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

October 7, 2013

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**HUMAN RESOURCES**

**October is Disability Employment Awareness Month**

At work, it’s what people CAN do that matters. October is Disability Employment Awareness month and Texas A&M Human Resources is supporting the Campaign for Disability Employment (CDE), a collaborative effort to promote positive employment outcomes for people with disabilities. “Because We are EQUAL to the Task” has been chosen as this year’s theme. The theme reflects the reality that people with disabilities have the education, training, experience, and desire to be successful in the workplace.

HR has several large posters your department can use to show your support for the Campaign for Disability Employment. They are not dated so you may leave them posted throughout the year. For posters contact Laura Dohnalik at ldohnalik@tamu.edu or (979) 862-3854. You can also print them from the web. Look for weekly information from HR about this initiative throughout October. Learn more about what you and your department can do to support this campaign for disability employment at http://employees.tamu.edu/managers/campaign.aspx on the HR website.

**President’s Meritorious Service Awards Program Ceremony Planned for February 2014**

The 27th Annual President’s Meritorious Service Awards Program ceremony has been scheduled for February 26, 2014 at 9:30am in Rudder Theatre. The nomination period is October 10 – November 14. Watch for a memo from...
President Loftin as the formal announcement regarding the nomination period and additional information about the program. Questions concerning this staff award may be referred to Human Resources at empirecognition@tamu.edu or (979) 458-4103.

**Recap of the Retirement & Financial Planning Fair**
The Retirement & Financial Planning Fair was a big success with 15 vendors and 16 well attended sessions including a packed house for the Teacher’s Retirement System of Texas (TRS) presentation. Human Resources would like to say a special thank you to our HR Liaisons who volunteered to moderate the sessions and fill other critical volunteer roles – Ann Grimes, Deborah Daniel, Andrea Howard, Patty Vychopen and Lisa Blum. Additionally, we would like to congratulate the following winners in the prize drawing which included two Nook readers and other great items – Jaime Roman, Jr., Sandra Edwards, Michael Phillips, Liping Chen, Rachel Scholz, Karen Toole, David Mozie and Nancy Luedke.

Be on the lookout for future retirement or financial planning events and resources as part of the Wellness Works program focusing on Financial, Physical and Interpersonal well-being.

**Vacation Regulation Recently Updated**
System Regulation 31.03.01 Vacation was recently updated and posted on the System website. The revisions made were to clarify the content and update the regulation in accordance with changes to the applicable state statutes and regulations. Some clarifications include:

- An employee’s vacation accrual amount is based on total confirmed State of Texas employment. State of Texas employment does not include employment with independent school districts and/or junior or community colleges.
- An employee accrues vacation beginning the first day of employment and ending on the employee’s last duty day, which is the employee’s last physical day on the job.
- Further explanation of computing total accumulated leave upon separation and payment provisions including payment provisions for vacation leave upon death.

Please take time to read and familiarize yourself with the updated Vacation regulation. Vacation leave is an important benefit for our employees, and as an HR Liaison or Department Leave Administrator, it is important to understand the vacation regulation and your role in ensuring proper leave administration. Please contact Benefits Services at benefits@tamu.edu or (979) 862-1718 if you have any questions related to vacation leave.

**Processing Supplemental Pay – Impact on the Employee’s Benefits Deduction**
Did an employee miss a regular pay cycle and you need to process a supplemental payment through payroll? It is very important for the HR Liaison to understand and to communicate accordingly how a supplemental paycheck will impact insurance premiums. When a supplemental payment is processed through payroll, the Budget/Payroll/Personnel (BPP) system will automatically calculate and pull any insurance premiums that are owed up through the month in which the supplemental pay is actually processed. Therefore, if the supplemental pay is processed in the month of October for time worked in September, the paycheck will include any premiums owed for both September and October. The subsequent regular paycheck for October would therefore not include the premiums which we deducted from the supplemental paycheck. HR Liaisons should communicate this information to the employee prior to the supplemental being processed and contact Benefits Services if this causes an undue hardship for the employee in advance of processing the supplemental.

