

## HR Forum\_Minutes

March 3, 2013

No Questions

Russell (Safety Director)

- Update on Work Step Program
  - Was supposed to be implemented on March 1, but has been postponed until April 1. All that remains is for Mr. Nance to sign the memo explaining the costs, implication of the program, and the whys.
  
- Safety for Employees
  - A Safety Director's job is to locate where incidents occur, and come up with ways to prevent them. Safety Directors also handle workers compensation on campus and building insurance. They oversee both Environmental Health and Safety and Risk Management. The majority of incidents on campus are falls, but the premiums are usually over \$750,000. Most incidents occur within the first two years of employment. In the last three years, the University spent over \$900,000 in medical cost and \$1.9m in premiums.
  
- Physical Skills Assessment Tests
  - Texas State is trying to ensure that faculty and staff adhere to their GOJAs. This will be done through individual Physical Skills Assessment Tests. The assessment should take about an hour. These assessments will be conducted by a third party company and test potential employees' physical capabilities to ensure they can physically complete all of the tasks listed in their GOJA. This will be effective April 1.
  - Physical assessment prior to employment will aid the University in ensuring a healthy workforce and reduce the number of employees who may become a liability, particularly in labor intensive jobs. It is important that labor intensive jobs be assessed, because labor intensive jobs constitute the majority of the University's workers compensation cases. The first people to be assessed will be new hires and the recently promoted/ transferred.
  - Whether or not the injury occurred while employed or prior to employment, the University must pay for it through workers compensation. To reduce this, the University must pre-screen potential employees to look for any prior injuries or incapacities that may lead to future incidents. For example, the University recently hired an electrician who refuses to climb ladders. Had he taken this assessment prior to employment, the University would have known about his unwillingness to complete a requirement clearly stated in his GOJA. Thus, the University would have not chosen him over the other applicants that are willing to climb ladders. Since he was employed, however, if an electrical problem occurs in a location requiring a ladder there may be an incident.

- The memo that goes out to announce the implementation of the program will have a website on it. The website will explain the procedures and the job titles included.
  - HR deals only with the process, and Russell’s job is to determine which jobs will be affected by the process.
  - Physical Skills Assessment is the overall project. Work Steps is the name of the program used by the PTRC who administer the test. PTRC conducts these tests nationwide.
  - If a department does not hire anyone, Russell will bring David in and meet with the employees to see if their GOJAs match up with what they actually do out in the field. The University has several Account Managers that keep the same staff for many years and sign off on the GOJAs without much thought. GOJAs become outdated this way.
  - More information about the Physical Skills Assessment is provided on the employment website. Mr. Nance will be sending out that link shortly.
- Question: Is this going to be similar to the drug testing for certain specified job duties?
    - Answer: The Account Manager helped create a list of all the jobs. This is a pilot program however, so more jobs may be added to the list at a later date. Eventually, these physical assessments may expand to all University jobs. Just because it is not considered “labor intensive,” a secretary may still have carpal tunnel, and the University would benefit from knowing that prior to employment.
  - Question: Is the date April 1 just for the pilot? Were Technology Resources involved?
    - Answer: What we call a “pilot” is trying to get all the kinks out of it. The program has only been in development for a year. A focus group was consulted and, yes, certain positions in Technology Resources were involved. Do not look at this program as a working program. It is still in development. Departments are encouraged to suggest jobs. The new job will be assessed by David. The department can even go through the test to see if it really does match up with what their employees do. Russell has the final say on which jobs make the list.
  - Question: Where is the list on the website? What’s the cost to the department?
    - Answer: It doesn’t cost the department anything. The University takes money from the premium to pay for it.
  - Question: What happens if someone is being transferred, but they don’t pass the Skills Assessment?
    - Answer: They don’t get transferred. They will not be fired because of it.

