Thank you to those who participated in our first readership survey for the HR EXPRESS newsletter! Your feedback showed we are meeting our objectives to promote HR-related services and information, allow for employees to provide topics for articles, and provide news that’s casual and upbeat but always informative.

Respondents said that they:
- read all three issues
- read nearly all articles
- like having it published three times a year
- visited the HR website after reading an article

Newsletter sections people liked most were:
1. For your Benefit
2. Featured articles
3. Tips for Career Success

Congratulations Susan Petty, Financial Management Operations, winner of our random drawing for completing the newsletter survey! She won a Roku streaming media player!

The newsletter rated high for readability; information about HR programs and services; and being helpful to career goals.

Thank you for your feedback! We took your suggestions and made several improvements to the newsletter. On page 10 we added links to our training calendar and to the campus events calendar. We replaced “Faces of HR” with “I like working at A&M because…” on page 9. And we made the newsletter’s email notice less busy and more direct.

Remember, you can always give us ideas for articles or ask general HR questions by emailing HR-feedback@tamu.edu. If you have specific workplace concerns or complaints contact one of our HR units directly, see the page 3 article.
Successful Staff Appreciation Week

HR and the University Staff Council are proud to claim that the inaugural Staff Appreciation Week at Texas A&M University was a great success!

- 700 employees visited the “Celebrating Staff” event at Rudder Plaza on March 5 & 6.
- 10,000 individual entries were submitted for the prize drawings either online, at Rudder Plaza, and at the President’s Meritorious Service Awards program.
- 118 prizes were awarded, plus hundreds of give-away items at the “Celebrating Staff” events, all donated from campus departments, campus organizations, and private businesses.
- Dozens of departments submitted photos and emails about their departmental staff appreciation events or recognition. View photos & videos here!
- 800 staff members took our follow-up survey. View survey results from the USC website, under the March 15 headline.

Survey responses showed almost 70% of A&M departments held some type of staff appreciation event! It’s outstanding participation for the inaugural year and we’ll work to encourage more participation next year.

Our goal was to show staff members sincere appreciation for their contributions to our shared success at Texas A&M University and to improve employee engagement, morale and productivity—not only during Staff Appreciation Week, but throughout the year.

Special thanks to Interim President Dr. Mark Hussey and the Office of the President for supporting Staff Appreciation Week as we endeavor to make it an annual event—a new Aggie tradition.

Wellness Works — Working for You

The Wellness Works program was recently rolled out as a program to encourage healthy lifestyles, support a healthy workplace, and create a culture of wellness throughout the campus community. It incorporates existing campus resources, as well as new programs, focused on Physical, Financial, and Interpersonal Health. Wellness Works is a program for YOU!

A survey was sent in April to collect your feedback and to gauge interest levels as Human Resources develops wellness programs. We had a great response with a wide variety of feedback that reflects our diverse employee population. Wellness is not one size fits all and the breadth of wellness programing possibilities is

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**FEATURED ARTICLES**

**Where Do I Report My Concerns?**

Whether you direct the work of others or you are responsible for carrying out those directions, problems in the workplace can create conflict and bring your productivity to a halt. Human Resources has the right staff to help you address problems that may be negatively impacting your work environment.

**Employee Relations** can help
- Resolve conflicts with your supervisor or co-workers
- Address poor employee performance
- Find workplace solutions to improve individual and operational performance
- Contact Employee-relations@tamu.edu or 979.862.4027

**Policy & Practice Review** can help
- Respond to potential discriminatory actions by coworkers, supervisors or 3rd parties
- Review and investigate workplace complaints
- Find workplace solutions to improve individual and operational performance
- Contact hrpolicy@tamu.edu or 979.862.3331

**Employee Assistance Program** can help
- Deal with troubled faculty and staff through crisis intervention and counseling services
- Direct management responses to individual and work group conflict
- Find workplace solutions to improve individual and operational performance
- Contact eap@tamu.edu or 979.845.3711

Each of these HR areas has staff to visit with you to sort through the many possible strategies to help you resolve problems in the workplace before they feel overwhelming. Let us know how we can help!