**Update on the Affordable Care Act**
The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is complex and there continues to be a lot of questions surrounding the impact of the ACA on the University community, especially issues regarding the 30-hour definition of benefit eligibility. Many of the questions still remain unanswered as the federal guidance is still being developed. A brief update of the University’s current compliance with the ACA is included below:

- The required Summary of Benefits and Coverage (SBC) has been developed and communicated to employees. The federally required format allows individuals to compare insurance benefits across plans in a standardized format.
- The notification letter announcing the new Health Insurance Marketplace have been produced for all active employees on the A&M System payroll. A process is currently being developed by System Benefits Administration to complete the notification requirement for newly hired employees. These notifications will
The 30-hour requirement for determining benefit eligibility will become effective on September 1, 2014. Departments with student workers, wage employees (including adjunct faculty), or employees working in a dual employment arrangement should be aware of this new requirement. The System Office is working on methods to monitor the hours worked which will determine the employees who may become benefits eligible based on the ACA 30-hour definition. It is important to understand that the ACA definition of benefit eligibility only impacts student worker or wage employees working 30 hours or greater. These individuals may be eligible for insurance benefits but will not be eligible for retirement or leave benefits. More information will be communicated when available and guidance and procedures will be updated accordingly once information is finalized.

SEBAC Representative – Do You Know Who Represents You?
Dr. Peter McIntyre serves as the University’s representative on the System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (SEBAC) which will hold their first meeting for FY2014 tomorrow, Tuesday, October 8. As a reminder, SEBAC is an advisory group that makes recommendations to The Texas A&M University System administration on various issues relating to your employee benefit programs, including health insurance. The group is responsible for working with the System Benefits Administration Office and others concerned with benefits issues to advise about the benefits programs that will be offered to Texas A&M System employees and retirees. Dr. McIntyre may be reached directly at mcintyre@physics.tamu.edu. More information on the role of SEBAC and detailed contact information for Dr. McIntyre is available on our SEBAC page at http://employees.tamu.edu/sebac.aspx online.

Save the Date: Flu Vaccine Clinic
Wellness Works Flu Vaccine Clinics – Tuesday, October 29 & Wednesday, October 30
Seasonal and H1N1 combined quadrivalent vaccine, injection and nasal FluMist available from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. in the General Services Complex, room 101A. Texas A&M System employees and their family members are welcome to participate. No cost if filed with insurance. Consent forms required. Details here. Please post this flyer in your office.

PAYROLL SERVICES

Inactive Wage Employee Report
The September Inactive Wage Employee Report is now available on the Payroll Services imaging system (http://imgweb.tamu.edu/finance_dept/). The report gives you the opportunity to delete inactive employees from your accounts. Refer to the attached letter for further instructions.

EMPLOYEE & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training Compliance Reports for October – As of October 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
89 (53%) 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 8.8% from 1,827 to 1,987
The total number of past due employees increased 0.9% from 1,355 to 1,367
The total number of past due Faculty employees increased 4.7% from 127 to 133
The total number of past due Budgeted Staff employees decreased 16.8% from 125 to 104
The total number of past due Wage Staff employees increased 0.9% from 971 to 980
The total number of past due Graduate Assistant employees decreased 25.6% from 43 to 32
The total number of past due Student Worker employees increased 32.6% from 89 to 118

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 – 98.6%
Ethics – 98.4%
Information Security Awareness – 98.1%
Orientation to the A&M System – 98.9%
Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse – 98.9%
Required Training for Athletics Task Workers – 18.7%

Coming Soon: PATHways to Performance Management
Your PATHways to performance management is coming soon! PATHways is the performance management process that will be accessed from PATH (Portal Access for Total HR). In the next few weeks, you will be introduced to the PCER (Plan, Coach, Evaluate, Reward) performance management model, which is intended to be an ongoing dialogue between the supervisor and employee throughout the year, and culminates with the year-end performance evaluation for non-faculty employees.

HR Employee & Organizational Development (EOD) will be supporting the performance management process, including its functionality in PATH. More details about PATHways will be released in the coming weeks and at the November 7 HR Liaison Network meeting. In the meantime, please contact EOD at HRPATHways@tamu.edu if you have questions.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Changes to a University Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP) and a System Regulation
University Risk and Compliance announced last week changes to a human resources related SAP and system regulation. For annotated copies and details, see https://listserv.tamu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=RULECONTACTS;7bd522eb.13.

- SAP 33.99.12.M0.01, Employee Identification Cards – REVISED
- System Regulation 31.03.01, Vacation – Revisions were made to clarify the content and update the regulation in accordance with changes to the applicable state statutes and regulations.

TIP OF THE WEEK

Strong Passwords Protect Your Personal Information
October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month. Protecting A&M work-related and personal information requires active participation by each Texas A&M employee. One way you can help create a safer digital world is to have a strong password for the Single Sign-On access to HRConnect and all other online applications used in your duties. Use passwords that are a mix of capital and lower case letters, numbers and symbols, and do not share the password with other individuals. For more password tips visit Computing & Information Services at http://hdc.tamu.edu/Connecting/Login_Accounts/Passwords/Tips_For_Creating_Passwords.php and stay current with the System-required Information Security Awareness Training.