Michelle

- Update UPPS 04.04.44 – Employees with Serious Illnesses

- The updated UPPS has been posted on HR's website to better meet the Workplace Accommodation Policy. There have also been technical updates made such as changing language such as "University Attorney" to "TSUS Associate General Counsel." The role for ADA Coordinator, which originally was in Disability Services, is now handled by Dr. Sherrie Benn, Assistant VP Director of Multicultural Student Affairs.
- Holiday calendar
  - The essential offices are posted on the website calendar and must keep a skeleton crew over Spring Break next week.
  - Payroll deadline
    - Monthly employees will be paid on April 1, but if they have leave without pay during Spring Break they need to enter that time and have it approved, no later than March 22. Else, it will not be included in in the April 1 paycheck. The payroll office will be locked March 25. Otherwise, the adjustment will have to wait until May 1.
  - As of now, it is still in review whether or not Dr. Trauth will approve the half-day off with pay for Good Friday again this year, March 29. The governor's office usually makes a proclamation declaring that all state employees can have half of Good Friday off with pay. However, this proclamation usually comes late each year, if they decide to make Good Friday a half-day at all.
    - Question: What if you are on vacation during Good Friday, do you count Friday as a half-day?
      - Answer: Yes, treat it like a holiday.
- FY14
  - The FY14 holiday schedule will not go to the Board of Regents until August because we have to wait until the Legislature is over in May to see if they change anything. Assuming that there are no changes, there will be 15 paid holidays and 6 energy conservation days. FY14 will be a higher-year paid holidays. If the University applies 5 days at Spring Break for Energy Conservation and one other day – not determined which yet -- that will make six. A preliminary calendar will be sent to the President's cabinet to be approved by the Board. The Board should review the calendar and give it their formal approval. In the past, the Board has never altered the preliminary draft because the University does not like waiting until late August to approve the calendar.
- SAP Updates
  - Z- Notime Report – This report was designed to help supervisors and time administrators look for the employees who have not put in their time. Run this for your hourly, monthly, NSNR, and student workers to see if they are entering their time and are still here. If not, they need to be informed to correct it and/or terminated. In the past, the next step would have been to find their last day worked. Their last date of

work will be added to the Z- Notime report to consolidate these two tasks. If you need help, contact Selma at 5-2557.

- Employee Self-Service Enhancement
  - HR is updating Employee Self-Service to include W-4 changes. This will allow employees to make changes more efficiently. One issue, however, is with the special tax rules to which international employees must adhere. Thus, HR is developing an exception report that will inform Sally in Payroll when an international employee makes a change so that she can contact them. The system itself will accept the change made by them, but they may not be legally allowed to do it. These updates will be available soon.
- Compliance Training Update
  - The compliance training available through SAP has been fixed after having kicked off several users since October. The training is now back online, and all of the people who were in progress have been contacted. A handful of users have lost their data. Also, tests scheduled for December and January were skipped during the maintenance. Testing will now resume. If you need more information, contact Ellen Cake in the Office of General Council.
- EEO training
  - Equity and Access and HR have decided to make EEO training available on SAP. This will be beneficial to employees because EEO training must be taken every two years. With the training on SAP, employees can take the classes online in their free time. There is no set date for when this will go online yet.
- Events schedule
  - The Finance Planning and Retirement Fair
    - This fair will be on March 28 in LBJ from 9am to 3pm. Social Security, ERS, and TRS will be there. Registration is open on the Portal in Professional Development. In the past, these classes have accommodated 100 people and filled up quickly, so register as soon as possible. All of our vendors will be there. ERS and the Retired Faculty and Staff Association will also each be manning a table.
  - Managing@TxState
    - Managing@TxState will be held on April 17 and 24, and will be advertised through Professional Development. Managing@TxState is twice a year – in April and October. All of the Vice Presidents will be sent a list with the names of managers and supervisors who have not attended before.
  - Health Check

- The University is partnering with the Central Texas Medical Center to conduct a health check. The health check will be held on April 18 at the Embassy Suites. It will not be considered work time because the check is not a University sponsored event. No busses will be provided for transportation since most people opted to drive themselves last year. Also, the pre-event blood draw on campus last February 14 had a very good turn-out. If you missed it, you can still have your blood drawn at the hospital.
    - Question: Can you use your medical leave for the health check?
      - Answer: No, you have to use comp, vacation or FLSA.
- FAQs
  - Question: How do I record holidays in SAP?
    - Answer: The holidays are already defaulted into the calendar. Many employees try to record holidays as “University closures,” but that is not correct. The only thing that you can record on a holiday is extra work hours.
  - Question: My net pay went down on my January 3 check, but I didn’t make any changes.
    - Answer: The social security tax changed. Congress did not extend the reduction to 4.2%, so it went back up to 6.2%.
  - Question: My department employs several student workers that are paid through work-study. What if I forgot to submit a change in cost distribution PCR when the work-study ran out?
    - Answer: The cost rolls over to the department.

