The Udder News

Williams College Human Resources

Summertime....

For many of us summer can be just as hectic as the academic year with a slightly different rhythm. We may try and get away for vacation or perhaps this summer, stay-cations, and rejuvenate for the year ahead. We may or may not find time to do those special projects we don’t seem to get to during the school year. The summer has been no different in Human Resources.

We continue to look for ways to integrate the College’s commitment for diversity and sustainability into daily operations. The diversity training program has had an excellent start training over 150 staff to date. Continuing efforts to reduce reliance on paper and streamlining some of the bureaucratic processes is evident by the transition to a more robust online college directory, expanding self-service for changing personal information and online availability of pay statements, a move to a web-based version for the new employee orientation program, and partnering with Financial Aid to restructure the student employment hiring process.

The team in HR continues to collaborate with departments evaluating opportunities for redeploying resources and/or modifying existing practices to better meet the needs resulting from the current fiscal climate. This includes helping staff navigate through what can be a difficult period of transition through listening, expanding the skills one has at their disposal, and suggesting alternative solutions.

We continue to expand the many ways we can better serve and support you. Continue to look for announcements of new initiatives in Udder News as well as on the HR website, Daily Messages, and direct emails.

Enjoy the few remaining days of summer!

-Martha Tetrault

Diversity Training Update

With a little over three months of delivering the diversity workshop “Building a More Inclusive Community”, more than 150 employees have already attended. Workshops have been held once a week and class sizes have been kept small in order to provide an opportunity for all to participate in what has been termed “lively conversation”. A common feedback theme from participants has been that the program was “engaging, informative and not what I expected”. The facilitators for the program took the month of August off to regroup and plan for the upcoming academic year and invitations have already gone out for September with October soon to follow. The following quote sums up the atmosphere we strive for in each of the sessions.

“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.”
Malcolm Forbes
Interview with Aimee Hirz

What city/town are you from? I am originally from Rancho Cucamonga, California, a decent-sized city of 300,000-400,000 people about 40 minutes east of Los Angeles. People on the east coast think that city name is hilarious.

What led you to choose your field? I’ve been focused on art and art history since I was in high school, but my current interest in Public Relations came from an inspirational moment when I saw the job description and thought to myself, “I would be so great at that.” I love what I do at WCMA and feel very inspired by working with the fantastic staff and members of the public.

What do you enjoy most about your job? I most enjoy connecting with people—be it the people I interact with on the phone, in the galleries, or the contacts I make around Berkshire County.

Decaf or regular? Regular, regular, regular. I’ve got to keep the energy high!

What did you want to be when you were 12 years old? At 12? I’d say a writer—I still have tons of old notebooks with all my hand-written stories and poetry.

What was your first job? When I turned 16 I got my very first job as a cashier at Best Buy. 20% off all CDs was a big incentive at the time!

Who are your mentors? I’m very fortunate to be working for the people I consider my mentors. I feel like they have my professional development in mind every step of the way and I’ve grown so much since I took this position.

What is your favorite Berkshire activity? Hiking and picking the seasonal fruit.

Other interesting tidbits about yourself? I’m an avid exerciser and walker (you’ve most likely seen me around town); my alcoholic beverage of choice is a good stout beer or a hefeweizen; I stink at dancing; I love to cook and bake and experiment in the kitchen; I used to be almost fluent in German and wanted to live abroad for the longest time.

If you were an animal what kind of animal would you be? That’s easy! I would either be my cats or my parents’ dogs, talk about living a life of spoiled luxury.

What’s the deal with ‘I before E’? All I know is that I always have to stop and think about it (as above with hefeweizen). That crazy English language!

Staff Council Calls for Nominations

Can the College benefit from your ideas and dedication?

The Staff Council meets monthly to discuss and share input on campus work-life issues such as benefits, policies and programs.

We will soon be accepting self or peer nominations for new members to serve on Staff Council. Please submit a brief statement that explains why you are interested in serving on staff council or why your nominee would make a good council member.

Look for an announcement on daily messages and visit the Staff Council website for more information.

http://wiki.williams.edu/display/facom/Staff+Council

Staff Council Members
2008-2009
Erwin Bernhart
Colleen Bethoney
Dave Boyer
Lisa Briggs
Gail Burda
Dawn Dellea
Gisela Demant
Madeleine DeMarsico
Jenny Dewar
Maggie Driscoll
Danielle Gonzalez, ex officio
Mark Kimball
Kristan Renish
Lynn Taft
Martha Tetrault, ex officio
Terry Waryjasz

“I feel like they have my professional development in mind every step of the way and I’ve grown so much since I took this position.”

Aimee Hirz, Public Relations Assistant, Williams College Museum of Art
S.P.E.C – what it means to Williams

Spouse Partner Employment Counselor (SPEC); the title may include the word employment, but Jill Strawbridge’s role is so much bigger for those moving into the purple valley. She is an ambassador, an advisor, a guide, a counselor, an event planner, and a “matchmaker” (not in the romantic sense).

The SPEC office was originally established in the fall of 2002 to address the career and relocation needs of College spouses and partners. A new employment opportunity affects the whole family, not just the individual seeking the job. The needs and interests of the family is often considered as much as the actual job, salary, and benefits offered. Williams support of this in the creation of the SPEC is unique.

Jill’s return to Human Resources in October 2008 has presented the opportunity to further shape and develop the support provided to spouses and partners who are weighing their options or who have actually relocated. One avenue is her collaboration with members of the Williamstown community developing connections and expanding in-roads for newcomers.

She has also initiated a number of programs that foster networking and integration. One such program is “Going Native” as an introduction to the area. Integration through planned activities may best describe her approach. Events have ranged from snow-shoeing, an information session with a local CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), bee-keeping, and a behind the scenes tour of WTF.

“I am here to encourage and facilitate networking by providing informative, active, yet fun, interactive experiences. My goal is to introduce newcomers (and not so newcomers) to the diverse offerings in our area.”

Helping new individuals discover the various aspects of the Berkshires allows people to meet and interact with other interesting local professionals. Whether someone is looking for a squash league to join, needs help reshaping their resume, identifying an alternative career path, or exploring options for entrepreneurship, Jill is there to guide and help.

Jill continues to cultivate resources in the Berkshire, Bennington, Albany and Troy areas, expanding possible employment opportunities. She coaches spouses and partners individually, as requested, with skills and tips for successful job hunting. “I love working with spouses and partners individually regarding their employment options. I also really enjoy developing relationships with departments as they conduct searches, helping a search may produce better results.”

Jill’s office is located at Mather House or she can be reached at Jill.B.Strawbridge@williams.edu.

http://www.williams.edu/admin/hr/wellness/
SteepleCats ball players visit the Williams Childcare Center for an afternoon pick-up game.

Right: Catching: Teacher, Sally Lemme and Riley at bat.
Above: Teachers: Megan Randall and Sally Lemme along with their School Age class

Check Your Mail for the Annual Dependent Certification Forms

The Annual Certification of Individuals for Health and/or Dental Plan Coverage forms will be mailed in late September to all employees with family medical and/or dental coverage. You will be required to complete the form and indicate the status of all dependents currently covered on your medical/dental plan; imputed income will be assessed for any “non-qualifying individuals” or you will have the option to discontinue their coverage. The IRS defines “non-qualifying individuals” as ex-spouses, same sex domestic partners/spouses and adult children who are no longer financially dependent upon their parent(s). Additional details will be outlined in a letter accompanying the Certification Form. The deadline to return the form is October 30, 2009.

Contact Kris in Benefits with any questions at Kristine.A.Maloney@williams.edu or ext. 4478

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