Human Resources Newsletter, December 2021

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Greetings!

Dear Colleagues,

As we wrap up this fall semester and prepare for the new year, I hope that you are able to take some time to recharge and know that you are appreciated. Take a step back and reflect on all that you and your teams have accomplished. I believe the entire University System community would agree with me when I say that we are truly grateful for your work and contributions throughout this difficult year, and we hope that you are able to enjoy this holiday season.

I would like to wish everyone a happy new year, and I hope that you find the content of this newsletter to be useful during this time.

Happy Holidays to you and yours!

Interesting News and Notes

Celebrating the Healthy Way

The holiday season offers opportunities for celebration with family and friends and features joyous occasions for many. Still, there are those among us who have to work harder to achieve
that feeling of happiness and good cheer. Instead, they experience very different emotions and challenges. Even so and no matter your own personal circumstances, here are some thoughts to assist in taking optimum advantage of time away to recharge and refresh.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

The holiday season and other times on the calendar can present particular difficulties with some experiencing what is known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Anticipating its onset can offer some potential for relief and the more you know about SAD and its symptoms, the more opportunity exists for working through the issues it presents and celebrating during the holidays. Want to learn more?

Holiday Self-Care Plan

When we think of the holiday season, most often images of family gatherings, joyful reunions, and excitement come to mind, but that’s not always the case. In fact, many struggle with some of the dynamics of the holidays. If you want to push back against those feelings of anxiety that can come with the season, you may want to start by identifying at least three sources of stress and ways to meet them head on. Imagining your best holiday ever is just another of several strategies to enjoy a happy and healthy holiday too!

Managing the Challenges of Coronavirus During the Holidays

There’s no question, as we navigate our way through yet another very different holiday season, the celebrations and traditions that have been fundamental elements of our enjoyment may continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some ideas on how to manage a wide range of emotions and feelings during the holidays and ways in which to share memorable moments while entering the new year with a positive frame of mind.

Emerging from the Pandemic: Managing the Transition

Between Oct.-Dec. 15th, nearly 350 UMS employees attended a session/conversation facilitated by Dr. Rodriguez, Ph.D., CRC, MAC, Licensed Clinical Psychologist on Emerging from the Pandemic: Managing the Transition. As a Dean and Professor, he’s uniquely familiar with higher education dynamics. Conversations and questions ranged in response to the common content so attendees received unique follow-up emails.

Here are some resources available to you we thought you might find helpful!

Did You Know Slips, Trips, and Falls Are Some of the Most Common Causes of Workplace Injuries?

It seems a simple thing to remember...watch your step when the weather turns wintry, but you might be surprised by how many of your colleagues sustain injuries when they slip, trip, and fall while on the job.

To help avoid your tumble, just remember S-A-F-E!
Those four letters help bring attention to Slip, Trip, and Fall Events that you can successfully navigate by taking note of the following advice for adverse weather conditions on campus:

**Surface:** Be aware of changes in weather conditions, watch for changes in the condition and composition of walking surfaces, and beware of contamination of the surfaces such as wet leaves, etc.

**Awareness:** Avoid distractions when walking, scan your surroundings, and stay alert.

**Footwear:** Should be appropriate for the conditions and work being performed.

**Environment:** Watch for obstructions, stairs, and ramps, and avoid rushing.

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**Farewell and Best Wishes to Our Esteemed Colleague**

Crompton "Hub" Burton returned to the University of Maine System in 2015 as the Internal Communications Manager, however, it was not the first time he was a UMS employee. Previously, he worked in Public Affairs at UM from 1989-1993 before heading to Ohio University and Marietta College in various communications, marketing, and alumni relations capacities.

Here at UMS, Hub has worked closely with colleagues in HR and the System in support of our employees and if you ask him, he will tell you that no two days in a row were ever exactly the same. In his own words: "I am grateful for the opportunity to serve with such talented and dedicated partners doing such important work. This was a wonderful place and wonderful way to close a thirty-year career in higher education."

Please join us in thanking Hub for his many contributions to UMS and wishing him a very happy retirement!

Thank you, Hub, you will be missed!

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**We Want to Hear From You!**

Because we wish to establish a new and ongoing line of outreach and communication between Human Resources and our community of employees, it’s extra important for us to receive your feedback and input.

That's why we invite you to share your thoughts and insights so that future editions can be helpful, useful, and well worth the time invested to spend a few moments with their news and information.

Perhaps you know of a particular colleague whose efforts to support our mission of supporting student success also go above and beyond? We'd like to hear about it along with exciting efforts and initiatives to make our University of Maine System a wonderful place to live and work.

Let us hear from you with questions, concerns, and interests that you feel may be valuable for us to share with our wider audience of UMS employees.

Even as we wish each and every University of Maine System employee the very happiest and healthiest of holiday seasons, it's not too early to look forward to 2022 and all of the promise and potential that comes with the new year.

Maybe, this is the opportunity to launch that new wellness program or re-dedicate yourself to pursuing that healthier and happier lifestyle?

Look for our January HR Newsletter in which we'll feature some helpful information to turn those New Year's resolutions into your Year of Fitness!

Sincerely,

Loretta B. Shields, SHRM-CP, PHR
Chief Human Resources Officer