**Temporary Hiring Freeze**

Effective May 9, 2014, Dr. Mark Hussey, Interim President, implemented an institution-wide hiring freeze for vacant budgeted staff positions in non-academic departments.

Hiring departments may visit the **HR website** for guidelines, lists of departments designated as academic or non-academic, the Hiring Freeze Exception form, and FAQs that should answer most questions about the hiring freeze.

If you have questions please contact Human Resources Recruitment and Workforce Planning at jobpath@tamu.edu or 979.845.5154; or Payroll Services at payrollprocessing@tamu.edu or 979.845.2711.
FEATURED ARTICLES

HR Liaison Network: 25 Years of HR Services in Departments

You know who he or she is in your department, the one who helps new employees get onboard, explains how to turn in leave requests, or keeps up with your personnel file - you just may not know they have a role called “HR Liaison”.

HR Liaisons have been partners with the Human Resources department since 1989 and facilitate the delivery of decentralized HR and payroll-related services directly to employees within each department. Originally called the Benefits Network and comprised of representatives from 40 departments, the group was dedicated to employee benefits issues, but soon the program expanded to include their participation in a wide variety of HR-related issues.

Over the last 25 years, the group has been renamed a few times, seen many HR-related and payroll-related functions progress to online services, and incorporated an extensive training program to stay abreast of ever-changing university, state and federal employment laws.

This year marks the 25th year of the liaison program and was celebrated at the March 4, 2014 HR Liaison Network Meeting, “A Silver Celebration!”, at the Memorial Student Center. Despite the seriously cold weather that day, 174 participants attended sessions to boost their knowledge on hiring, compensation, performance goals, onboarding, immigration and other topics that support supervisors, managers and the overall employee experience in each department. Presenters included A&M professors, experts and HR Liaisons themselves, and garnered praise and high ratings.

Please take a moment to say hello to your department’s HR Liaison and thank them for their work!

TO YOUR BENEFIT

Wellness Exam Incentive Deadline June 30th

The June 30 deadline for the Wellness Exam Incentive program which financially incentivizes individuals to get their recommended annual wellness exam with a medical provider is quickly approaching. This June 30 deadline is a guaranteed date that allows enough time for the claim to be processed and the completion to be recorded before the September premium calculations. Exams after the June 30 deadline will have the premium rate adjusted prospectively after the completion has been reported from BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS) to A&M System Benefits Administration.

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TO YOUR BENEFIT

Wellness Exam Incentive Deadline June 30th

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If you or your spouse does not have the required wellness exam, you will not initially qualify for the lower wellness premium rate and will instead pay an additional monthly premium of $30 per month for each individual until the exam has been completed and recorded. A dedicated webpage addresses questions about the wellness exam incentive. So what steps should you be taking right now?

1. If you have NOT already had or scheduled your appointment with a medical provider, please call and schedule it NOW.

2. If you have completed your exam, check your Blue Access for Members (BAM) account to ensure that the completion has been properly recorded. Instructions for checking your confirmation in BAM. This process usually takes several weeks from the time BCBS receives the claim.

Thirty dollars represents grocery or gas money – so get your wellness exam so you can use that money for better things other than paying additional insurance premiums!

Retirement Planning? Checkout Our Retirement Resources

Retirement planning is extremely important whether you are just starting your career or are approaching retirement age. As an employee of Texas A&M University, you have access to great retirement plans and helpful resources. Our retirement plan vendors are available for financial planning and guidance and the System Benefits Administration’s website has retirement calculators and informational resources. A Tax Deferred Account (TDA) can be opened with as little as $25 a month.

Approaching Retirement? - If you are planning to retire this summer, step #1 should be to contact Benefit Services at benefits@tamu.edu or 979.862.4028 to schedule your retirement counseling session. You’ll 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 session productive. If you participate in the Teacher Retirement System (TRS), it will take approximately two months to receive your first annuity payment, so plan ahead from a budgetary standpoint!

