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The "Personnel" Touch

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An internal communication on Human Resource matters, policies, procedures and benefit information.

Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP)

The Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP), became effective July 1, 1998, allowing employees under the Florida Retirement System or the Teachers' Retirement program to retire and begin accumulating retirement benefits, without terminating employment for up to 60 months from the date the employee first reaches normal retirement. Normal retirement for most FRS members is either when an employee is vested and reaches age 62, or when they complete 30 years of service regardless of their age (age 55 and vested or 25 years of service for Special Risk members).

Under this program, employees effectively "retire" (building up retirement benefits in a DROP "account") while they continue to work (receiving a paycheck from the University). While in DROP, employees pension benefits are kept in the FRS Trust Fund, earning an effective annual interest rate of 6.5 percent. Employees can ultimately retire with a monthly FRS benefit plus an accumulated "nest egg". They can elect to receive payment as a lump sum (after taxes) or, subject to federal limits, roll over into an eligible retirement plan (e.g. individual retirement account (IRA), or a qualified trust).

On July 1, 1998 vested employees over age 62, or having more than 30 years of service, were allowed to enroll in the DROP program. However, because employees must enroll for DROP within 12 months from the first day of eligibility, an employee eligible on July 1, 1998 has only until June 30, 1999 to enroll. If you are such an employee, you still have a few months to enroll in DROP!

Please contact your Benefits Section at 348-3515 or 348-2464 with any questions on the DROP program.

Health Insurance Premium Increase

Effective the pay warrant dated January 15, 1999 health insurance premiums were increased for all employees. Following are the new premiums for **full-time** employees. The increase amount for part-time employees is prorated based on their FTE.

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Individual Coverage | \$ 14.96 biweekly |
| Family Coverage | \$ 53.80 biweekly |

OHR Director's Corner

Are Counter Offers Counter Productive ?

Counteroffers for top performing employees who have secured employment offers from other organizations have become common in recent years, as unemployment rates remain at record low levels and staff retention continues to be a key issue.

While a manager's immediate reaction might be to persuade a key employee to stay, he or she should first uncover all the contributing factors that led the individual to explore other opportunities, and then take a hard look at whether these problems can truly be resolved. A cautious approach to counteroffers should be taken to avoid challenges to our compensation system when other employees learn of the agreement and question their own salaries.

Additionally, some managers may have lingering concerns about an employee's loyalty after the counteroffer has been accepted. Except in the rarest of circumstances, counteroffers are ill advised.

Counteroffers should not be considered in circumstances where the employee has secured an internal reassignment. Such an action would amount to the University competing against itself for staff.

What Is Workers' Compensation?

Our workers' compensation program is an insurance plan provided by the State of Florida which pays all reasonable and necessary medical care if a state employee becomes injured or develops an occupational disease because of conditions on the job. The program also provides payment to the employee for part of the wages he or she might lose if the injury or illness disables the employee for more than seven calendar days.

WHAT DO I DO IF A WORK RELATED INJURY OCCURS?

In a MEDICAL EMERGENCY?

- GO to the nearest medical facility or CALL PUBLIC SAFETY at 348-5911 if emergency transport is required. The closest emergency medical centers to FIU campuses are:

| UNIVERSITY PARK | NORTH CAMPUS |
|--|---|
| Columbia Kendall Regional Med. Ctr. 11750 Bird Road (305) 223-3000 | Parkway Regional Med. Ctr. 160 NW 170th Street (305) 651-1100 |

- NOTIFY HUMAN RESOURCES as soon as possible about the injury:

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <u>University Park</u> (305)348-3273 | <u>North Campus</u> (305) 919-5545 |
|---|---------------------------------------|

What if the injury requires NON-EMERGENCY medical attention?

- Immediately REPORT the injury to your supervisor and Human Resources.
- HUMAN RESOURCES will coordinate the initial treatment with an approved medical provider.
- FOLLOW medical treatment plan as prescribed by your provider.

What if the injury is minor and DOES NOT REQUIRE MEDICAL ATTENTION?

- REPORT the injury to your supervisor and HUMAN RESOURCES to document the injury. Receive necessary first aid at job site, if available.

If the injury occurs outside regular working hours, the injured worker or supervisor should call Humana at 1-800-424-6689. HUMANA providers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you have any further questions about workers' compensation, please contact Serafin Alorro at 348-3273.

Qualifying Status Changes (QSC)

Please remember to notify the Benefits Department immediately after an important event in your life that might allow you to make changes in your insurances. Events such as; marriage, divorce, newborn children, etc., are considered qualifying status changes. Employees have thirty one (31) days from the date of the event to make changes in their insurances. Once this period is over, employees must wait until the annual open enrollment period to make changes in their coverage. Employees may call the Benefits section at 348-2530 or 348-3627, if they have questions on QSC.

Human Resources is Showcased

Florida International University's Office of Human Resources strives to be on the cutting edge of its field. With over 25 HR professionals on staff, our goal is to provide the highest quality and service possible. Our latest list of successes includes an article in the national professional publication of HR on Campus Newsletter highlighting our Compensation/Classification procedures manual as a best practice model.

The Benefits Department was cited as the first University in the State of Florida to successfully provide a long-term care benefits package for its employees. Our initial enrollment goal was 5%; we enrolled almost 10%!

With the creation of an Employee Relations Department, we continue to collaborate with the various bargaining units and have reduced the number of employee complaints that turn into grievances. Our proactive stance promotes and encourages better labor management relationships.

In the area of Workers' Compensation, we have been chosen to present at the Colleges & Universities Personnel Association(CUPA) Conference in Kentucky. We will be introducing a fully automated Workers' Compensation process developed at FIU.

Finally, our newly acquired Training and Development Department has been busy developing and delivering programs that will enhance the professional development of all employees on campus. We have partnered with the United Way to bring a Brown Bag Lunch Series covering a wide variety of work/family issues. We are also working on a second session for the Franklin Covey Time Management Series. The first session was sold out within two weeks.

While we are keeping very busy these days, we continue to remain committed to providing the excellent customer service our community has come to expect. Maybe that's why we were one of the finalists for the Presidential Award at the 1998 Employee Recognition Awards. And there's more where this came from....

Leadership

As a leader, one must sometimes take actions that are unpopular or whose results will not be known for years to come. There are victories whose glories lie only in the fact that they are known to those who win them.

— Nelson Mandela