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Benefits Open Enrollment is Oct. 1-Oct. 31

The MSU Benefits Open Enrollment for the 2014 benefits plan year will be held from Tuesday, October 1 through Thursday, October 31, 2013. This is the time of year when benefits-eligible faculty and staff can re-evaluate their benefits selections and make changes, such as switching health plans or adding or removing dependents.

It is important to note that MSU is moving toward a calendar year-based plan year rather than a fiscal year-based plan year for all of the benefits plans currently available to faculty and staff. Plan selections will be effective January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014.

This change brings many advantages for faculty, staff and the university. Rather than having separate open enrollments throughout the year for health plans, flexible spending accounts (FSA) and voluntary benefits, faculty and staff will make all their selections at one time each year and our open enrollment guide will outline all the various benefits options available at one time. (Please note that retirement plans and some voluntary benefits continue to be offered year round without an open enrollment period). In addition, it will be easier for faculty and staff to determine the impact of health plan deductibles when deciding on FSA withholdings. Finally, the change better aligns MSU with Affordable Care Act regulations moving forward.

MSU Human Resources invites faculty and staff to our Benefits Fairs held October 15-17. Information about the Benefits Fairs and other detailed information will be posted as it becomes available at www.hr.msu.edu/openenrollment.

Woman to Woman at MSU: Save the Date

Save the Date: on Tuesday, November 12 and Wednesday, November 13 there will be financial education sessions especially for women! The Woman to Woman program will offer two types of sessions that will cover investing and saving strategies for all MSU employees. The program is hosted by TIAA-CREF and sponsored by the Family Resource Center, MSU Human Resources, MSU Women’s Resource Center and the Women’s Advisory Committee for Support Staff.

Look for more information and registration details in October! Questions? Call the HR Benefits Retirement office at 517-353-4434 ext. 0.

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Nominations Due for Upcoming Staff Awards!

Two awards for support staff have upcoming nomination deadlines. The first is the Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Awards. This is a $2,500 award presented annually to six university support staff members. The award is named in honor of the late Jack Breslin, a student leader, honored athlete, former University Vice President, and steadfast advocate of MSU.

Criteria for selection of recipients include overall excellence in job performance, supportive attitude, contributions to the unit or university that lead to improved efficiency or effectiveness, and valuable service to MSU. Nomination forms for the 2013-14 awards are due by October 28, 2013 and can be found at http://www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/DistStaff.htm. Contact HR at 517-353-3720 with questions.

The second is the Ruth Jameyson “Above and Beyond” Award. This annual award recognizes one support staff member who is pursuing a post-baccalaureate degree while also performing “Above and Beyond” in the scope of their duties at MSU. The $2,500 award is given in honor of the late Ms. Jameyson.

Nomination forms are due by January 31, 2014. The nomination form and the full award criteria can be found at http://www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/JameysonAward.htm. Contact Michael Rice at 517-420-6943 with questions.

October Raise Process Information

During the months of August and September raise models were open for unit entry to award salary increases to Faculty and Academic Staff (FAS), Supervisory Support Staff (APSA), Professional Support Staff (APA) and Nurses (NURS). The raises awarded will be effective on October 1, 2013 and will be entered into the HR/Payroll system during the first weeks of October.

If a cost redistribution or pay change transaction is “in process” at the time HR attempts to apply the raises to the employee’s record, the HR/Payroll system will not allow HR to update the employee’s record.

In an effort to make the raise upload process as smooth as possible, we ask that you please approve all cost redistributions and pay changes for FAS, APA, APSA and NURS employees by Monday, October 7 and hold on initiating any cost redistributions or pay changes for FAS, APSA and NURS employees during the time period of Monday, October 7 through Friday, October 11. This limitation is only being requested for FAS, APA, APSA and NURS employees – all other employee groups are unaffected by this process.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Data entry by HR will be complete and employee raise notices will be sent no later than October 18, 2013. If you have any questions on the raise process please contact:

- For Faculty and Academic Staff: Angela Hunt, huntaj@hr.msu.edu or Kara Yermak, yermak.kara@hr.msu.edu
- For Supervisory or Professional Support Staff: Rosy Ovenhouse, Ovenhouse@hr.msu.edu or Karin Root, root.k@hr.msu.edu.

