

# MSU Human Resources **Source**

<http://www.hr.msu.edu>

February 2003

*People Making People Matter*

## The People of MSU – *Advancing Knowledge & Transforming Lives* A Context for Challenging Times

Typically the beginning of a new year is a time to reflect on the past and contemplate the future. Being optimistic about an organization's future can be difficult in a time of economic constraint and uncertainty, particularly when the impact on people and programs is not yet known. To thrive during these times, it is important to keep current challenges in perspective and recognize the many achievements that are part of our past, present, and future. MSU's achievements have been and will be the result of its people. This article is intended to celebrate the achievements of the students, faculty, and staff whose past contributions have made us a world-renowned university and whose future contributions will ensure that MSU's fundamental strengths will be preserved.

In its almost 150-year history, MSU has thrived and excelled even during periods of intense uncertainty and change. As we enter into 2003, there is every reason to expect that the same dedication and commitment that has sustained MSU through difficult times will once again serve to propel MSU to even greater heights as we strive to continue to make a difference in our communities, the state, the nation, and the world.

Over the years, the people of MSU have helped to transform it from a small, land-grant college, serving the state of Michigan, into a university with global reach and extraordinary

impact. This transformation continues today as the people of MSU create and apply knowledge, work cooperatively, perform acts of courage, contribute to culture and tradition, and serve others. MSU's accomplishments have often come with less resources than our peers—but with greater creativity and cooperative effort from the people of MSU. These and other elements crucial to our success are derived from our core values, and we must continue to build upon them to ensure our future success.

Collectively we may take pride that MSU is truly a prestigious institution with a reputation for accomplishment. Every day, the people of MSU contribute, in ways both large and small, to the quality of life of countless individuals.

- *An Extension specialist providing outreach to children, youth, and families through programs in youth development, family resource management, and food nutrition and health*
- *A faculty member connecting with a student to guide that student toward his or her life's work*
- *A financial aid staff member making it possible for a student to remain in school*
- *A physical therapist helping someone to recover from a life-changing injury*

- *A cook in a residence hall providing nutritious meals to students*
- *A radiologist providing early detection of breast cancer during mammography screening*
- *A veterinary technician caring for a family's beloved pet*
- *A faculty member providing agricultural expertise to a developing country*

These and thousands of other impressive accomplishments are directly attributable to the intellectual vitality and innovative spirit of all members of the MSU community. From the researcher whose discovery may affect the welfare of millions of lives, to the office assistant who provides a listening ear to a single frustrated student, every member of the university community plays a vital role in promoting the university's vision of "Advancing Knowledge and Transforming Lives."

Perhaps this idea is best expressed in

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the words of John A. Hannah, MSU's twelfth president, who provided insightful leadership over twenty-eight years of profound institutional change and transformation.

*"It seems to me when a person . . . looks back over his life, what is important is not prestige or the amount of money in the bank, but if a person feels that his or her life has been useful. If one has been able to make it possible for people to live lives that are more satisfying, it seems to me, that is probably the most meaningful of life's satisfactions."*

MSU faces both difficult challenges and exciting opportunities as it embarks on another year in its history. The challenge of operating under uncertain and reduced funding and offering a quality education at a reasonable price brings with it the opportunity to learn new methods to increase efficiency and effectiveness. The challenge of curbing and containing health care costs provides the opportunity to examine and adopt healthier lifestyle habits. The challenge of taking on new job responsibilities offers the opportunity to learn new skills and explore new avenues for creativity.

MSU has persevered and prospered despite serious challenges throughout its history because of the talent, creativity, hard work, and cooperation of the truly dedicated people who are this institution's greatest resource. As in the past, MSU will come through the current challenges as a vital organization that advances knowledge and transforms lives. Whatever your role at Michigan State University, you will play a part in making that happen.

*-Roxann Graham, Compensation*

Visit the new MSU Human Resources Retirement Web page at [www.hr.msu.edu/depts/benefits/retirement/default.htm](http://www.hr.msu.edu/depts/benefits/retirement/default.htm)

## Join the Celebration!

On May 13, 2003, MSU will host its annual Service Recognition Awards Program for university support staff and retirees at the Kellogg Center Big Ten Room. A total of 553 employees with 15 years of service, those in five-year increments thereafter, and retirees meeting university retirement provisions will be honored.

Eligible employees will receive a letter that includes a packet with instructions to order awards online from the Service Recognition Web site.

If you have not received a letter by February 28, 2003, contact **Sondra Olin** at 517-353-3526, ext. 122, or email [serviceawards@hr.msu.edu](mailto:serviceawards@hr.msu.edu). MSU Human Resources coordinates this program in recognition of years of service.

## FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS (FSA) INFORMATION

**2002 Claims** – Employees who were enrolled in a Dependent Care Spending Account (DCSA) and/or a Health Care Spending Account (HCSA) for 2002 have until February 28, 2003, to submit claims for eligible expenses for the 2002 plan year. The Internal Revenue Service requires money not used for eligible expenses in the calendar year be forfeited. Be sure employer and provider information on the forms is complete and legible, especially when faxing information to FlexBen.

