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Management Update - November, 2009

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H1N1 Flu Update

In response to widespread cases of H1N1 flu in Ohio and the increased activity on campus and in the community, Kent State University has initiated its campus pandemic plan by activating the Kent State University Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The goal of the EOC is to provide management as the university transitions from the pandemic mitigation and preparedness phases to a response phase of operations. While university business will continue as usual, activating the EOC is a management tool that allows the university to manage its resources and to respond and make decisions quickly. More information on the EOC can be found on the university's [Flu Update Web site](#) at www.kent.edu/flu.

Several resources are also available to help answer employees' questions and alleviate concerns about the spread of H1N1. This includes [tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) on how to stay healthy in the workplace, particularly if a co-worker becomes ill and is presumed to have the H1N1 flu. Human Resources has also prepared a list of [FAQs](#) for managers on how to deal with work absences due to the flu or flu-related symptoms. Managers are encouraged to review the list and to be prepared for any employee absences in their area.

New Staff Award to Recognize Excellence

A new recognition program for Kent State staff is being introduced this month. The President's Excellence Award will recognize staff members who have demonstrated exceptional performance in advancing one or more of the goals of the university's Excellence agenda. The award is open to full-time classified and unclassified employees at all campuses who have been employed by Kent State for a minimum of one year and who are in good standing with the university.

The nomination period begins today (Nov. 2) and runs through **Nov. 23**. Nominations are for performance during the previous fiscal year and may come from peers, an employee's supervisor or other leader in his/her department or a faculty member. The recipients will be announced in January, and each recipient will receive a \$1,000 award. [View information on the award, including criteria and how to submit a nomination.](#)

Please share this information with your staff and encourage them to nominate a colleague whom they feel is deserving of the award. If you have questions, contact Carla Wyckoff at 330-672-5857 or cwyckof1@kent.edu.

Planning for the Holidays

As your department makes plans to celebrate the upcoming holidays, please be aware that the practice of funding holiday celebrations established last year will continue in 2009. That means that any departmental or unit holiday parties, lunches, etc. should not be funded from university resources, including Kent State University Foundation resources. Parties and celebrations should be "pot luck" or funded from personal contributions.

The university will also continue the practice of operating on a holiday schedule during the last two weeks of December. The holiday schedule will run from **Dec. 24, 2009**, through **Jan. 1, 2010**. During that time, all nonessential operations will be closed at all Kent State campuses. Eligible classified and unclassified employees will receive paid leave for **Dec. 28, 29, 30 and 31**. The paid leave is in addition to the paid holidays of **Dec. 24, 25 and Jan. 1**. Full- and part-time employees who normally accrue vacation throughout the year are eligible to receive paid leave time for the four additional days.

Next month HR will publish a list of departments that will be open during this period; managers will also

receive information on how to record leave and pay guidelines for staff not working and those required to work during the holiday schedule.

Upcoming Seminar on Hiring International Employees

The Office of University Counsel will sponsor a half-day seminar on *What You Need to Know When Hiring International Employees* on Monday, **Nov. 16**, from 9 a.m. - noon in the Moulton Hall Ballroom. The seminar will cover a wide range of topics related to hiring international employees including:

- Basic terms and current issues;
- International faculty and professionals;
- Student employees;
- Postdocs and other exchange visitors;
- Employment of foreign nationals as independent contractors; and
- Kent State's Permanent Residency Assistance program.

The seminar is open to the university community and faculty and staff who are involved with the hiring of employees for their department are encouraged to attend. Registration is required and can be completed online at www.kent.edu/hr/register. Once there, look for the *facilitator-led learning opportunities* link and then search for *University Counsel* events.

For questions about the seminar, contact **Mike Pfahl**, associate university counsel, at mpfahl@kent.edu or 330-672-2982. For registration questions, contact **Carla Wyckoff** at cwyckof1@kent.edu or 330-672-5857.

No Increase in Minimum Wage

Managers of student employees should be aware that there will be no increase in Ohio's minimum wage for 2010. The minimum wage will remain \$7.30 per hour for nontipped employees.

According to the state constitution, Ohio's minimum wage will increase on Jan. 1 of each year by the rate of inflation. The wage is tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for urban wage earners and clerical workers for the 12-month period prior to September. Since the index declined by 0.2 percent during that period, there will be no change to the state minimum wage. If you have questions, contact **Ami Hollis**, associate director, Career Services, at 330-672-2360.

Information Services Seeks Your Feedback

Kent State's Division of Information Services (IS) would like employee feedback on the systems and technology support it provides. All Kent State faculty and staff are encouraged to complete a brief online survey, which is accessible at <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB229RUG62WD9>. Input will be taken through Friday, **Nov. 13**. All responses are anonymous.

