HR Forum Notes

July 1, 2013

John McBride calls for questions.

No questions.

Michelle Moritz introduced Heather Steed as the new Benefits Manager.

ERS Group Insurance-Annual Enrollment

- ERS Annual Enrollment
  - Annual enrollment starts July 8 and goes through August 9. The higher education window is July 22 through August 4 to make official changes.
  - If you have employees that have questions and are going to call ERS, it is suggested that they call within that time frame to keep the customer service lines shorter, thus a shorter wait. Employees can go online any time between July 8th and August 9, but the customer service line won’t be open until July 8.

- Tobacco Certification
  - In the past, if you were a tobacco user, you had to go online and certify so, but if you did not use tobacco, you did not have to certify because the default was “No.” Now, the default has been changed to “Yes” starting September 1.
  - There are 1,500 employees without a certification on file with ERS.
  - People who do not use tobacco and have not certified will be charged on their October 1 paycheck if they do not certify “No” by September 1. ERS is claiming there will be no refunds. The charge is $30 per person up to $90 for a family and if you don’t do it and get charged, they will not refund it.
  - There is an e-mail bulletin about it and information on the website about it; ERS will be sending information out about it.
  - Question: Are there specific instructions?
    - Answer: Yes, in the bulletin and there is a link on the HR website for tobacco certification that gives instructions.
  - If you go to the ERS website, there is information about it as well. There is a link on the certification page that walks you through step-by-step on how to complete the online certification. There is a whole page dedicated to the tobacco certification. They can do it three ways: 1) in person by filling out a form, 2) online, or 3) by calling ERS directly. We have the forms printed out in our [HR, Benefits] office. They can do it any time this summer. If you check “No” or “Yes” on the website, it will take you to the page with the amount, so if they accidently checked “Yes”, they can go back in and change it. There is a link on the certification page that walks you through step by step on how to complete the online certification.
Question: Is there any way a supervisor can be informed if their staff members have not completed the certification?

Answer: We do have a list of all of the people that have not taken care of this. Michelle has retrieved the test but it is connected to the ERS number and we cannot translate it to current employees. We will try to do what we can to break it down and get lists to supervisors. We will get another list at the beginning of August, hopefully making it easier to break the list down.

- TexFlex Health Care Spending Account Max Lowered
  - Changed due to the Affordable Healthcare Act. Anyone working 30 hours per week in a benefits eligible position will now be eligible for a full-time employer contribution.
  - So, now our 75% FTE employees will be getting a 100% contribution towards medical and 50% towards dependents. Anyone 75-99% will be eligible for that.
  - The best time for them to enroll will be during annual enrollment, but it will not change until September 1. It will still show at the part-time rate until then.
  - For those already enrolled, it will automatically adjust. This only applies to health insurance benefits.

- Evidence of Insurability Process
  - Short-term/Long-term Disability or increasing optional life insurance: The process can now be completed online. It will route employees to an option to have it sent to their e-mail or they can enter their address and have a paper copy mailed to them. If they do it online, they will receive an instant response, such as, “Yes you are approved,” or “Further information is needed.” If you are approved for short or long-term disability or optional life insurance, they will automatically send that information to ERS and they will add it on, most likely on September 1.
  - If someone gets approved, and then changes their mind, they will have to contact ERS directly before September 1 to have it removed.
  - If you have employees uncomfortable applying online, we can help them request the paper application, but we cannot give them our old application because it is a different process and is mailed directly to them.

- Medicare- Eligible Retirees
  - This only affects fully retired enrollees that are Medicare eligible. There will be an annual enrollment in the fall, November, to coincide with the Medicare enrollment, which is in November every year. If they are not Medicare eligible, they are in the summer annual enrollment like everyone else.
  - Premium changes: Medical is increasing by 7%; short-term disability is increasing to 30 cents per $100; and long-term disability will stay the same. HMO will increase 7%. The State of Texas dental plan will stay the same.
  - The Affordable Healthcare Act lowered the limit for TexFlex spending accounts to $2,500 per year. This only affects medical; the dependent daycare account will still have a $5,000 limit.
  - Question: On the 7% medical increase, if you look at the employee contribution and add 7% of whatever you are contributing now, is that what you will be putting in?
Answer: Rate sheets are available on the HR main page with a link to the rates and the rates are also on the ERS website.

Question: Can we login and check?

Answer: Yes; login and it will be pre-checked. If blank, certify.

Question: Will the benefits page include this?

Answer: Don’t know 7/3-5 benefits

- The Benefits Fair will be July 23 from 9 a.m. to 12:00 noon in JCK 1100. The formal presentation starts at 9:30 a.m. ERS will be speaking; healthcare vendors will be present. Dental vendors, prescription vendors, pay flex, Bobcat Balance and all other vendors will have booths. Registration is not required.