**2003 Enrollment** – The annual FSA enrollment was held from November 1 – 18, 2002. Flexible Spending Accounts enrollment statistics are as follows:

DCSA	HCSA
370	1,103

Confirmation letters were sent to participants outlining the procedures and requirements for reimbursement. Questions should be directed to FlexBen Corporation toll-free at 888-678-6116.

You also have the added bonus of account information via the Internet at [www.hr.msu.edu](http://www.hr.msu.edu). Click the **eHR Service** login link to open the eHR Services login page. Enter your MSUnetID and press the Tab key. Enter your password and click **Submit**. On the eHR main menu, click the **Flexible Spending Accounts Status** link to view your personal Flexible Spending Account information. You may also access your account information through a voice response system. These enhancements allow you to access your account at your convenience.

FlexBen Corporation may be reached by phoning toll-free 888-678-6116 if you have any questions or claim inquiries during the course of the year. MSU Human Resources can provide general information at 517-353-4434, toll-free 800-353-4434, or by email at [benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu](mailto:benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu).

**MSU Benefits  
Open Enrollment 2003  
April 21 - May 11**



# Flexible Work Schedules – Everybody Wins!

Flexible schedules can be a useful method to maintain unit service while supporting employees' personal needs. It can be a win-win for both department and employee, as described by these MSU departments.

*Linda Hale says of Chip Hornberg's approach in Wonders Hall, "Together we have been able to devise a plan that will accommodate my family's demanding schedule, without hindering daily departmental operations."*

*Nancy Walker of the Institute for Children Youth & Families says, "Linda Chapel Jackson has encouraged and actively supported the development of innovative flextime schedules that accommodate staff needs to be both involved parents and exemplary professionals, balancing these needs with the institute's needs to have the office staffed during normal working hours."*

## What options are available for flexible or alternate work schedules?

- Flexible full-time hours, e.g., working 9:00-6:00 or 7:00-4:00 instead of 8:00-5:00
- Compressed work week, e.g., working four 10-hour days
- Working some hours at home (see Telecommuting guide at [www.hr.msu.edu/depts/comptelecommguide.pdf](http://www.hr.msu.edu/depts/comptelecommguide.pdf))
- Reduced work hours (from full-time to half or three-quarter time)
- Job sharing (two employees working half time)

## The benefits of flexible or alternative work schedules include, but are not limited to

- Reduced absenteeism, turnover, and overtime

- Improved retention and recruitment in a tight labor market
- Enhanced morale, productivity, and commitment
- Reduced cost without reduced staff
- Giving mutual advantage to the employee and the department
- Responding to a diverse work force with changing demographics
- Reduced employees' childcare costs

These benefits are reflected in a Catalyst (a national family advocacy organization) poll on why people left jobs and what they value in an organization. In this poll, 45 percent said it was their need and ability to balance work and personal life, which was rated more important than a fun and innovative organizational culture, or potential future earnings. Flex schedules can be a benefit that does not cost the university, but does enhance the work environment.

Catalyst cites, in its 1996 article, "Making Work Flexible," some challenges to be addressed when using flexible schedules

- Office hour coverage
- Clear communication
- Tracking hours
- Task definition

## Tips for going flexible

It takes work to implement flexible schedules successfully. Managers need to be good listeners and may have to adjust their management style. Employees on flex schedules need to communicate and be accountable for their job duties. Managers are encouraged to involve the workgroup to come up with a plan that suits the needs of the unit and the staff. Listed in the next column are some other important steps to implement flex schedules successfully.

## Supervisors need to

- Assess department needs
- Clarify the work that needs to be done
- Communicate standards of quality and timeliness
- Create a comfortable work environment
- Start as a pilot with a timeline
- Monitor progress, give feedback
- Evaluate success with input from all staff

## Employees need to

- Think through their options and come up with a few ideas to present
- Think of plans that will benefit the business of the department, not just themselves
- Talk to their supervisors and team
- Speak to others with successful flex schedules
- Communicate during the trial period
- Look at the job through the supervisor's eyes

It may seem like a challenge to implement flexible schedules, but typically the benefits far outweigh the effort of implementation. Human Resources and Child and Family Care Resources are available to consult with employees and departments on implementing flex schedules. Contact Jan Underwood at Human Resources (517-353-3720, ext. 123), for assistance with operational implementation. Contact Lori Strom at Child and Family Care Resources (517-432-3745, ext. 146), for assistance with work/life issues.

Also watch for Human Resource Development (HRD) announcements offering future sessions for supervisors on "How to Implement Flex Schedules."

*-Lori Strom, Child & Family Care Resources*

# Human Resources Would Like Your Input

We continually strive to communicate topics that are important, timely, and relevant to you in a convenient and effective manner. Please help us improve our communications and learn your preferences by responding to the questions below. We are seeking your feedback on the content and distribution of our information so we may continue to provide to you valuable, up-to-date information.

## How important to you is the information distributed by MSU Human Resources and what is the best way to distribute it to you?

Please respond by circling the number and checking the box that best represent your opinions.