Health Insurance Marketplace Notification

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires MSU to notify all employees of the new Health Insurance Marketplace available through www.healthcare.gov. The Marketplace is a resource where employees can:

- Shop for private health insurance coverage if they are not benefits eligible or are benefits eligible and choose not to elect health insurance coverage through MSU; or
- Learn more about certain tax credits and premium savings that may be available to them.

To meet this requirement, a one-time notification is being emailed to all currently active employees who are in a paid position as of the effective date of 10/1/2013. Faculty, Academic Staff, Support Staff and Temp/On-Calls received the notification on September 17. Student Employees and Graduate Assistants will receive it on September 23.

You can review the notification at http://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/marketplacenotification.pdf.

If you have questions regarding this notification, please contact MSU HR Benefits at 517-353-4434 or benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu.
Affordable Care Act (ACA) Update

As you may be aware, the ACA is a very complex law that will significantly impact all Americans as well as employers and the U.S. Health Care system.

Coming into compliance with ACA will mean making some changes in the coming year to health plan eligibility rules for variable hour employees. This group mostly includes temporary employees, on-call employees, and fixed-term faculty in traditionally non-benefits-eligible positions, but can also impact other groups, such as student employees and project pay employees.

It is important for hiring units to know that effective January 1, 2015, departments will be charged a cost of approximately $5,000 for any variable hour employee who becomes newly eligible for health care as a result of working an average of 30 hours per week or more throughout 2014. Like the current fringe charges, these charges will occur based on eligibility, not actual enrollment, so it will be very important for departments to understand the potential impact of hiring and scheduling decisions on unit budgets and grant funds.

We encourage you to visit our ACA (Health Care Reform) website at [http://www.hr.msu.edu/healthystate](http://www.hr.msu.edu/healthystate) for additional information. If you have questions, please contact MSU HR Benefits at 517-353-4434 or [benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu](mailto:benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu).

Alcohol Use in the Workplace

Alcohol use in the workplace is a serious issue. Besides the risk to the employee's health, safety and well-being, it can result in poor work performance, lost productivity, absenteeism and on-the-job accidents. It's important for supervisors to know what signs to watch for and what to do if they observe these behaviors.

Signs of alcohol usage:
- Excessive absenteeism from work, especially in a pattern (i.e., Mondays or Fridays)
- Frequent tardiness
- Often away from workstation without explanation
- Smell of alcohol on person or breath
- Slurred speech, staggering or blood-shot eyes

One sign alone may not automatically point to use of alcohol in the workplace, but warrants further review. Also, these are examples of signs, not a checklist. Not every sign will be present in each case.

By contacting Employee Relations early on, they can walk you through the process step-by-step and provide guidance along the way. There are numerous factors that need to be considered including conducting a thorough investigation, possibly sending the employee for a screening test and potentially disciplinary action. It’s also important to remember the employee’s right to union representation during this process, if discipline might occur as a result. The Employee Handbook addresses workplace behaviors, including alcohol and drug usage.

While it is necessary to address the job performance issues associated with alcohol use, we recommend you refer the employee to available services on campus, such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP staff will assess the employee’s situation and formulate a treatment plan as needed. They may also make referrals to outside agencies. A leave of absence may be necessary. If so, the Leaves team should be contacted to process the leave.

For questions call Employee Relations at 517-353-5510.

Full Accounting String Available for Training Expenses

Employees booking courses with Human Resources Development or Technology Training by IT Services through the EBS Portal have new fields available to them. When using either Department Charge or Educational Assistance, optional fields will be presented so employees can enter the entire accounting string if their department requires. The additional fields are: Sub-Account, Object (GL Account), Sub-object (Cost Center), Project Code (Internal Order), and Org. Ref ID (Functional Area).

While the collection of the additional accounting fields is available now, Fiscal Officers won’t see training payments including this information in the Finance System for several months. Presenting these fields is a prerequisite step towards the rewrite of an intermediary system that processes charges for training from the HR/Payroll System into the Finance System.
What you may have missed this month on our blog...