**SAP Employee Self Service**

- W-4 Changes
  - Some new changes are available in SAP. There is a W-4 with change option now. You can still do the paper form, or you can change it online. No retroactive changes are possible. It will be effective the next payroll cycle. Employee makes change online, certifies, and checks the box, just like signing the form. This sends record over to the master data center.
  - We also added an email notification if you change your direct deposit banking information for confirmation.
  - One other change is that, for people terminated and who have been gone for more than 4 months, they are being switched off of direct deposit and will receive a check. So, if they get rehired, they will have to re-enroll in direct deposit. HR will then go into the system and update.

- Holiday Calendar FY14
  - The memo went out about the holiday calendar for next year. We have had some discussions. We are relooking at the calendar because January 2nd and 3rd conflicted with late registration for classes because they start earlier than normal in 2014. We went back and looked at the calendar, then recommended the Christmas holiday to start on Thursday, December 19th with a return on January 2nd, which is still two weeks. It is just moved up.
  - With graduation occurring early, we will have that week in between for the Thursday-Energy conservation and Friday-Holiday. Graduation is the 16th or 17th of December, so it is better to move back. Why is this and issue? For 8 or 9 years, we have agreed that academics and everybody need seven days to get ready for the spring semester. The semester starts January 14th.
  - The benefit of a two-week paid leave at Christmas will not match 15-day vacation scheduled Board of Regents in August for approval even if approved by President’s Cabinet.
  - Question: So, the proposed 12/19 Energy Conservation and 12/20 Holiday brings everyone back to work on January 2, 2014?
• Answer: Yes.

Questions

• Question: I am currently half-time and will become full-time on July 8th. Will I accrue at the half-time or full-time rate?
  o Answer: Half-time.

• Question: I’ve been working at Texas State for a couple of years and just remembered I worked for UNT for a couple of years when I went to school there. Does that count for anything? State service?
  o Answer: Employees need to let HR know and we will verify and give retroactive service credit. That counts for state service, state longevity pay, and vacation accruals. Retirement credit is different and staff service awards are only at Texas State. Each program has slightly different rules.

• Question: What documentation do I need to add my common law spouse to my health insurance?
  o Answer: You can add them. Documentation is required. You must have a document called a “declaration of informal marriage” filed with county court. Also, you need proof of joint ownership of something, such as a home, vehicle, etc.

• Question: Is there an “informal divorce”?
  o Answer: Yes, ERS will require it. We cannot provide legal advice. If you are claiming an informal spouse, ERS expects to see that.

• Question: If I have an hourly student worker that is not working in the summer but is coming back in the fall, do I need to file separation papers?
  o Answer: Yes, because it is a significant break.

CUPA Interview Guide [LynnAnn Brewer]

• The CUPA interview guide is a great resource for hiring managers. It is now available on the HR website. Go to the main page, click on hiring manager, then select and download the CUPA interview guide.

• It goes over lots of information about hiring, legal considerations, discrimination, how to deal with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and more. There are sample interview questions and inappropriate topics which is good information to share with your hiring managers. It is from CUPA so it is legally sound.

• There will be a bulletin about it. There is a “.pdf” on the website so you can have a copy.

• Question: Is it broken down by behavioral questions?
  o Yes. There are sample questions to determine if applicants can perform certain jobs.

• John McBride: It’s a tool that helps you stay out of trouble. It is a tool; it is not required. You do not need to use all of the questions but you may find something that is relevant to what you want to do and you just didn’t know how to ask it in the past. CUPA updates this periodically and since they are the national HR association for hirer education, this is very good stuff. A lot of you may not interview often so it is a really good resource. In the environment we are in now,
employees question everything. The next step is that we will have to provide the questions and the answers that were given. If you have questions about how to use it, give LynnAnn a call.

**Changes to Non-student, Non-Regular Application [LynnAnn Brewer]**

- The criminal history section’s wording has been updated. Connie Brownson changed the form, cleaning it up. Now the questions have been changed to ask about a felony charge instead of an arrest record.
- Question: Is the new application a form so you can just tab from field to field to fill it out?
  - No, but we will make that available soon.
- John McBride: The same change will be made in the regular applications as well. The wording came from the State of Texas application.
  - It has already gone through our lawyer, the TSUS associate general counsel here, and she recommended that we make these changes.
  - In conjunction, if a back ground check if a hit comes back, you must do an individualized assessment to determine if the criminal history is relevant to the position you’re hiring for.
  - The UPPS has cleared the secondary reviewers and now has been forwarded to FSS review which is protocol. Then, it goes out to university.
  - It is putting into policy what we are doing in process.
- Question: When will that become available to us to use?
  - Answer: You have to use the individual assessment now. If someone’s background check comes back with a hit, the hiring manager has to conduct this assessment. There is a form out there and they will make a recommendation about this: the arrest is either relevant or not relevant. It makes no difference whether or not you think it is, your VP has to review it also. So, if you think it is relevant and he or she thinks it is not, they don’t get hired, or vice versa. On the form we will give you for the individualized assessment, every one of those questions that we ask you to have answered came right out of the EOC enforcement guidance that was published in 2012. There are questions like: “how long ago?,” “have you had jobs since then?”, “have you had any difficulties?,” and “can you be bonded,” and then you make the judgment call. You have to determine if it is relevant to the job or not.