		Information Distribution check box of preferred method									
		Least Important. . . . .				Most Important	Mailed to workplace	Mailed to home	HR Web site	Source	Emailed to you
<b>1. Benefits</b>											
-Benefits Open Enrollment options		1	2	3	4	5					
-Information on health insurance, retirement plans, etc.		1	2	3	4	5					
-Benefit & retirement educational programs		1	2	3	4	5					
<b>2. Employment</b>											
-Job postings		1	2	3	4	5					
-Filling of vacancies information		1	2	3	4	5					
-Career development		1	2	3	4	5					
<b>3. Compensation</b>											
-Pay policies and provisions		1	2	3	4	5					
-Classification descriptions		1	2	3	4	5					
<b>4. Employee Relations</b>											
-Updates on collective bargaining agreement interpretation		1	2	3	4	5					
-Arbitration award summaries		1	2	3	4	5					
<b>5. Human Resource Development</b>											
-Course schedules & descriptions		1	2	3	4	5					
-Educational Assistance benefits		1	2	3	4	5					
<b>6. Management practices</b>											
-Managing change		1	2	3	4	5					
-Evaluating employees		1	2	3	4	5					
-Informal rewards		1	2	3	4	5					
<b>7. Human Resource policy/procedure updates</b>		1	2	3	4	5					
<b>8. Health information</b>											
-Healthy-U programs		1	2	3	4	5					
-University Physician's articles		1	2	3	4	5					
-Health & safety updates		1	2	3	4	5					
<b>9. Awards and recognition</b>											
-Information about award programs & recipients		1	2	3	4	5					

**Other comments or communication suggestions:**

**Please indicate your faculty/staff group: (circle your response)**

Faculty    Academic Staff    Exec Mgt    APSA    APA    CTU    1585    999  
 547    274    Nurses    Grad Assistants    Confidential    Off-campus

**Return your responses to Nancy Bryans, MSU Human Resources, 140 Nisbet Bldg, 1407 S Harrison, East Lansing, MI 48823-5239, or by Fax: 517-353-1869, by *February 28, 2003*. Thank You!**

# Thinking About Retiring or Reducing Your Work Time? Here Are Some Things to Consider\*...

## Working Retirement

If you decide to retire officially, you may request to continue working on a fixed-term or on-call basis after your retirement date, subject to department/unit approval.



**Ray Holtz, Field Representative, Social Security Administration**, speaks with a group of MSU employees and spouses during **The Road Next Traveled** program at Human Resource Development, January 14, 2003.

## Unpaid Leave/Retirement

If you are within two years of meeting the official retirement requirements (25 years of service at any age or at least 15 years of service at age 62), you may be approved for an unpaid leave of absence ending in retirement. You would accrue service credit during the leave that would allow you to retire officially at the end of the leave. Support from your department/unit is required to receive consideration by AHR or HR (as applicable). Consideration will be given to those requests that demonstrate cost savings or other flexibility in staffing complement.

- Support staff approved for an unpaid leave/retirement are paid their vacation and sick leave accruals at the beginning of the leave. (Vacation payoffs are funded by individual departments/units and sick leave payoffs are centrally funded.)
- During the leave period, you pay the cost of health, dental, and prescription coverages.

## Reduction to Part-Time

If you reduce to a part-time position, you retain benefit eligibility if appointed at least 50 percent time for at least nine months per year. The MSU contribution for health care coverage becomes proportionate if hours are reduced below 90 percent.

- If you meet the official MSU retirement requirements and subsequently continue working on part-time status, you would be eligible to continue to receive university contributions toward health and dental plans based on your FTE service months on the date you change to part-time.

## Change to Voluntary Flexible Appointment (APA, APSA, and CTU only)

- If you volunteer to change your status to a flexible appointment and your unit agrees, you would be working a 9, 10, or 11-month flexible appointment and may have the same benefit eligibility as regular full-time employees. For more information review the Flex-Appointment Policy at [www.hr.msu.edu/Docweb/pp/flexapptpp.asp](http://www.hr.msu.edu/Docweb/pp/flexapptpp.asp).

## Change from Annual to Academic Year Appointment (faculty/academic staff only)

- If you were appointed on or after January 1, 1982, the basic employment commitment is to an academic year (9 month) appointment. Such faculty/academic staff may be changed from an annual (AN) to academic (AY) year appointment by reducing the AN salary to 9/11. (Any administrative increment is removed prior to reducing the AN salary to 9/11).
- On a voluntary basis, if you were appointed prior to January 1, 1982, you may change from an annual to an academic year appointment.

This summary is intended to provide faculty and staff with information about the various employment/retirement options currently available. Questions may be referred to Human Resources (HR) at 517-353-4352, or 800-353-4434, or to Academic Human Resources (AHR) at 517-353-4851.

*\*These options apply to both faculty and staff, unless otherwise noted*

# Retirement - Educational Opportunities

Please register, *at least one week in advance* for any of the following programs by emailing [benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu](mailto:benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu), or phoning 517-353-4434 or 800-353-4434.