Your MSU NetID and Password

If you use university systems like EBS or SIS frequently, your MSU NetID login is pretty familiar to you. What if the only time you use it is to update your Benefits during open enrollment? Will you remember the password? If not, you’ll need the PIN that was issued with your NetID or you’ll need to request a new one. You can do that at netid.msu.edu. Benefits Open Enrollment starts October 1, so be sure you are prepared.

The NetID home page is also where you can reset your password and learn more about what you can access using your MSU NetID. For example; did you know that as an employee you have access to library resources, wireless internet pretty much anywhere on campus, and the AFS file system where you can have a personal web page or shared file space where you control the access? See the rest of the article here.

Lunchtime Activities at MSU

When lunchtime comes around a good meal or a fun activity can make that break worthwhile. At MSU there are tons of activities to engage in when you have some free time. Here are a few lunch break ideas that can be used throughout the work week.

1. Attend a Recipe for Health Class at the Brody Demonstration Kitchen

Recipe for Health offers information and recipes to help you prepare healthy meals every day. A seasonal food item is featured each month (e.g., cucumbers, peaches, lamb, etc). Health4U also offers other classes at different times and days throughout the week, including Kitchen Skill Drill, Culinary Cooking and Concepts, Raising Good Eaters and more.

Read the rest of the article here.

Where Can I Find a Breastfeeding-Friendly Room?

For all new or first-time mothers who didn’t know before, there are more than 60 breastfeeding rooms available at MSU!

MSU administration supports breastfeeding and has made rooms readily available during the workday (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) throughout campus and at some offsite locations.

View this blog post to learn more and see the map of room locations.
HRD Education Opportunities

To register or get more information on any of these upcoming Human Resource Development courses, look at the SpartansLearn.msu.edu catalog on the Human Resources website at www.hr.msu.edu or go to SpartansLearn.msu.edu. The current catalog is available under the “HR News” section of the HR website.

**Essential Skills for Leadership**  
Thursday, October 3, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Presenter: Pam Wyess. $230.  
Learn how to lead by example, manage behavior and engage employees. Discover techniques to get your message across clearly and how to respond no matter what employees bring to your attention.

**How to Handle Conflict Well**  
Thursday, October 17, 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  
Presenter: Carrie Galdes MSU Human Resources. Free.  
Improve your confidence in tackling conflicts head-on. Learn effective strategies for improving communication, developing solutions and resolving issues.

**Sexual Harassment: For Supervisors**  
Friday, October 18, 1 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Presenters: Kristine Moore, JD, MSU Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives and Jayne Schuiteman, Ph.D., MSU Women’s Resource Center. Free.  
As a supervisor or manager, you are responsible for upholding the university’s policy on sexual harassment. Learn how to recognize and respond to sexual harassment issues at work.

**New! Crucial Accountability**  
Monday, October 21 and Wednesday, October 23, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Presenters: Jeff Magnuson, Broad College of Business and Leslie Johnson, College of Human Medicine. $250.  
How do you handle situations where people let you down? Learn to effectively resolve broken promises, violated expectations and bad behavior; all while preserving or even improving the relationship.

**Benefits/Retirement Investment Education**

To register or get more information, call 517-353-4434 ext. 0 or email benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu. Sessions are free and are held in 125 Nisbet Building. Registration is requested.

**MSU Benefits/Retirement Orientation**  
Wednesday, October 23, at 12:30 p.m.  
Presenter: Human Resources staff.  
Recommended for anyone new to benefits or signing up for a retirement plan.

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**HR Department Directory**

**Academic Records**  
517-355-1526  
records@hr.msu.edu

**Benefits**  
517-353-4434  
benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu

**Employee Records**  
517-353-4330  
records@hr.msu.edu

**Employee Relations**  
517-353-5510  
hr.er@hr.msu.edu

**Human Resource Development**  
517-355-0183  
hrdmail@hr.msu.edu

**Staffing Services**  
517-353-3720  
hrstaffingservices@hr.msu.edu