Center of Expertise: Employee Relations

As HR works through our reorganization, we will be introducing a Center of Expertise in each edition of this newsletter.

The Employee Relations office at MSU seeks to ensure fair and consistent treatment of all staff while balancing competing interests and remaining in compliance with employment laws in order to support the university’s overall teaching, research and outreach mission.

The Employee Relations office is ultimately responsible for the union/management relationship between the university and all ten bargaining units across campus. This office also serves as a resource for support staff employees who are not covered by the terms of a collective bargaining agreement.

Employee Relations provides guidance to supervisors and administrators in the areas of:

• Absenteeism
• Contract and Policy Interpretation
• Discipline and Discharge
• Grievance Administration
• Investigations
• Misconduct
• Policy Development
• Unemployment Compensation
• Union Contracts
• Work Performance
• Workplace Behavior (workplace interactions)
• Workplace Violence

Employee Relations serves as the advocate for the university in labor contract negotiations, arbitrations, mediations, fact-finding, and unemployment hearings. Additionally, this office provides recurring and ad hoc training to management for best practices on how to operate in a unionized environment.

You can contact Employee Relations at 517-353-5510 or hr.er@hr.msu.edu.

MSU FileDepot, FileDepot Internal Services

IT Services launched two related file sharing services to transfer files up to 900MB inside and outside of Michigan State University.

These services help address the need for sharing large files and data with colleagues at MSU or other institutions.

Learn more at http://tech.msu.edu/news/2014/02/msu-filedepot-filedepot-internal-provide-alternatives-for-sharing-data/.

Comments & suggestions for Source are welcome!
Contact us at: hrcommteam@hr.msu.edu

Inside this Edition

Page Two
• Performance Development Plans and Supervisor Roles
• Seeking Nominations for 2014 CT Awards

Page Three
• MSU Retirement Plan Improvements
• MSU Telecom Technology Workshop on May 12

Page Four
• Health Advocate
• Take Your Child to Work Day
• Breslin Takeover III

Page Five
• What You May Have Missed on the SourceLive Blog

Page Six
• Education Opportunities
Performance Development Program (PDP) and Your Role as a Supervisor

As a supervisor, it is your responsibility to conduct an annual performance evaluation for all of your regular support staff employees. The annual review process is called the Performance Development Program, or the PDP. The expectation is that you will meet with your employee to discuss what has worked well over the last year and what areas need improvement. This includes attendance, performance, and the ability to work well with others. During the discussion you may share compliments or complaints you have received throughout the year and you should address changes in duties or reporting relationships. You should also set goals for the coming year, and it is a chance for your employee to provide you feedback and to ask for additional resources or training.

The overarching goal of the PDP is to have open, two-way communication between you and your employee.

The PDP will become a permanent part of your employee’s file so it is critical that the appropriate form be used. The PDP form is called the Performance Development Program and can be downloaded at [http://www.hr.msu.edu/performance/supportstaff/index.htm](http://www.hr.msu.edu/performance/supportstaff/index.htm).

The Employee Self-Review Worksheet encourages employees to reflect on their performance and to identify areas they would like to improve on. For additional guidance in completing a PDP, please read the Performance Development Program Guide or contact Talent Management at HR.TalentManagement@hr.msu.edu.

You may need to inform your employee that he/she is not meeting expectations by marking “No” on the PDP. In this case, a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) should also be completed prior to the PDP meeting. The PIP is a 90-day opportunity for your employee to demonstrate that he/she can improve deficient performance or behavior; it is not discipline. When completing the form, identify goals that are specific, measurable, realistic and time-bound. Once issued, you will meet with your employee at least once every 30 days during this 90-day process. At the conclusion of 90 days, you will have to assess whether your employee has achieved the required improvements or not.

If you have questions about how to complete the PIP form or how to set clear expectations throughout the year, please contact Employee Relations at 517-353-5510.

Seeking Nominations for 2014 Clerical-Technical Award

Is there an outstanding CT in your unit who deserves special recognition for his or her skills, abilities and dedication to excellence? Nominate that special person for the 2014 Clerical Technical Recognition Award! The winner will receive $1,000 in recognition of their outstanding service, along with a special recognition reception. Criteria for the award include:

- Respect of their peers and continuous diligence in attending to their daily responsibilities;
- Concern for students, faculty, staff and colleagues in their respective units, particularly (but not limited to) those assisting overseas U.S. students and faculty, international students, international faculty, etc.;
- Extraordinary and significant contributions to the community or public service;
- Innovative thinking in facilitating unit tasks and responsibilities.

Individuals may be nominated by any member of the university community. To nominate an individual you will need to complete a nomination form and collect a minimum of two support letters (maximum of five) by MSU colleagues. You may include additional information if it supports the applicant’s nomination. You can find nomination forms at [http://www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/CTrecognitionAward.htm](http://www.hr.msu.edu/recognition/supportstaff/CTrecognitionAward.htm). Submit the nomination form and attachments (preferably PDF) by 5 p.m. on June 9, 2014 to ServiceAwards@hr.msu.edu, Attn: CT Recognition Award Selection Committee.
MSU Retirement Plan Improvements

We have great news to share. As a result of the retirement plan consolidation implemented for contributions beginning January 2012, we can report significant savings in the first two years, and we are implementing additional savings measures beginning in 2014.

