Independence Day Holiday

AU will observe the Independence Day Holiday this year on Monday, July 5th. Happy Birthday, USA!

Employees who are scheduled to work on that day, but who are eligible for holidays (i.e. Regular employees), should be afforded equivalent time off as close to the holiday date as is practical.

The 2010 Holiday schedule is summarized here.

Exempt vs. Non-Exempt

Exempt and non-exempt are two terms most people have heard but may not fully understand. One major misconception is that a person can simply choose whether a particular position is classified as exempt or non-exempt. Many people believe that simply by paying a salary and not an hourly wage that an employee is exempt from receiving overtime pay. Neither of these statements is true.

The terms exempt and non-exempt come from a federal law – the Fair Labor Standards Act or FLSA. This law has many provisions including minimum wage provisions, recordkeeping, child labor standards, and overtime provisions. It is from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act that we find the terms exempt and non-exempt. The law requires employers to classify positions as either exempt or non-exempt and provides the guidelines employers use to make such a determination. Non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime pay. Exempt employees are not entitled to overtime pay; hence, they are "exempt" from the overtime provisions of the law.

For non-exempt employees, the law provides for a minimum hourly wage, the maintenance of detailed records of hours worked, and overtime pay of one and one-half the regular rate for work in excess of 40 hours during a seven day pay period. Public institutions, such as Auburn University, are authorized to award compensatory time off at the premium rate equal to one and one-half hour for each overtime hour worked in lieu of pay.

Office Skills Assessments Available Through HR

How many times has this happened to you? You have posted an office/clerical position and ended up with almost 200 applications! As you attempt to bring this down to a manageable size, you decide to key in on any applicants who indicate they are highly proficient in using Microsoft applications such as Word, Excel, etc. since use of those software programs is an everyday occurrence in your office.
But how do you know if these applicants really have the skill sets you need? And have you ever made a hiring decision based upon all of the other factors you take into account in the interview process – past experience, communication skills, favorable references – only to have that person come in and struggle with the basic information management responsibilities which must be met in order to be successful in the job?

The Department of Human Resources has available the Office Proficiency Assessment & Certification (OPAC) skills assessment software to assist you in determining the computer-related qualifications of your applicants. Software skills assessments are available for MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. Additionally, other assessments are available in the areas of Keyboarding Speed & Accuracy, Customer Service, Clerical Skills, and Financial.

Applicants may be scheduled to take the assessments at any point during the selection process. In other words, you can create your shortlist of candidates and ask them to make an appointment for the skills assessment session; or you can call in your candidates for interview and then schedule only those candidates in whom you have a sincere interest. And because these assessments are not Pass/Fail, you are not obligated to hire the individual with the highest scores if there are other factors which would make a candidate scoring lower the more appropriate finalist for the job. The assessments are merely an additional factor to be considered, and you decide how heavily you need to weight those in making your final selection decision.

OPAC conducts reliability studies to make certain that the assessments they develop appropriately address the US Department of Labor’s guidelines for interpreting reliability. Only those OPAC assessments that demonstrate sufficient reliability to address these guidelines are released for use. Some of our departments have taken it upon themselves to create their own “tests” during the interview process. This puts the University in jeopardy of not being able to meet the government’s guidelines for validity. Therefore, this activity should not be taking place.

If you would like to utilize the OPAC skills assessments to assist you with your next hiring decision, please contact Angela Erlandson or Chris Thompson in the Employment Unit.

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**Employee Recognition Program**

This year's Employee Recognition Program to honor employees achieving milestones in years of service and for winning the Spirit of Excellence Award, was held on Wednesday, June 9, 2010 from 2 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at The Auburn University Hotel and Dixon Conference Center Ballroom A. A total of 400 dedicated employees will be recognized for 5, 10, 20, 25, 30 and 40 years of service to the university. Additionally, the 48 monthly Spirit of Excellence Award winners were recognized. From among this distinguished group of 48, four employees were selected as **employees of the year**:

- Matthew Caudle - AU Bookstore
- Martha Combs - Building Services
- Ann Gulatte - Ag Administration
- David Roberson - Design & Construction

The winners each received a $500 cash award made possible by a $2,000 donation from the Office of Development. A reception for all those honored was held immediately following the recognition program. Faculty and staff members were also invited to attend the reception.

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**Buying a Home: The Right Time, the Right Steps**

Are you thinking that this is would be a good time to purchase a home, but wondering how you will finance the purchase. Are you posing such questions as these: What mortgage is best for my financial situation? Should I work with a realtor? How do I purchase a "For Sale by Owner"? What is "affordable housing" all about? All of these areas of potential homeownership will be considered on Tuesday, July 27 from 10:00-12:00 in the Human Resource Development (HRD) Training Facility in another of HRD’s "Meeting Economic Challenges" series. The course will also cover credit considerations, loss mitigation, and refinancing a home loan. There will be a thorough look at the process one goes though during a purchase, from shopping for a home to closing. The session will be facilitated by Todd White, from the City of Auburn's Housing and Community Development, and Roger Royal, from the Auburn University Federal Credit Union. Register in A-Train or contact Pamela Rogers (4-7363 or pkr0001@auburn.edu) with questions.

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http://www.auburn.edu/administration/human_resources/hmews.htm
Lactation Policy

Section 4207 of the new Health Care Reform law (the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) states that employers shall provide breastfeeding employees with "reasonable break time" and a private, non-bathroom place to express breast milk during the workday, up until the child's first birthday.

This requirement, which took effect upon the signing of the law, amends the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). For more information, please see the new personnel policy section 9.21.

Voting

The primary runoff election is scheduled for Tuesday, July 13th. Auburn University encourages all employees to exercise their right to vote.

Employees are normally able to vote before or after work, given the extended poll hours (7:00 am - 7:00 pm). Supervisors should strive to accommodate anyone having an unusual situation relative to voting, to ensure that they're able to cast their ballot.

Voters need to carry one of a wide variety of approved identification, including a driver's license; a photo ID issued by a college or employer; a current bank statement, utility bill, government check or paycheck with the voter's name and address; a valid ID issued by the state or federal government; a current hunting or fishing license; a certified copy of a birth certificate; or a valid Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid or Electronic Benefits Transfer card.

More information about Alabama voting laws can be found at AlabamaVotes.gov.

Spirit of Excellence Winners

Each month AU presents Spirit of Excellence awards to four employees for outstanding service.

Recipients for March 2010 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office/Admin</td>
<td>Jan Lovelace</td>
<td>COSAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Professional</td>
<td>Danielle Fields</td>
<td>Alumni Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Maintenance</td>
<td>Stephanie Williams</td>
<td>Building Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Paraprofessional</td>
<td>Elizabeth Crandall</td>
<td>Clinical Sciences</td>
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Do you know a fellow AU employee whose performance is consistently beyond what is expected? One who exemplifies professionalism and routinely puts forth extra effort? One whose contribution to the department's or university's mission is significant? If so, that person would be a perfect nominee for AU's monthly Spirit of Excellence award. You can link to the nomination form at http://www.auburn.edu/administration/human_resources/forms/spirit.pdf.

Moving? Want to Continue Your Career in Higher Ed?

The Department of Human Resources routinely receives position announcements from other colleges and universities. These are maintained in notebooks in the lobby of our department in 332 James E. Foy Hall. Please feel free to come by to review these during our lobby hours of 7:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m, Monday through Friday.

Your Newsletter Subscription

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