## Human Resource Retirement Plan Clinic

This is a basic overview of the MSU Base, Supplemental, and Deferred Compensation Plans. Learn what options are available, the differences between the 403(b) Supplemental Retirement Plan and the 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan, and what to consider when making investment choices. Suitable for newly eligible or newly enrolling employees.

April 15 1:00 p.m. 125 Nisbet Bldg

## Four-Part Personal Finance Series

Learn more about planning your financial future through this four-part series, which places special emphasis on how to react and invest in turbulent markets. Attend all sessions or select those sessions that address your personal needs. The series is offered twice in the year. Suitable for all employees.

### I. Investing in a Turbulent Market

Emphasis on adjustments to your portfolio in a changing market.  
September 16 12:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. 125 Nisbet Bldg

### II. Estate Planning

Emphasis on trusts and wills, increased exemptions, estate tax rates, and protecting your assets.

February 12 12:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. 125 Nisbet Bldg  
October 1 12:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. 125 Nisbet Bldg

### III. Asset Allocation and Diversification

Emphasis on efficient allocation of assets using tax-favored investment opportunities, and benefits of account diversification.

February 25 12:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. 125 Nisbet Bldg  
October 21 12:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. 125 Nisbet Bldg

### IV. College Planning

Emphasis on different college funding options, including Michigan's 529 plan (MESP).

March 12 12:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. 125 Nisbet Bldg  
November 5 12:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. 125 Nisbet Bldg

## Save on Taxes

This program will look at tax-saving strategies associated with retirement investing that may help you lower your future taxes. Suitable for all employees.

February 18 12:00 noon Kellogg Center

## Developing an Investment Strategy

An in-depth look at some financial concepts that will help you choose an investment allocation to suit your needs. We'll look at understanding risk, diversification, the relationship between volatility and return, and the benefits of investing in managed portfolios. Suitable for all employees.

February 18 5:00 p.m. Kellogg Center

## Choosing Income Options

This seminar will assist individuals in understanding the array of income options that are available at retirement. Learn the pros and cons of each option so you can determine what will best suit your needs. Suitable for employees within one to two years of retirement

February 18 5:00 p.m. Kellogg Center

## The Road Next Traveled

If you are within five years of retirement, this workshop is for you. Designed by MSU Human Resources, this two-day workshop covers a range of retirement issues including MSU benefits, financial perspectives, Social Security benefits, legal concerns, and lifestyle issues. The program is free to MSU Faculty and Staff, with a minimal charge for guests. Participants **must** register in advance, and space is limited. **Please contact MSU Human Resource Development at 355-0813 ext. 169, or e-mail [odyssey@hr.msu.edu](mailto:odyssey@hr.msu.edu) to register in advance or for additional information.** Participants must attend both days.

Projected 2003 Workshop Dates: April 8 and 10  
June 3 and 5

## Individual Counseling Sessions

Individual appointments may be scheduled by contacting the investment sponsor directly.

**Fidelity Investments** by phone at 800-642-7131

**Vanguard Group** by phone at 800-523-1188 (Counseling Center)

**TIAA-CREF** on their Web site at [www.tiaa-cref.org](http://www.tiaa-cref.org) or by phone at 800-842-2044

**Lord, Abnett & Co.** by contacting the following local agents:

James Huber	517-324-4616	Kim Seymour	517-351-4877
Jeffrey Richards	517-351-4877	Rick Scherer	517-339-7988

**AXA Advisors/Equitable** by contacting the following local agents:

Rick Audus	517-347-4646	Robert Courtney	517-347-4646
Jeff West	517-347-4646	Thomas Rudert	989-773-6227
Bobby McAllister	517-347-4646		

**AIG VALIC** by contacting the following local agents:

Daniel Watson	800-448-2542	Todd Dowrick	800-448-2542
Steve Dickinson	800-448-2542	MSU Voicemail Hotline:	800-892-5558, ext. 89105

Retirement plans, investments, and the regulations associated with them have become much more complex, providing choices many of us have difficulty understanding without some assistance from retirement professionals. The 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan is a recent example.

MSU Human Resources Retirement professionals **Sherry VanKampen** and **Dianne Kneppshield** are available to answer your questions individually or in a group session. Contact them at 517-353-4434 or 800-353-4434 for more information. In the meantime, here are some answers to commonly asked questions about the 457(b) plan.

## What is a 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan?

This is a non-qualified tax-deferred compensation plan that allows you to increase your savings toward retirement. You determine the pre-tax amount that you want to defer (up to the IRS maximum) and how it is to be invested. Assets are held in one or more group annuity contracts for the exclusive benefit of you and your beneficiaries.

## Can I contribute to both the 403(b) Supplemental Retirement Plan (SRP) and the new 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan?

Yes. The plans have separate enrollment, both are voluntary (optional), and you may participate in either one or both plans.

## Will enrolling in the 457(b) plan affect the university match on my Base Retirement Plan (BRP)?

No.

## Is there a university contribution to the 457(b) plan?

No. Similar to the 403(b) SRP, the 457(b) plan is designed for employee contributions only.

