

HR Forum Meeting Minutes – January 7, 2008

Present: JaNelle Barnes, Jo Ann Gardner, Pat Naylor, Michelle Bohn, Letitia Tunnell, Lori Hughes, B. Brandenburg, F. Quinn, M. Moritz, J. McBride, D. Mathews

Mr. McBride asked if there were any HR issues they wanted addresses. There were none.

Mr. McBride presented some questions to the membership for discussion:

1. Mr. McBride reported that HR has recently completed an audit for one department with a budget issue and the department requested HR change some of the staff members to exempt status to ease the budget. Mr. McBride asked members if this could be done. The answer is no, because exempt status is based on duties and responsibilities. He also reminded members that when employees are moved within the department, a review of the change of duties needs to be made. This will avoid personnel problems.
2. Mr. McBride asked if members knew how the chair of a grievance committee is selected. Human Resources has a list of all directors, and Mr. McBride recommends several from the list to the President. The President then appoints one of the recommend employees to be chair. The other two members are selected by Staff Council. One of them must be same FLSA status of person filing the grievance. Once the committee makes a decision all evidence is forwarded to the Vice President of employee. The committee actually serves as the investigative board for the VP.
3. Mr. McBride asked if anyone could explain what Benefit Replacement Pay (BRP) was. In the past the State paid 5.85% of the employee's social security tax on the first \$16,500 of salary up to about \$1034 per year. When it was stopped effective 9/1/95, the employees covered were grandfathered in, and they continue to receive BRP to this day. However, those employed after 9/1/95 do not receive this benefit.
4. Mr. McBride asked members if a supervisor could prohibit an employee from taking time off. The answer is yes – all time off must be agreeable to both supervisor and employee.

Dual Employment:

Mr. Quinn reviewed UPPS 04.04.06 Dual Employment Policy. He reminded everyone that state agencies can prohibit an employee from taking a second job if there is a conflict of interest. Employee must complete the appropriate paperwork, and submit to the department head and divisional Vice President for approval. Then the paperwork is filed in the employee's personnel file. Staff employees need only do this once per work event/activity. Faculty is required to submit the necessary paperwork annually.

MDC Update

It was reported the renovations for the Master Data Center are scheduled to begin January 22nd and will take approximately three to four weeks. Once it is completed Roxie Weaver, Rosie Olivo and Lisa Vallejo will be staffing the center.

Minimum Wage

The next minimum wage increase will be July 20, 2008. The new hourly rate will be \$6.55 per hour. Another increase will be in July 2009.

Performance Appraisals

Mr. Quinn reminded members it is now time for annual performance appraisals of employees for CY 07. If anyone has any questions regarding the process please contact Mr. Quinn or Jeff Lund in HR. The evaluations are to be completed during January and February. They are due to the divisional VPs by April 1st and to Human Resources by April 15th.

Mr. Quinn reminded everyone that the performance plan form used must be the most recent and updated one. Also, supervisors can now use a sliding scale for the scores. A FAQ sheet was published in the December HR Bulletin. Members were reminded these are official documents and need to be treated accordingly. Supervisors must justify all scores above or below a 3. The justification does not need to be lengthy, but supervisors should state how the employee either exceeded or fell below what was expected on the performance plan. If an employee scores below 300 on the evaluation, a performance improvement plan must be submitted. All the forms needed for this process are located on the HR website.

Cell Phone Payment Process

A general discussion was held regarding the new cell phone payment process. Employees issued a cell phone by departments must sign an agreement which will be retained in the departments. By January 14th each division will submit a spreadsheet to Roxie Weaver, indicating who will receive a cell phone allowance after the divisional VP has approved them.

Gordon Thyberg reminded everyone this would have impact on department budgets.

New IRS rules

On January 1st IRS implemented new rules that affect PayFlex Debit Card for TexFlex. When purchases are made, they must be validated thru TexFlex. If the vendor is not listed as approved vendor a reimbursement request must be filed for the expenses. A list of approved vendors is on the website.

UPPS 04.04.30 and UPPS 04.04.43 Changes Made

Changes to both UPPSs were approved November 2007 and they were placed on the website January 1st. In UPPS 04.04.30 the leave approval form is now optional for some absences such as sick and vacation. Another change involved the Energy Conservation days. An employee may use sick leave if they are ill, whether they were scheduled to work or not. The Emergency leave section was also rewritten. All forms previously included in the UPPS are now on the HR website. Also the calendar and timing for submitting timesheets has been updated. Employees using ESS to submit their time must do so weekly.

In UPPS 04.04.43 – Worker's Compensation some technical changes were made and removed the Student Health Center as an approved provider. The forms are now on the HR website.

Recent Process Changes:

- a. Prior state service notifications are now being copied to employee's supervisor. Expired comp time notices will now go to the time administrator and employee, but NOT to supervisor.

- b. Benefits section has implemented a new survey which goes out to participants of NEO Part I 60 days after completion of orientation.
- c. Payroll will be mailing all employees W2's this year. It is still possible to make address changes in the system this week. It is possible by next year we will have an electronic W2.

New Faculty for Spring Semester – Contact Benefits Office to Enroll

Michelle Moritz reminded members that all new faculty need to contact the Benefits office concerning enrollment for insurance. They have 30 days to enroll; however, it is usually best to complete their forms by January 31st so optional benefits can begin on February 1.

It was reported that TRS is mailing new handbooks to employee's home address this month.

Upcoming Events:

- a. Departmental Time Administrator training – January 23 & 24; Feb 19 & 20
- b. HealthSelect/BCBS Managing Wellness – February 27
- c. Financial Planning & Retirement Fair – April 2
- d. Managing @Texas State – April 9, 16 and 23

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned.