effective immediately and submit the iBenefits document online (prior to the September 13 ISS deadline). The international student will have an amount refunded on their fee statement that is the difference between the original health insurance fee amount and the amount of premiums owed for coverage between 8/17/13 and the effective date of their employer coverage. Remaining premiums for the fall semester will be collected through payroll deduction.

Top

Years of Service Verification Process Soon to Begin

Human Resources will soon begin the process of verifying Texas A&M service for the Years of Service recognition program. The program recognizes faculty and staff with 20 or more years of service with the University, awarded every five years. HR Liaisons who serve as department contacts for the Years of Service program will soon be receiving email communications about the process and timeline for 2013. For more information about the Years of Service program, please go to http://employees.tamu.edu/employees/WorkLife/recognition/yos.aspx or call 458-4103.

Top

Insurance Identification (ID) Cards

New insurance ID cards (health, prescription, dental or vision) were mailed only to new enrollees with new coverage. ALL participants enrolled in the Graduate Student Plan will receive new ID cards because of the new insurance carrier for that plan. The ID cards have the employee’s name as the primary policy holder and will not have covered dependents’ name printed directly on the card. Dependent coverage is verified at time of service. Replacement or additional ID cards may be requested by contacting member services directly by using the Printable - Insurance Enrollment/Contact Summary Sheet available under the Benefits Data Tab through HRC onnect. Temporary ID card information is available here.

Top

Vacation Leave Lapse
The automated process to lapse vacation leave balances in excess of the maximum carryover amount for FY2013 into the sick leave balance for FY2014 has been completed in LeaveTraq. As a reminder, employees are able to check their current leave balances and use the Show Details button to view the maximum carryover amount for the next fiscal year and any projected lapse amounts. Departments and Supervisors should encourage employees periodically throughout the year to utilize their leave benefits and avoid a lapse situation before the fiscal year ends.

Using Sick Leave for Parent-Teacher Conferences and other Educational Activities
The new school year is upon us, and with it comes a barrage of things and we are pleased to announce that a state-authorized leave benefit has been expanded to help parents even more. The Texas Legislature through House Bill 480 recently expanded the use of sick leave beyond just parent-teacher conferences to include educational activities. “Educational activity” as defined in the legislation means a school sponsored activity including parent-teacher conference, tutoring, a volunteer program, a field trip, a classroom project, a school committee meeting, an academic completion, and an athletic, music or theater program. Texas A&M rules allow employees to use up to eight hours of accrued sick leave, with reasonable advance notice, per fiscal year to attend educational activities for their children in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. For questions, please contact Benefits Services at benefits@tamu.edu or 862-3128.

Annual Required Notices to Employees
At the beginning of each fiscal year, Human Resources distributes to all university employees an email reminder on the federal and state laws that affect them in the workplace. We anticipate delivering the email soon and we encourage HR Liaisons to help draw attention to and awareness of the expectations, benefits, protections and policies afforded under these various laws. The annual notices are available at any time at http://employees.tamu.edu/employees/notices.aspx online.

PAYROLL SERVICES

TimeTraq Timesheet Adjustments
In concept, a Timesheet Adjustment is a simple thing: on a given day, an employee worked ‘N’ hours more/less than was reported previously. But adjustments can be complex, particularly when charging time to Projects, backing out hours, or when moving time between regular and overtime rates. See attached document for data entry details. Contact your Payroll Processing Team at payrollprocessing@tamu.edu if you have questions.

Overtime for Short Reporting Periods
The new year starts 9/1, regardless of what day of the week this is. The last reporting period in the fiscal year ends with a short split work week. TimeTraq does not compute state/FLSA overtime across work week boundaries, this means that employees’ time for the calendar week encompassing the fiscal year boundary must be examined for overtime and corrective adjustments made to employees time, if needed. A combination of TimeTraq’s “Weekly Overtime Worked” report and Timesheet adjustment can be used to make these corrections. The report can be found on the report tab in TimeTraq.

One-Time Merits
Please be aware of the requirements for making One-Time Merit Payments as referenced in Standard Administrative Procedure 31.01.01.M5.02, found at http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/31.01.01.M5.02.pdf online. One-time merit payments effective 9/1/2013 can be paid on the 9/20/2013 and 9/27/2013 Biweekly Pay Days or with the 10/4/2013 Supplemental Pay Day. The One-Time Merit Payment Approval Form should be completed and submitted to Payroll Services for payment by the appropriate supplemental due date.

EPA Processing
Due to the beginning of the new fiscal year, Payroll Services is receiving a large number of EPAs every day. Payroll Services prioritizes EPA processing according to the biweekly or monthly payroll deadlines. If you have any questions, email your payroll processing team members.