The Retirement Investment Advisory Committee (RIAC), Human Resources staff and our investment consultant completed a comprehensive review of the retirement plans and implemented changes to reduce the retirement plan administrative costs for new contributions in the new accounts beginning January 1, 2012. Since then participants have saved an average of 24.5% for those with TIAA-CREF and 63.3% for those with Fidelity by paying lower administrative fees as part of the total fund expense of their chosen investments.

Due to this success for new investments, we negotiated with the retirement vendors to see how we could reduce the total fund expenses that MSU faculty, staff and retirees were charged in their retirement accounts for contributions prior to 2012, which we call the legacy accounts. The following provides two improvements we will be implementing in the next couple of months for the legacy accounts:

• **Mutual Fund Changes**: For some investment fund options in both the Fidelity and TIAA-CREF legacy accounts, there will be changes from individual retail-type mutual funds to lower-cost institutional-type mutual funds. These funds are the same investments as the retail investments they are replacing with the same investment managers, just at a lower cost. The individuals that have these mutual funds in their legacy account will see a reduction in the future total fund expense due to lower administrative fees, which in turn will produce increased performance. In April applicable participants will receive communications from either Fidelity or TIAA-CREF about the fund changes that are scheduled to take place in May, and how they will affect legacy accounts. If you do not have a legacy account with either Fidelity or TIAA-CREF, you will not receive this communication.

• **Revenue Credit**: For investment fund options in Fidelity and TIAA-CREF legacy accounts that we were not able to change, either due to no lower-cost institutional mutual funds being available or because they are insurance annuity investments, we have negotiated with the two vendors to provide a revenue credit to applicable accounts. This revenue credit (or plan servicing credit) represents the excess of funds you have already paid above the necessary administrative expenses by the two vendors for 2012 and 2013. In May, you will receive a communication from either Fidelity or TIAA-CREF that explains the revenue credit that will be made to your legacy account later that month. And as long as there continues to be any excess revenue generated in the future, we will work with the vendors to have it credited back to your account. Remember, the revenue credit is only for those that have a balance in either a Fidelity or TIAA-CREF legacy account.

There also will be a few mutual fund changes for the new 2012 and beyond accounts, which will provide lower-cost institutional mutual funds. You will receive communications from either Fidelity or TIAA-CREF in April about these changes that are also taking place in May. If you have both a legacy and a new account, you will receive all the applicable mutual fund changes in one communication in April.

We are happy to share this news with you about these retirement plan improvements. If you have questions regarding the upcoming changes, please contact Human Resources at 517-353-4434 or retirementinfo@hr.msu.edu.

IPF Telecom Systems to host MSU Telecom Technology Workshop on May 12

MSU Infrastructure Planning and Facilities Telecommunications Systems will host a technology workshop from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on May 12 at The Henry Center for Executive Development. The workshop is designed to help attendees explore their communication methods and will teach them to better utilize the communications platforms that they already own. This is a free workshop for the MSU community and includes lunch and refreshments.

Registration and full program details are available at http://ipf.msu.edu/resources/training/technology-workshop/index.html. Registration is open until May 5. For more information, contact IPF’s Telecom Systems department at 517-353-5515 or telesyst@ipf.msu.edu.
Save Time. Worry Less. Health Advocate.

MSU benefits-eligible faculty and staff enrolled in one of MSU’s health plans have a great health care service available to them: Health Advocate. Health Advocate can help with complex health care problems you may be facing. Specific services include:

- Getting more information about test results, treatment recommendations, medications, etc.
- Making appointments with hard-to-reach specialists
- Coordinating second opinions
- Transferring medical records
- Negotiating payment plans for non-covered services
- Finding services, such as elder care and transportation

If you’re enrolled in MSU’s Community Blue PPO, Blue Care Network, or the CDHP/HSA plan, you’re eligible. Personal support is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. After hours, an operator will take your message and have an advocate get back to you.

Another benefit of Health Advocate is that it’s available to your extended family. You’re welcome to call for help with health care issues affecting your parents, parents-in-law and children —whether or not they’re dependents on your health care plan. Needing only your name and enrollee ID number (found on your BCBS or BCN health insurance card), they also can contact Health Advocate directly.

Learn more about Health Advocate by viewing their brochure: http://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/benefits_docs/Health_Advocate_Brochure.pdf.

If you want to save time and worry less, consider calling Health Advocate toll-free at 1-855-425-8585.

Take Your Child to Work Day is April 24

MSU families are encouraged to bring their children aged 8-14 years to campus on Thursday April 24, 2014 to job shadow their parents and experience the abundant career and educational opportunities available at MSU. This year’s national theme “Plant a Seed; Grow a Future” will give the university the opportunity to highlight the agricultural gems on campus. Even parents will discover new things they did not know about the university!

A complete list of tour sites, activities and details will be available by Friday, April 18, 2014 at www.wrc.msu.edu.