## What investment options are available?

Three investment sponsors are currently available: AIG VALIC, AXA Advisors/Equitable, and TIAA-CREF. You should contact the investment sponsor of your choosing regarding the funds offered for the 457(b) plan.

## How do I enroll?

You will need to complete an account application (available from the investment sponsor) and an MSU Earnings Reduction Agreement (ERA) form. The ERA form is available on our Web site at [www.hr.msu.edu/docweb/forms.htm](http://www.hr.msu.edu/docweb/forms.htm). Both forms must be returned to MSU Human Resources Benefits, 140 Nisbet Bldg.

## I already have a 403(b) SRP with the investment sponsor that I will use for my 457(b) plan. Do I need a new application?

Yes. The 457(b) plan will be a new account and you will need to complete a new application. Applications can be obtained by contacting the 457(b) investment sponsor of your choosing.

## If I want the 457(b) plan to begin in March 2003, when do I need to complete the application and ERA form?

Your application and ERA form need to be completed and returned to Human Resources Benefits by the last working day in February 2003, to have a deferral from your March payroll check.

## May I enroll in the 457(b) plan at anytime?

Yes. Enrollment is always effective the month *following* acceptance of your application and ERA form.

## How much may I contribute or defer to the 457(b) plan?

You may contribute up to the maximum as defined by the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). The maximum for 2003 will be the lesser of \$12,000 or 100 percent of an employee's compensation.

## Will the 457(b) plan provide any catch-up provisions for employees?

Yes. If you are over the age of 50 you may contribute an additional \$2,000 for 2003, and increases thereafter in accordance with the law. If you are between the ages of 62 and 65 you may also be eligible for additional catch-up provisions. Contact MSU Human Resources Benefits for additional information at 517-353-4434, 800-353-4434, or [benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu](mailto:benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu).

## How often can I make a change to the 457(b) plan?

You may submit an ERA form as often as once a month to change your deferral amount, investment sponsor selection, or cancel your contributions.

## When may I take a distribution from my 457(b) account?

Distributions are only available at separation from service, for an unforeseeable emergency, or at death. The criteria for an unforeseeable emergency is defined differently than the criteria for hardship under the 403(b) SRP. For definitions of hardship and unforeseeable emergency refer to the MSU Retirement Plan, Comparison Chart ([www.hr.msu.edu/depts/benefits/retirement/retirementplans/retirementplancomparison.pdf](http://www.hr.msu.edu/depts/benefits/retirement/retirementplans/retirementplancomparison.pdf))

## Will MSU allow loans against the 457(b) plan?

Yes. MSU will allow loans from the plan but *not all investment sponsors offer this option*. Please check directly with the investment sponsor you select regarding availability, payment schedules, interest rates, and criteria.

## What happens to my 457(b) account if I leave MSU?

Your account is always fully and immediately vested. You will have several distribution options. You will need to contact your investment sponsor for information and the proper forms.

## May I rollover my 457(b) account if I go to a different employer?

Yes, if your new employer accepts rollovers. If your new employer does not offer a 457(b) plan, rollovers into other types of plans, e.g., 403(b), 401(k), or IRA are permitted. If you are considering a rollover to a non-457(b) program, consult your tax advisor concerning early withdrawal penalties.

## When do I pay income taxes?

The 457(b) plan is funded through pre-tax contributions, so applicable federal and state taxes are not due until funds are withdrawn from the account.

## If I take a distribution from my 457(b) account prior to age 59 ½, due to an unforeseeable emergency, is there a penalty?

No. The 457(b) plan is not subject to an early withdrawal penalty, regardless of your age.

## What effect does enrolling in the 457(b) plan have on my Social Security?

Enrollment in the 457(b) plan does not reduce your current Social Security taxes or your future Social Security benefits. This is also true for the 403(b) plan.

## The Human Side of Change

As the economy has experienced a continuing downward trend, MSU, like many other organizations, faces a difficult challenge—to reduce costs and increase efficiency and effectiveness in order to adapt and react to rapidly changing economic and business conditions. Confronting the challenge of change requires more than simply managing changing functions and processes; it requires a focus on and commitment to the human side of change and its effect on the university's most valuable resource: its people.

It is natural and common for people to respond to change with emotions of fear and resistance. Resistance to change can manifest in not only the behaviors and reactions of employees, but also in managers themselves. Dealing with change and fear on a personal level, managers need to be ever vigilant and aware of their own modes of resistance and recognize that they themselves might rely on habitual activities and responses in order to keep their balance and act as if nothing has happened. Some managers might exhibit resistance by suppressing dissent and becoming isolated or ineffective. In such cases, the staff may feel fearful and uneasy.

Understanding resistance to change by individuals in an organization is an essential element in an effective change process. People generally tend to resist any new way of acting or thinking because it causes them discomfort. An individual is likely to resist change for four reasons: uncertainty, concern over personal loss, belief that the change is not in their own best interest, or a belief that the change is not in the best interest of the organization. For example, asking people to handle work differently or take on different responsibilities might cause them to think that the way they have been working is somehow

'wrong' and deserving of blame. Understanding and being supportive of each other during times of change can help to ease the transition into new ways of doing business.