**Salary Review [Jeff Lund]**

- It is salary review time. We kick off this process today. There are forms on our webpage and we’ve included some draft notices to employees that you can use to announce the amount of the award.
- In this case, the university is authorized at 2% for individuals who were hired on or before September 4, 2012, and have performance appraisals greater than 300. So at 301, the employee becomes eligible for a salary increase if they were hired on or before September 4, 2012. Three hundred doesn’t quite cut it; it has to be 301 or higher.
• Not everyone gets 2%; it is up to you what they get. The universal entry begins today and runs until July 21st, so that allows about three weeks for department heads to make their determinations, start their initial review, and announces to their employees. The next level of review will be the week of July 2nd and then the review approval for VPS will be July 29th that week. So, we have three weeks to put in our data for our employees. I will also send out detailed salary review instructions on our webpage. There will be instructions and templates to use for your employees to announce the amount they will receive.
• This includes grants; they are also expected to match the state pay raise so they should also set aside 2% as well. Also, we are looking at just regular staff, regular faculty.
• John McBride: The president sends out a general memo and announces what is going to happen. Thirty minutes after that, we send out the memo that repeats a lot of what was in there and gives a link to the salary instructions. In the draft that was sent up there that kicked off on July 1st, Mr. Nance confirmed that it was in the president’s office, so as soon as she releases it, we will send ours and you will be able to do yours. Now, our draft deals with the 2% merit pool. You may not know that, in addition to each VP having a 2% merit pool, they got an additional ½% to distribute as they see fit. So, each divisional VP will determine how they want to deal with the additional ½%, and we have heard of things such as: How far away are they from the market, and titles they may want to do something with. It is strictly discretionary on what they want to do with that. You will have to look to your specific VP to see what they want to do with that additional ½%. Hopefully, that will come today [July 1st].

**Evaluation of the Annual Appraisal Process [John McBride]**

• A couple other things that I want to mention: I told you that a consulting firm had been hired to do an evaluation of our evaluation system and that process has started. The initial meeting was last week with the President’s Cabinet and now they are going to meet individually or have an individual phone interview with each vice president and then they will move forward with evaluating our performance evaluation system. We will just have to see how that all plays out. I have seen the interview questions. One of the big ones is: “What do you want your performance evaluation system to do?” “What is its purpose?” “What are you trying to accomplish?” In the meeting I got to attend when the consultants met with the vice presidents and Presidents Cabinet, a couple of the vice presidents brought up about how whatever your requirements are with your job, do they link to the overall goals and objectives of the university? So, we will see how all of that turns out. The consultant opened the thing with: If you read in the literature which is, this is a university so everybody reads the literature, that you would see 49 out of 50 articles where nobody likes performance evaluations for one reason or another, either bosses or employees. That is true. We used to do a HR evaluation survey once every three years for ten years, and we sent out three of them. “Customer satisfaction” and “performance evaluations” were either the number one or number two “issues” [respondents complained about]. So, I had even brought it up to Mr. Nance that the state doesn’t require us to have performance evaluations, so why don’t we just drop it? Well, politically, that will not fly. You can’t go to the taxpayers and say: “Well, we don’t even evaluate your employees.” In our office, we have a
template with all the duties that we put on the performance plan. In the first part of the
document, I list the University goals, objectives, the FSS objectives and goals, then I list all of
their duties and then they have to tell me how that duty supports the objective and that goal. In
the end, I think that is what the VPs were trying to say: If whatever you are doing doesn’t
support the university’s or division’s goal, why are you doing it? So, I think there will be some
emphasis on that. It is a six-month process. They are supposed to finish up in November. There
won’t be any changes in place until calendar year 2015 because we will use our current system
through 2013 and maybe 2014, so don’t throw away your papers or think that you won’t be
doing an evaluation.

Stipends to Exempt Employees for Non-exempt Work

- Another issue that has come up is that just recently we seem to have three or four occasions
  where departments want to pay exempt employees a stipend to do non-exempt work. The basic
  thing is that you can’t do that because your job is determined to be exempt on non-exempt
  based on the totality of the duties that you do. We have had some situations where it seems
  fairly clear, the non-exempt work, that will not be in such an amount that it should affect your
  exempt status. So, we are looking at possibly relaxing or changing how we handle that. If we can
tell that is that the case, we may be able to permit it. Right now, it is on a case by case basis and
  SAP is not set up to do it. We will have to have another pay type and that sort of thing. I wanted
  you to understand why.

Any Questions?

- No questions were asked.