Planning ahead is the key to a smooth transition into retirement. Visit our Retirement Services webpage for more information and plan to attend the Retirement & Financial Planning Fair on October 16.
Annual Benefit Enrollment Updates for July

It’s getting hot! As summer arrives it’s time to break out your sunscreen and shades; it’s also time to plan for your annual benefit enrollment options. Annual enrollment runs July 1-31, and is the time for you to review your insurance benefit selections and make appropriate changes to your benefits, if needed, that will be effective September 1.

We know you are probably anxiously awaiting information on benefit changes and the premium rates for the upcoming benefit plan year. While the FY15 health insurance premiums are not finalized, the expectation is that they will remain relatively unchanged for fulltime employees. What is finalized are two exciting benefit plan design changes to share with A&M Care members:

- Your portion of the coinsurance amount will decrease from 30% to 20% meaning that the insurance plan will pick up more of the charges at 80% for in-network services. This change helps our plan become better aligned with other State and local Municipal plans.

- Your office visit co-pay amounts ($30 for primary care & $45 for specialist) will be included in the $5,000.00 maximum out-of-pocket amount.

Plan design changes are necessary for the Optional and Dependent Life insurance plans for compliance with IRS regulations. Most notably is that the dependent life insurance rate will no longer be based on your age and tobacco user status as an employee, but will instead be based on your spouse’s age and tobacco user status directly.

More information, including finalized premium rates, will be posted on the Annual Enrollment website once information is available. Be sure to attend one of the Annual Enrollment Benefits Fairs on Monday, July 14 or Tuesday, July 15 (flyer here) which will feature the insurance carriers in a come-and-go format with breakout sessions. This is your opportunity to visit with the various insurance carriers and Benefit Services to get answers to your questions.

Please review the annual enrollment communications that you receive and take appropriate actions by July 31 to ensure you have your desired benefits for the upcoming benefit plan year starting September 1, 2014.
As the performance evaluation period comes to a close, it’s time to start considering performance goals for the 2014-2015 review period. Establishing clear performance goals with your employees helps them know what you expect, thus setting them up for success, and also supports their growth and motivation. Here are some guidelines to help you choose appropriate goals:

- **Goals should move the business forward:** A performance goal is meant to outline a specific work-related achievement. Instead of focusing on everyday tasks, incorporate short and long term projects and initiatives into performance goals. This allows the employee to make a meaningful contribution to the department’s continued success.

- **Keep them manageable:** It is important to have the right number of goals. Too few performance goals can make the employee become disengaged, too many and the employee can become overwhelmed. A good rule of thumb is to have from 4 to 6 performance goals.

- **Keep them SMART:** Using SMART language can help employees know what success will look like before they even start working on a goal. SMART objectives are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. Make sure there are metrics in place so that the goal can be easily assessed and the employee will be held accountable.

- **Review, Review, Review:** It is important that performance goals are revisited with the employee throughout the performance review period. This will help ensure that the employee reaches a successful outcome, as well as allow for any necessary revisions due to changes in organizational goals or priorities.

**What Are Behavioral Competencies?**

Behavioral Competencies are what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use). Behavioral competencies, combined with knowledge of what Texas A&M does as an organization, how it works, and what it stands for, will help you contribute to the University’s mission.

Employee & Organizational Development has created a website detailing the five Behavioral Competencies that all employees are expected to display in their professional duties and interactions. Visit the [Behavioral Competencies website](#) for helpful descriptive information and developmental activities for you to gain the knowledge and skills in each competency.
**TIPS FOR CAREER SUCCESS**

**EOD Certificate Programs**

Time effective. Cost effective. New skills. Networking. These are some of the benefits of participating in an Employee & Organizational Development (EOD) Certificate Program, making it an outstanding professional development opportunity.

With up to 18 months to complete a program, courses are taken according to your schedule, both online and in classroom. A registration fee of only $49 and little to no travel, make the program a cost effective means of enhancing and developing both current and new skills.

A certificate program also provides an excellent opportunity to meet and network with colleagues across Texas A&M. When you complete your program, you will be invited, along with your supervisor, to attend a reception where you will receive a framed certificate and be recognized by campus representatives for your hard-earned accomplishment.

To learn about the programs offered, please visit EOD's Certificate Program webpage.