Please remember the following EPA points:
- Payroll’s internal procedure is to process EPAs on a first come, first serve basis.
- EPAs need to have all backup documents attached when received in Payroll to avoid delays in
adding employees to TimeTraq and/or Monthly Payroll.

- Due to the large number of EPAs received, an EPA is placed on hold or rejected if not complete, accurate or does not have all backup documents.
- Last minute EPA approval may not be possible on TimeTraq and/or Monthly Payroll due dates.

***EMPLOYEE & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT***

**Coffee Conversations – Fall 2013 Schedule**
The fall session of the "Coffee Conversations: Hot Topics in Higher Education" series includes the following presentations:

September 20: Government & Community Relations in Higher Education  
*Presenters: Michael O'Quinn, VP for Government Relations, Office of the President; Robert Bisor, III, Assistant VP for External Affairs*

October 18: What Do Faculty Do All Day?  
*Presenter: Michael Benedik, Dean of Faculties and Associate Provost*

November 8: 25 by 25 – Transforming Engineering Education  
*Presenter: M. Katherine Banks, Vice Chancellor for Engineering, Dean of the Dwight Look College of Engineering, Director of the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station*

“Coffee Conversations: Hot Topics in Higher Education” is a no-cost series sponsored by Employee & Organizational Development to foster community among all Texas A&M system employees, helping them gain a deeper appreciation of how we are all working together toward a common goal and mission. Free conversation! Free coffee! For information including full descriptions, times and location, please access: [http://EODinfo.tamu.edu/coffee](http://EODinfo.tamu.edu/coffee) online. Questions can be directed to EODinfo@tamu.edu or (979) 845-4153. Registration is required: [http://training.tamu.edu/Courses#SeminarSeries](http://training.tamu.edu/Courses#SeminarSeries).

Please [download a flyer](#) for your break room.

***Training Compliance Reports for September – As of September 1, 2013***

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**

- 100 (60%) of the 168 M Workstation ADLOCs have 100% of employees up-to-date or current on training assignments.
- The total number of past due assignments increased 134.5% from 779 to 1,827
- The total number of past due employees increased 284.9% from 352 to 1,355
- The total number of past due Faculty employees increased 51.2% from 84 to 127
- The total number of past due Budgeted Staff employees increased 22.5% from 102 to 125
- The total number of past due Wage Staff employees increased 1545.8% from 59 to 971
- The total number of past due Graduate Assistant employees increased 290.9% from 11 to 43
- The total number of past due Student Worker employees decreased 7.3% from 96 to 89

**Required Employee Training Compliance Key Performance Measure**

- Percentage of employees in M Workstation ADLOCs up-to-date or current on required courses:
  - Creating a Discrimination-Free Workplace, EEO – 98.8%
  - Ethics – 98.5%
  - Information Security Awareness – 97.8%
  - Orientation to the A&M System – 99.3%
  - Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse – 99.1%
  - Required Training for Athletics Task Workers – 14.1%

**Notes:**

1. The increase in the number of past due assignments, past due employees, and Wage Staff employees is
due to the re-inclusion of Athletics Task Workers in the Wage Staff category (they were not included in the July and August reports).

2. Athletics Task Workers are now being assigned a separate course to meet System training requirements.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Second Waiver Deadline Extension – Health Insurance**

*Sent on behalf of International Student Services*

Due to the continuous and newly discovered issues with health insurance we have requested an extension of the deadline until September 13, 2013. The extension includes acceptance of waivers, insurance for J-2 dependents, and graduate assistantship reimbursement. We hope that this additional time will allow for the majority of issues to be resolved.

Currently we have been flooded with many questions to healthinsurance@tamu.edu and we are trying to respond as quickly as we can. International Student Services, the Texas A&M University System, and AHP would like to thank you for your continued patience as we work through these issues. If you have any further questions or concerns please contact your Human Resource Office, the A&M System Benefits Office (employeebenefits@tamus.edu), the Academic Health Plans Office judith@ahpcare.com, or the International Student Services Office healthinsurance@tamu.edu.

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**TIP OF THE WEEK**

**Helping New Employees Access SingleSignOn**

Access to SingleSignOn (SSO) for new employees is as simple as 1, 2, 3…and HR Liaisons can help new employees with those three easy steps. First, direct new employees to https://sso.tamus.edu/ and ask them to select “New Employees – Set up your password”. Second, the new employee must know their UIN and social security number (SSN); if they do not have a SSN, HR Liaisons can request a temporary ID from Payroll Services. Third, and finally, provide the new employee with their employing department’s ADLOC number. A little help in the beginning will make your new employee’s transition to the department a smooth one!