Feedback from the survey will be used as the division embarks upon a new strategic planning initiative. Last updated in 2006, the strategic plan for IS serves as a blueprint for its resources and strategic investments. The objectives of the planning process are to:

- Ensure alignment of the division's efforts to Kent State's mission and priorities;
- Confirm and set priorities;
- Enhance service levels;
- Secure financial and other resources; and
- Enhance relationships.

The survey is a critical step in examining the current state of IS and provides the framework for understanding existing strengths, weaknesses and capabilities. The survey takes only a few minutes to complete and honest, constructive comments and suggestions are appreciated. If you have questions about the survey or the strategic planning process, please contact **Jennifer Goings Smith**, IS executive director of planning, security and disaster recovery, at jgoings@kent.edu or at 330-672-7170.

Calling All CommonSpot Users

Now that the university's new Web site has been unveiled, the migration has begun to transition other university Web sites into the new design. The university's goal is to have all current clients, colleges and academic Web sites transitioned to this new look, via its free content management system, by **Feb. 28, 2010**. In some instances, this deadline has been accelerated. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences and academic departments in that college should have their sites completed by **Dec. 23**.

Because this redesign brings with it the need to move every page in existing CommonSpot Web sites to a new database, anyone in your department who uses or will use the CommonSpot tool will need to take a training course. To keep the project moving, a weekly series of open labs will be hosted to support end users and provide ongoing training. Each session will take approximately two hours, and training materials will also be available online.

Seating is limited, so be sure to register. However, keep in mind that you must meet with a University Communications and Marketing Web team member prior to registering for an open lab session. The open labs will be held in Room 333 of the Kent State Library, from **Nov. 18 through Jan. 25, 2010**. A schedule of the open labs and registration is available online at <http://www.kent.edu/ucm/>.

Contact webteam@kent.edu for more information.

Save the Date for Veterans Day

Kent State's annual Veterans Day observance will be held on Thursday, **Nov. 12**, at 3:30 p.m. in Room 306 of the Kent Student Center. This year's theme is "Honoring All Who Served ... A Tradition of Service." In keeping with the university's celebration of its Centennial, the program will take a look back at the history of the Army and Air Force ROTC programs at Kent State. A reception will follow the program.

The observance is open to the university community, with a special invitation to faculty and staff in the military or who have family members in the military. You can RSVP to **Joshua Rider** at 330-672-0510 or jrider@kent.edu by **Nov. 6**.

One More Week for Open Enrollment

Please remind employees in your unit that the annual Open Enrollment period for selection of health benefits ends at 11:59 p.m. on **Nov. 8**. Information pertaining to the benefit selections for 2010 is available on the [Human Resources Web site](#). The site also has a prerecorded video outlining the options available for next year. If you have questions, contact the Benefits hotline at 330-672-MyHR (6947) or benefits@kent.edu.

Give Generously to United Way

Please remind employees in your unit that the annual United Way fundraising campaign is underway. A gift to the United Way will make a tangible, positive difference in the lives of Portage County residents every day. Kent State is the largest employer in Portage County, and as such our donations comprise a substantial portion of the operating funds of the United Way of Portage County.

Upcoming United Way events on the Kent Campus include the annual Pasta Dinner on **Nov. 13** from 5 to 8 p.m., in the Kent Student Center. Tickets are \$10 in advance for adults; students and senior adults are \$7; children age five to 11 are \$5.50. There is also a new take-out option this year. Tickets are available by contacting **Peta Denno** at 330-672-6322 or pdenno@kent.edu. All tickets will be \$1 more if purchased at the door.

Nov. 13 is also the night of the Kent State men's basketball home opener, so if you have or are considering purchasing tickets to the game, you can take care of dinner right on campus by including the pasta dinner in your evening plans.

For more information on United Way of Portage County and to donate, please go to the [Web site](#).

Dates to Remember:

- **Nov. 1** Daylight Savings Time ends; clocks turn back one hour.
- **Nov. 3** General Election Day
- **Nov. 11** Veterans Day (university closed)
- **Nov. 12** Veterans Day program, 3:30 p.m., Room 306 Kent Student Center. More information is available in this issue.
- **Nov. 19** Faculty Club, hosted by the colleges of Architecture and Business Administration, 5-7 p.m., Schwebel Room. For more information contact LaShonda Taylor at ltaylo33@kent.edu.

Cultural Dates:

November is National American Indian Heritage Month

- **Nov. 1** All Saints Day
 - **Nov. 9** World Freedom Day
 - **Nov. 24-29** The Hajj: Islamic observance
 - **Nov. 26** Thanksgiving (university closed Nov. 26 and 27)
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Tell Us What You Think

This newsletter is designed to keep you, the managers and supervisors, informed. Please take a few minutes to let us know what you think of the publication, along with any comments or suggestions. You may contact us at managersfeedback@kent.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.

For information about events sponsored by Human Resources, please check out the [HR e-calendar](#) and share the information with your staff.