Event Overview:
8:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. -Department Tours and Career Exploration 30-minute Tours
11:30 a.m. - Noon -Recognition Ceremony @MSU Union Main Lounge
Noon - 1 p.m. -Lunch on Your Own
1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m. -Department Tours and Career Exploration 30-minute Tours

The event is sponsored by Michigan State University’s Women’s Resource Center, Family Resource Center, Purchasing and Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement.

If you have questions, call the Women’s Resource Center at 517-353-1635.

Breslin Takeover III: Carnival and Resource Fair is April 19

On Saturday, April 19, 2014, from 1 p.m. -5 p.m. Student Parents on a Mission (SPOM) and the MSU Family Resource Center will host the Breslin Takeover III: Carnival and Resource Fair. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness of MSU students who juggle their roles and responsibilities as students and parents. It will also give the greater Lansing community an opportunity for family fun and resource information.

Activities at the Breslin Center will include kid’s games, clowns, face painting, karaoke, dunk tank, bounce house, laser tag, petting zoo, Impression 5 and more. The carnival will be open to the public with a suggested donation of $2 per adult and $1 per child under the age of 12 years.

Thanks to “Gold” sponsors MSU Federal Credit Union and ASMSU, along with the MSU Council of Graduate Students, Residential Hospitality Services, Shaheen Chevrolet Team One and many other great organizations and businesses sponsoring the event!

See the full sponsor list and other updates at http://www.frc.msu.edu/News/index.htm.
What you may have missed this month on our blog...

Spotlight on HR Toolkits for Hiring Faculty and Academic Staff

This month we are spotlighting the toolkits for determining the requirements and process for running background checks and degree verifications when hiring Faculty and Academic Staff.

The questions are simple, sometimes the answers are not. When do you need to run a background check when hiring faculty? How do you initiate a background check degree verification? How do you complete it? The answers to these questions are in our latest toolkit postings under Toolkits for Administrators, Managers and Supervisors.

Visit our blog post to learn more, or the links to these toolkits can also be found on the Human Resources home page under What’s New.

Find High-Quality Products at the MSU Meat Lab

The MSU Meat Laboratory has been teaching and educating future meat scientists for years. The Lab has also provided quality meat products to the MSU community. The 67,000 square foot facility is located in Anthony Hall and is directed by the Department of Animal Science and the Department of Food Science.

The Lab focuses on four areas: education, outreach/extension, meat judging and student employment. The Lab provides carcasses for class instruction and research projects. The Lab in conjunction with Meat Extension Specialists provides materials that educators use in trainings for youth and meat consumers. The Lab also provides employment opportunities for students to gain additional experience in the meat processing industry. In addition, the MSU Meat Lab competes in multiple meat judging programs each year.

Read the rest of the article here.

Winter Farmers Market Continues Through April

Who says you can’t find fresh home-grown goods in the winter? The Meridian Township Farmers Market comes out to Meridian Mall in Okemos every first and third Saturday of the month from December to April. Approximately 25-30 unique vendors are present at each market day. The event is located in the JC Penney corridor of the mall from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., and will continue through April 19.

Learn more about the Meridian Township Farmers Market and other year-round markets at our blog post.
PDS Education Opportunities

To register or get more information on any of these upcoming HR Professional Development Services (PDS, formerly HRD) 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.

Recognizing and Preventing Violence in the Workplace
Thursday, April 10, 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Learn to identify and address warning signs in a timely manner to prevent violence in the workplace. MSU Police will provide instruction on how to identify behaviors, as well as give tips on intervention and how to best respond during a violent incident.

Payments to Non-Resident Aliens & Foreign Vendors
Thursday, April 17, 8:30 a.m. - noon
Presenter: Lee Hunter, MSU Accounting. Free.
This session provides key information about making payments to non-U.S. vendors and individuals. Topics include how to identify non-resident aliens and foreign vendors, visas, payment types, etc.

New! Conducting Successful Focus Groups
Thursday, April 17, 2 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
A focus group is a great way to get in-depth information about a particular topic or issue, gauge perceptions, or follow up on survey results, but done incorrectly your results may be questionable at best.

Essential Skills for Leadership
Tuesday, April 29, 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.

Benefits/Retirement Investment Education
To register or get more information, call 517-353-4434 or email benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu. Sessions are free and this month’s session is in 250 Nisbet Building. Registration is requested.

MSU Benefits/Retirement Orientation
Wednesday, April 16, at 12:30 p.m.
Presenters: Human Resources staff.
Recommended for anyone new to benefits or signing up for a retirement plan.

Contact HR
• 517-353-4434 or benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu for questions related to benefits.
• 517-353-3720 or hrstaffingservices@hr.msu.edu for questions related to hiring, staffing, classifications, compensation and job postings.
• 517-355-1526 or records@hr.msu.edu for questions related to processing of academic hires and academic job postings.
• 517-353-4330 or records@hr.msu.edu for questions related to employment verification and time processing.
• 517-355-0183 or ProDev@hr.msu.edu for questions related to professional development courses.
• 517-353-5510 or hr.er@hr.msu.edu for questions related to unions, grievances, arbitration and employee discipline.