

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

HUMAN RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

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FEATURED HUMAN RESOURCES EMPLOYEE



If you've ever stepped foot in the Human Resources Office in the last 25 years, I am sure you have had the pleasure of meeting Mary Ellen Kamas. Not only that, but you have probably had the opportunity to work

with her and experience her vast knowledge in the area of Human Resources and her willingness to assist you with any issues or questions you may have.

Mary Ellen began her career at MSU in 1979 when she joined the Human Resources Office as a Receptionist. Over the past 25 years, she's taken on additional roles and responsibilities and currently serves as the Assistant Director. Mary Ellen is the person you go to for questions or concerns regarding classified employees on campus. Most of her days are spent handling labor relations issues, such as grievances and investigations, classifications and salary issues. Mary Ellen also spends a great deal of time assisting employees with finding answers to questions and guiding them through the maze of interpreting contracts and policies.

Mary Ellen grew up in the Mankato area and has lived here her entire life, except for 7 years that she spent in Buffalo, New York. She has three married daughters and six grandchildren. Her pastimes include reading, golfing and time with family and friends. Unfortunately, for our office, Mary Ellen will be able to spend more time enjoying her pastimes in just a few years when she plans to retire. We all value her knowledge and dedication to our office.



*The first annual Quarter Century Club Luncheon was a huge success!
Thanks to each of these dedicated employees for their 25 plus years of excellent service to MSU.*

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Having just barely completed the re-entry into the academic year, I'm going to get on my soap box about a particular issue: late submission of appointment paperwork to HR. Many reading this might say "Ugh!" or "That's a lot of crap" (I get this a lot), but this is a real issue. It's real for us in HR but even more real for those whose paperwork is not submitted timely, who can be affected by any or all of the following:

- Not getting paid (what a way to welcome a new faculty or staff member to MSU – "thanks for coming, we're glad you're here, but we aren't going to pay you");
- Not being eligible or delaying eligibility for benefits; some benefits are a one time only option and if paperwork is late and they aren't on the system, they can't get it (e.g. the IFO HRA plan);
- Not having access to a computer or email (which could mean no access to course registrations, advisees, grades, etc., and if you teach on-line – forget it);
- Not getting a MavCard (which soon will mean no access to buildings when the new keyless entry system is up and running);
- Some actually get overpaid and then we have to collect money back, which is never fun or easy (e.g. late submissions of cancelled classes);
- No access to library services.

I just ask everyone to keep this in mind. Whether someone is new or returning, being "on the system" turns out to mean a great deal. HR cannot get someone "on the system" without the correct paperwork. We know there are times when late submissions cannot be avoided, but there are also times when they clearly can. We also promise to do our part in inputting the data as quickly as possible when the paperwork is received and minimizing any errors.

Thanks for listening. I'll step down now.

A BIG THANK YOU FROM COMBINED CHARITIES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

Mark your calendars for January 12, 2004 for Professional Development Day. The Professional Development Task Force and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning are working cooperatively to bring a host of professional development programs to you on this day. There will be programs that appeal to all faculty and staff. Watch for brochures and registration information later in November.

Thank you to all of the donors and volunteers who made the MSU Combined Charities Campaign a success. The Campaign was conducted from October 11 through 29 and included a Kickoff Celebration on October 14. MSU faculty and staff enjoyed refreshments and met with representatives from several charitable organizations. Many who attended were even lucky enough to win some very nice prizes donated by MSU individuals and departments. Of course, the main objective was to raise awareness about the many charitable organizations that serve our communities and need our support. Plus, as state employees, we can easily donate to these organizations through payroll deduction. I am pleased to announce that the number of employees making pledges through payroll deduction increased 63 percent and pledges for 2005 total more than \$20,000. Thanks again for the wonderful response to the Combined Charities Campaign.

BENEFITS INFORMATION

FREE SNIFFLE KITS

Cover your cough, wash your hands, stay home when you are sick. These may seem like no-brainers, but with cold and flu season upon us and a shortage of flu vaccine, it is more important than ever that we follow these practices. Health Services, the Wellness Committee, and HR have partnered to provide posters, e-mails and Sniffle Kits to students, staff and faculty to remind us how to reduce the spread of sickness and take care of ourselves during this cold and flu season. The Sniffle Kits include Tylenol, cough drops, tissues, antibacterial wipes, and helpful information about symptoms, self-care, and fun facts. Pick up a Sniffle Kit in Human Resources, WA325.