LynnAnn

- Background Checks
  - In May 2012, EEOC asked employers to do individual assessments instead of blanket disqualifications for certain criminal histories. The policy is still in revision, but should be out soon. Currently, HR is going case by case. If a criminal background check comes back with a criminal history, HR evaluates it and assists the department with conducting an individualized assessment. The department must then sit down with the new hire, or employee being transferred/promoted, and talk about their criminal history. The department must take into account: the nature of the crime, the gravity of the offense, the number of offenses, their age at the time of the offense, the length of time since the offense, completion of their sentence, and any rehabilitation efforts. The department can also look at the particular employee in question’s employment history. For example, if the employee has never caused an incident at the University it should positively affect their assessment. After the assessment, the hiring manager must sign it and send it to the VP for the VP’s approval. Then, the VP will notify HR. HR does not require the department to hand over the explanations given in the interview, only the assessment.

HR will keep these assessments for 2-3 years in case the University is audited by EEOC.

- Question: We have background checks only on certain jobs?
  - Answer: No, they are for all University jobs.

#### McBride (Background Checks Continued)

- The University Attorney recommended that the VP of the department that is considering hiring the prospective employee sign the assessment because they have a higher authority than the hiring manager. For example, the person may have a criminal history of sexual assault and want to work in Residential Life. Someone who has authority within the University, such as the VP, has to make the final decision whether or not it's too much of a gamble to hire that individual. On the other hand, the person may have a DWI and want to work in accounting. Then, the conviction is irrelevant to the job so there should be no gamble, but the VP still needs to sign off on the final decision.
- In the past, if an individual had a misdemeanor, they had to be individually assessed but, if they had a greater offense, they had no hope of getting a job. EEOC recently published that 1/17 Anglo American males, 1/6 Hispanic American males, and 1/3 African American males have had a brush with the legal system. Many of these men would have no chance at being hired, thus, the system had to be revised.
- Hopefully, the rule will be out shortly because some departments are not following the procedure because it's not in writing yet. HR has to write it carefully because it has to include all possible scenarios. The process, however, is already settled and will be in 04.04.17.
  - Comment: We had this happen in one of our departments and it's really not that painful. LynnAnn worked hand-in-hand with the hiring supervisor and grant compliance. It was good that that partnership was there. It forces you to sit back and do a proper assessment.

#### Tammy

- FY13
  - Since the beginning of the fiscal year 50-55 incidents have occurred. Since 2010, there have been 14 indictments against University employees that HR is still tracking.
  - Best Practices to help employee relations:
    1. Communicate and document the problem.
    2. Write it down and date it.
    3. Carefully consider, "What have you done in the past?" particularly with a similar issue.
    4. Take action – call Jeff or Tammy in the HR department if you see a problem brewing.
    5. Do it promptly; don't wait for it to get worse.
    6. Use the checklist on the Employee Relations website for guidance.

- Updates on ER Forms:
  - A heads-up for departments with a lot of disciplinary actions: If you have separate forms in your files, don't use them because the forms are being updated.
  - Performance Improvement Plan – PIP
    - This form is used mostly for employees who score below 300. Employees can be put on PIPs for other reasons, too. For legal reasons, HR needs to review PIPs prior to departments giving them to their employees to make sure that we are following the policy within that conversation.
  - Other forms are being updated as well. Changes to the website will be made as these updates are made.

#### McBride (indictments continued)

- HR tracks indictments; some people have already been convicted for transgressions they had here at the University. Some have paid fines. The University has had employees with court dates set seven or eight times. Whether you are the defendant or the testimony you have to go through this long process.
- Most of the time, the University Attorney is the one who gives the final approval before termination. The attorney will ask three questions. The first question will be if anyone has been treated differently. So, if you have one employee that makes \$450 and another that makes \$310, but you want to fire the \$310 employee for being late even though the other employee is just as frequently late, the attorney will recommend that you don't because it's unfair treatment. The next question is if you have helped the employee improve their actions or given them any training. Lastly, the third question is whether or not the employee has any disabilities. Did the employee ever mention anything to you that may have impaired their ability to work? What did you do? Use the checklist provided on the Employee Relations website for guidance so the situation doesn't end up here.
- Disciplinary letters changed – earlier is better than late
  - On the bottom of disciplinary letters, it always had a spot for HR to sign called “HR Concurrence,” but now it will be called, “HR Acknowledgement.” What this means is that HR acknowledges that the employee discussed the issue with HR, but did not necessarily concur with it. HR doesn't make the decision, management does. The same thing will be on the PIP.

No questions