Communication is perhaps the most important tool to counteract this natural resistance and fear of change. There are six key components for communicating change that generally address the questions of why, what, when, to whom, how, and methods.

- Communicating the **why** related to change is the key to creating understanding, alleviating fear and insecurity, and building acceptance and commitment.
- Knowing **what** to communicate is the first step in effective communication. It relies on clarity of the general message and explains the rationale and technical aspects surrounding a change. It also explains the change process, answers the "me" questions connected with the change, and openly addresses possible negative aspects for the organization and the individual. Most importantly, it confirms and validates that mistakes and experimentation during the change process are okay.
- **When** communication takes place has a significant impact on people and processes. Keep everyone updated throughout the change process, both formally and informally. If rumors surface about a specific change, bring people together for a frank discussion of the issue. Supervisors and managers should tell employees both what they know and what they do not know and attempt to report back on issues for which they can find an answer.
- **To whom** should communication be made? Target communication to everyone who is directly

affected plus anyone else who might want or need to know. It is especially important during large-scale change for everyone to know what the change means for the future of the organization.

- Communication is affected by **how** it is delivered. Open and honest dialogue should be encouraged and supported. An effective manager welcomes constructive criticism and does not react defensively to it. It is important for management to take the first step and not wait for employees to come to them.
- The **methods** of effective communication are numerous and varied. Large group meetings are appropriate to announce major changes and new directions that affect all stakeholders. Small group and/or team meetings can be especially helpful for addressing specific problems, providing details, and answering questions. One-to-one meetings are useful for dealing with change on an individual level, overcoming resistance, reinforcing the positive aspects of the change at hand, and handling individual and/or personal questions and concerns. Other methods of communication that may be appropriate include written updates, newsletters, and change management learning opportunities.

Meeting the challenge of change is not just a concern of supervisors and managers. All employees, when equipped with an understanding of the need for change and the fear and resistance that are a natural part of the change cycle, may utilize these foundations of effective communication to provide understanding and compassionate support for the human side of change.

-Roxann Graham, *Compensation*

# Planning a Trip?

If your plans include international travel, consider a visit to Michigan State University's Travel Clinic. The staff there can help you plan a safe and healthy trip abroad. The clinic is operated by the University Physician's Office and located in Olin Health Center, room 341. They provide information, immunizations, and consultation for international travelers. It is open to students, faculty, staff, retirees, and spouses. Non-university affiliated travelers over the age of 18 are also welcome.

The Travel Clinic provides the following services.

- Information on health and safety risks
- Counseling tailored to your lifestyle and medical history
- Recommended immunization and prescriptions for certain travel medications. Travelers must participate in the information and counseling session before immunizations will be administered.

Please review the Travel Clinic's Web site [www.msu.edu/~travel](http://www.msu.edu/~travel), and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel), at least two months before departure to see what vaccines you may need to stay healthy. Knowing your length of stay, exact itinerary, and activities while traveling will help you decide which immunizations are recommended.

Travelers are seen by appointment only. Appointments are available on weekdays and some evenings. When making an appointment, we will ask you what countries you will be visiting and in what order. This is important in making the right recommendations on immunizations. In addition, travelers are asked to bring to their appointment

- Routine immunization history (e.g., date of last tetanus shot, polio vaccine, measles, mumps, rubella vaccine)
- Names and dosage of any medications that are taken regularly, including over-the-counter medication
- Family medical history including allergies
- A completed Travel Vaccine Planner from the Web site [www.msu.edu/~univphys/knowb4ugo.html](http://www.msu.edu/~univphys/knowb4ugo.html)

The Clinic utilizes TRAVAX, a software program that is updated weekly with information from the CDC, World Health Organization, Health Canada, Eurosurveillance, ProMED, and the National Ministries of Health. This provides updated recommendations on immunizations, if antimalarial medication is needed, and other pertinent travel information.

### Costs

MSU employees and families will be charged for an office visit and immunizations. Some insurance companies may cover the cost of the visit and immunizations. Please check with your insurance company to see if your plan pays for this service.

We look forward to helping you plan a safe and healthy trip. Please call us today, 517-353-3161, if you have any questions concerning the Travel Clinic or wish to make an appointment.

*-Mary Ellen O'Doherty, Travel Clinic*



## Join the Quest For Keyboard Comfort With Healthy U

Would you like to have more energy at the end of the day? Are your eyes fatigued and your muscles sore after working all day on the computer? Join Healthy U this March as we introduce a new self-paced program called **KEYBOARD COMFORT QUEST**. If you use a keyboard on the job, you may be able to be more productive with less effort and decrease your chances of getting a repetitive strain injury by enrolling in this program.

**KEYBOARD COMFORT QUEST** consists of five separate quests, each one containing activities related to keyboard comfort. These quests include flexibility, chair adjustability, posture, desktop efficiency, and self-care. You'll study the clues from the handouts for each quest to pursue the five matching keys. Obtain all five keys and you've unlocked the secrets to safe, healthy, and enjoyable computer work!