WHAT IS STATE EMPLOYEE EXPRESS (SEE)?

State Employee Express (SEE) is the new on-line benefits resource that the Department of Employee Relations (DOER) introduced this fall. SEE allows you to access your insurance and pre-tax benefits information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Using SEE, you can find out about your current coverage, out-of-pocket costs such as health plan deductibles and copays, dependent eligibility, how to file a short or long term disability claim, and much more. SEE also helps you compare health and dental plan options during times like Open Enrollment.

In fact, SEE is so jam-packed with information that it might be overwhelming. However, as DOER refines the system and we become more accustomed to using it, I think we will find it a very useful resource.

You can access SEE through the Self-Service website www.state.mn.us/employee. Sign in using your payroll User ID and password. Click on Benefits and then State Employee Express. Remember to click on Sign Out when you are finished.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Another Open Enrollment has come and gone. With only health insurance, long term disability insurance, and pre-tax benefits open and very few changes in the health insurance coverage, it was a fairly easy Open Enrollment for most people. The biggest change this year was that most of the Open Enrollment information was delivered via the Self-Service web site and State Employee Express (SEE) instead of through the mail. Now that Open Enrollment is over, I would like to remind you of a few things.

- Insurance changes and 2005 pre-tax benefits will take effect on January 1, 2005.
- The January 7, 2005, paycheck will reflect changes in insurance premiums and/or pre-tax account deductions.
- New health insurance cards will be mailed in late December and early January. Check your cards carefully and report any misspelled names, incorrect clinic designations, or missing cards to Therese in Human Resources, 389-6942.
- If you remained with the same insurance carrier but wanted to change primary care clinics for 2005, remember to call your insurance carrier by December 15. The phone number is on the back of your insurance card.
- Long term disability insurance certificates of coverage are available in Human Resources. Contact Therese at 389-6942 or Wendy at 389-2015 if you would like a copy.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT...

Direct Deposits

Faculty and Staff can now change their direct deposit information on the self-service web site. www.state.mn.us/employee. If you prefer to complete a form, please make sure that you obtain the form through the HR office or the HR web site and return it to our office. Faculty and Staff should not complete forms at the Campus Hub or MavCard office. They will not be processed.

Resignations

When an employee resigns, our office needs to receive a UPD indicating the resignation and last day of employment (for unclassified employees) or a PRF with a copy of the resignation letter (for classified employees) as soon as possible, so that the employee is not overpaid. Please call Colleen Isaacs at 389-2191 if the paperwork will not be submitted before the effective date of resignation.

I-9 forms

If a new employee completes the I-9 form in your office, please attach copies of the viewed documentation and send it with the UPD.

W-4's

You can change the amount you have withheld for taxes yourself on the employee self service website at: www.state.mn.us/

EMPLOYMENT TESTING

We would like to remind all employees that HR offers employment testing for clerical positions every Friday at 9:00 a.m. in the new Technology and Teaching Center in the basement of the Memorial Library.

We recently purchased new testing software that is more comprehensive and user friendly than our previous testing package. The new tests are interactive, offer additional test titles and provide scores on different levels such as beginner, intermediate and advanced. We still offer some of the same type of tests as before (Typing, Math, Data Entry, Spelling, Grammar, 10-key and Word Processing), but we now offer tests for spreadsheets, data base management, customer service and others.

Please keep in mind that test scores are valid for one year after the last date taken, and if you are considering applying for a different position within MSU you might want to sign up for testing early, particularly if it has been over a year since you last tested. We are able to test five people during a session. If you are interested in signing up, please contact Johanna Simpson at 389-2017.

Always Keep your
ON-CAMPUS INFO
Current

You can check your ON-CAMPUS info including mailcode, phone, etc. on the people finder located on the MSU web page under Directories. If corrections are needed please complete & submit the ON-CAMPUS INFO CHANGE FORM located at the web address listed below.

<http://www.mnsu.edu/humanres/forms2/OncampusChange.pdf>