**COMMON GROUND**

**Campus Climate Survey Results**

You are the most valuable resource of the university and what you think about your work environment is important. The university conducts separate climate surveys every three years. Each survey is geared specifically for faculty, staff, and students (graduate and undergraduate), respectively.

The most recent staff survey was conducted in two phases—Phase 1 in December 2012 and Phase 2 in January 2013. On a scale of 1-6, with 6 being the highest score, your overall satisfaction with Texas A&M University was 4.75, which was slightly lower than the 4.93 score from the 2009 survey. However, you reported higher satisfaction with development opportunities and promotion opportunities. View the survey results online.

On February 24, 2014, the Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity hosted a campus wide climate session, Engaging the Data: A Work Session Using Campus Climate Survey Results. Presentations are located online. Your feedback from this working session is being used to generate specific, concrete, and actionable recommendations to continue to create an inclusive and welcoming environment at our university. Thank you for your feedback and stay tuned for more information!
Wellness Works — Working for You

Continued from page 2

extensive. Survey results are being analyzed and your feedback will be incorporated as programs are developed. A Wellness Advisory Committee has been established to help move Wellness Works forward.

Did you miss the survey, but still want to provide ideas or suggestions on wellness programs? Does your campus department have a program already developed that could be promoted through Wellness Works? Please email your ideas to benefits@tamu.edu.

More information will be communicated as programs are developed and resources are added to the website; however, mark your calendars for these upcoming events:

- July 14 & 15: Annual Enrollment Benefits Fair
- Oct. 16: Retirement & Financial Planning Fair
- Oct. 27 & 28: Flu Vaccine Clinic

Visit the Wellness Works webpage or follow us on Twitter for information and stay tuned on how you can get more involved in wellness here on campus.

WORKING AT A&M

“I like working at A&M because...”

“I work with great people and I really enjoy what I do. There’s a family mentality here, the Aggie Family, and I couldn’t imagine working anywhere else.”

Renee’ Weidemann
Business Coordinator III
VP for Research

“I am blessed to have such outstanding colleagues that are extraordinarily dedicated to excellence in supporting our A&M’s mission.”

Gib Sawtelle
Assistant Director
Information Technology

“I enjoy helping people. I feel like good customer service is becoming a "lost art" so I try to give the type of customer service that I want to receive.”

Beth Haferkamp
Business Coordinator II
Student Life
HR MISSION:
We provide human resource programs, services and expertise that foster employee and organizational success.

HR CORE VALUES:
• INTEGRITY
  We demonstrate uncompromising commitment to honesty and accountability.
• RESPECT
  We treat all people with dignity, recognizing diversity and unique experiences, perspectives and contributions.
• QUALITY
  We strive for excellence in meeting our customers' expectations.
• EXPERTISE
  We develop and apply the highest level of knowledge and skills to address our customers' needs.

Human Resources publishes HR EXPRESS three times per year for Texas A&M University employees to promote HR-related services and information.

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Newsletter Online: employees.tamu.edu/HRexpress
Newsletter Suggestions: HRfeedback@tamu.edu

Highlights for Summer 2014

JUNE
6/11 Benefits Orientation
6/11 New Employee Welcome
6/25 HR Liaison Network Meeting
6/30 Wellness Exam Incentive Deadline June 30

JULY
7/1 Annual Benefits Enrollment Opens
7/4 University Holiday - Independence Day
7/9 New Employee Welcome
7/14-15 Annual Benefits Enrollment Fairs
7/31 Annual Benefits Enrollment Ends

AUGUST
8/18-19 New Faculty Orientation – Tentative
8/13 Benefits Orientation
8/13 New Employee Welcome

SEPTEMBER
9/10 Benefits Orientation
9/10 New Employee Welcome
9/19 Coffee Conversations- Hot Topics in Higher Education
9/25 EOD Certificate Program Recognition Reception
9/30 HR Liaison Network Fall Meeting

University Holidays FY2013-14:
Independence Day
July 4, 2014
The University holiday schedule for FY 2015 will be established by the Texas A&M System Board of Regents at their summer meeting. Learn more.

What’s happening around campus?
Texas A&M Calendar of Events
What classes does HR Employee & Organizational Development offer?
EOD Training Calendar