We'll send you a packet of materials a week before the program starts. It will have everything you need, including workout templates with tips on mini-workouts, vision breaks, office stretches, computer fitness, and more. You'll also receive articles such as, "The Key To Flexibility," "The Key to Picture Perfect Posture," and "Workstation Spot Check." If you complete a survey at the program's conclusion, you will be entered into a drawing for one of two \$25 gift certificates toward a massage!

This free program begins **Monday, March 10**, and ends **Friday, March 21, 2003**, spanning 10 workdays. Contact Healthy U at **517- 353-2596**, by Tuesday, **February 18, 2003**, to register. Materials are limited so enroll today!

*-Kimberly Lyth, Healthy U*

# Human Resource Development

## “Excellence Training in Competencies for CTs” Offers New Development Opportunities

A new certificate series for clerical-technical employees will be offered for the first time beginning in March 2003. Developed by a design team from Human Resources and the Clerical-Technical Union of MSU, “Excellence Training in Competencies for CTs” (ETC-CT) is an eight-part program that addresses major competencies needed for excellent performance regardless of a CT’s level or location within the university. The series is designed for all clerical-technical employees—those new to their positions as well as experienced employees who wish to acquire new information or refresh their skills.

The program offers many new approaches to topics including working in the MSU culture, effective communication, dealing with conflict, diversity, managing time and priorities, thriving in change, and service excellence. As a result of completing the series, participants will

- Understand and be able to work more effectively within MSU’s diverse work cultures
- Be aware of the importance of continuously learning and keeping

skills up to date

- Work more effectively with others using new awareness of personal behavioral styles.
- Communicate more effectively using essential tools and techniques
- Be more confident and proficient in problem solving and dealing with conflict
- Manage time and tasks more effectively
- Work more effectively with people from diverse backgrounds
- Be able to participate more effectively in setting work priorities
- Be more adept and confident in dealing with ongoing change at work
- Place renewed emphasis on ways to deliver excellent service in times of reduced resources and sometimes conflicting expectations
- Work with enhanced confidence and professional image
- Have increased skills and knowledge in specific areas identified for development

The total investment for this program is \$900 and may be covered by participants’ Educational Assistance or department pay. The series bridges two Educational Assistance years, leaving participants non-credit Educational Assistance for other educational or development activities. An informational brochure has been mailed to all clerical-technical employees. Information and applications are available from Human Resource Development and the Clerical-Technical Union of MSU.

Human Resources would like to acknowledge and thank design team members for the time and commitment they have put into the design and development of this series.

**Kim Poglese**, Housing & Food Services

**Vivianne Robinson**, Office of Financial Aid

**Barbara Reeves**, Clerical-Technical Union of MSU

**Dan McNeil**, Clerical-Technical Union of MSU

*-Dawn Hecker, Human Resource Development*



Graduates of the **Taking Charge of the Front Desk** certification series gather at their graduation, November 14, 2002. Instructor, **Lois Wolfe-Morgan** is in the lower-left corner.

### **Taking Charge of the Front Desk -**

series will be launched March 25, 2003. This series of workshops designed especially for staff members in front-desk positions consists of six sessions split between two academic years—three sessions in the spring followed by three sessions during the fall semester. The program addresses communication skills, personal leadership, customer service, professional image, and personal and emotional safety. The sessions are facilitated by **Lois Wolfe-Morgan**, a national presenter and author. Publicity and application information will be mailed in February.

### M.E.N.T.O.R.S. Program Brings Development Opportunities for Employees

Spring semester brings the pilot offering of a new unit-level mentoring program supported by Human Resource Development (HRD), that will present new opportunities for professional growth and development to MSU staff.

This new program, **M.E.N.T.O.R.S.** (Mentoring Enhances Networking, Teaching, Organizational Renewal, and Success), was developed following last summer's WACFPO (Women's Advisory Committee for Finance, Personnel, and Operations) recommendation to Vice President Fred Poston that a mentoring program be implemented for MSU support staff.

Mentoring presents the opportunity for enormous benefit to mentees, mentors, participating units, and the university. These benefits include

- Creation of knowledgeable leaders at every level of the organization
- Increased organizational ability to recruit talented employees
- A means to facilitate a rapid gain in unit knowledge for new employees
- Higher retention of skilled employees who want to develop professionally and personally
- Increased job satisfaction for mentors and mentees
- For mentees, enhancement of current job performance and development of new competencies essential for future career advancement
- For mentors, the opportunity to participate in the growth and development of a less senior employee, and exposure to new ideas and perspectives

A design team that included staff from Human Resource Development, WACFPO, the Black Faculty, Staff, and Administrators' Association, and MSU labor organizations began work in early fall and has designed a program that features

- Voluntary implementation at the unit (MAU) level
- Administration by a unit mentoring program coordinator for each participatory unit
- Matching mentors and mentees within the same unit, or from other units
- Direct central support mentor/mentee pairs when they are from different units
- Centralized orientation and training three times each year for participating mentors and mentees
- Flexibility for units to select the type of mentoring to be implemented
- Mentors and mentees paired formally for one year and meeting approximately four hours per month during that time
- A spring 2003 pilot to be conducted in three to five units

Following the spring pilot implementation of the **M.E.N.T.O.R.S.** program, additional units will be able to participate beginning in fall 2003 in mentoring as a development opportunity for interested staff.

Inquiries may be directed to the following design/advisory team members.

**Dawn Hecker**, Human Resource Development, [hecker@hr.msu.edu](mailto:hecker@hr.msu.edu)

**Penny Fischer**, Department of Police & Public Safety, [fischer@dpps.msu.edu](mailto:fischer@dpps.msu.edu)

**Debra Russell**, Physical Plant Carpentry & Key Shop, [drussell@plplant.msu.edu](mailto:drussell@plplant.msu.edu)

**Sharri Margraves**, Housing & Food Services, [margrave@msu.edu](mailto:margrave@msu.edu)

**Denise Zieleniewski**, Housing & Food Services, [zielenie@msu.edu](mailto:zielenie@msu.edu)

**Deborah Sudduth**, College of Nursing & BFSAA, [sudduth@msu.edu](mailto:sudduth@msu.edu)

**Barbara Reeves**, Clerical-Technical Union of MSU; [reeves@msu.edu](mailto:reeves@msu.edu)

**Leo Sell**, Administrative Professional Association, [lsell@msu.edu](mailto:lsell@msu.edu)

### Popular Series Returns in Spring 2003

**Leadership From the Inside: Succeeding at the Team/Group Leader Role**—is returning with the sixth track this spring. More than 100 participants have graduated from this series addressing the needs of team and group leaders in all employee groups. Participants explore concepts of leadership, their personal behavioral styles, conflict management strategies, communication skill building, on-the-job training skills, and motivation. Track six will kick off on February 4, and conclude on March 11, 2003, where graduates will be joined by their supervisors for a graduation luncheon. Another track for late spring/early summer may be scheduled, depending upon requests.

### Summer 2003 Tuition Waiver Deadline

If you are planning to take credit classes at MSU during the Summer 2003 semester and utilize your educational assistance benefits, **the application deadline is March 15, 2003.** You may send or bring your completed Educational Assistance Application to HRD, Room 10, Nisbet Bldg, or fax it to us at 517-432-2979. If you will be taking classes at other institutions, please submit your application 30 days prior to the start of the semester at that school. Contact **Julie Rorick** at 517-355-0183, ext. 177, if you have questions.

For  
HRD Class Listings  
go to  
[www.hr.msu.edu](http://www.hr.msu.edu)

## Be Sure to Add New Dependents to Your Health and Dental Plans

Are you newly married, had a baby, or adopted a child recently? If so, and you want to enroll your new dependent in benefits plans such as health and dental, you need to enroll *within 31 days* of the event. *Coverage is not automatic.*

To enroll, access the online enrollment feature at [www.hr.msu.edu](http://www.hr.msu.edu) and click the **eHR Services** link. Enter your MSU netID and password. Upon successful login, click the **Benefits Enrollment/Changes** link.

Upon making changes online, a confirmation statement summarizing your changes will be sent to your MSU net email account. These changes will be pending until documentation, such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, or adoption information, are received by MSU Human Resources Benefits. Documentation must be received within 7 days of the online change.

If you have questions concerning the Web process, contact MSU Human Resources Benefits at 517-353-4434, 800-353-4434, or email [benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu](mailto:benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu).

Other changes in benefit information or plan selections can be made during the annual **Benefits Open Enrollment April 21 – May 11, 2003.**

## Human Resources Bulletins

MSU Human Resources is pleased to provide services and programs to our employees in accessible facilities. To request accommodations such as an interpreter or auxiliary aid, phone 517-353-4434 two weeks in advance.

**New Faculty Orientation:** Room 125 Nisbet Building—Thursday, February 13, 9:30—11:30 a.m.; Thursday, February 20, 1:30—4:00 p.m.; Thursday, February 27, 9:30—11:30 a.m.; Tuesday, March 4, 1:30—4:00 p.m.; Thursday, March 13, 1:30—4:00 p.m.; Tuesday, March 18, 9:30—11:30 a.m.; Thursday, March 27, 9:30—11:30 a.m.; Thursday, April 3, 1:30—4:00 p.m.; Thursday, April 17, 1:30—4:00 p.m. (Room 27); Tuesday, April 22, 9:30—11:30 p.m.

**Suggested to attend:** faculty and academic staff newly appointed 50 percent time or more for at least nine months. MSU Human Resources Benefits staff will explain programs and allow time for questions and enrollment. Phone 517-353-4434 to register.

### Course Fee Courtesy Deadline:

**Fall Semester 2003:** June 1, 2003

**Spring Semester 2004:** October 1, 2003

### Educational Assistance Deadlines: MSU Courses

**Summer Semester 2003:** March 15, 2003

**Fall Semester 2003:** June 19, 2003

### Educational Assistance Deadlines: Non-MSU Courses

30 days before the class begins

All applicants must be approved before class begins.

### Source

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**Address corrections:** Contact your department to update the AIN for for faculty and academic staff, or the PAN form for support staff.

## Source

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