

# HR&D UPDATE

Human Resources & Diversity (HR&D)

April 2009

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Welcome to  
UW-Whitewater

Elizabeth Woolever, UC.



## EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS

UW Whitewater Chancellor's Office and Human Resources & Diversity will be celebrating State Employee Recognition and Employee Service Awards on Wednesday, May 6, 2009, 3:00 p.m. at the Hamilton Center in the UC. Employees reaching a milestone in 2008 or 2009 shall soon receive a letter. If you do not in the next few weeks, and feel you should have, please contact Tara Boyette, x1397 or boyettet@uww.edu.

## HEALTH INSURANCE SURVEY

The Dept of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) has contracted with Synovate to conduct a health insurance satisfaction survey of a sample of insured participants covered through the group health insurance program. This study is important because the results will be published in a health plan report card in the 2010 *It's Your Choice* booklet and will also be considered during health plan premium negotiations.

Randomly selected employees will receive an email from Synovate starting the week of March 23. The UW System has approved the use of work time for employees to complete the survey during scheduled work hours without loss of pay. Employees should choose a time to complete the survey that does not interfere with work duties. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

## TIAA-CREF

There's still time to make an appointment with a TIAA-Cref representative to discuss your financial goals. Representatives will be on campus on April 28, 29, & 30 in the University Center from 9am-4pm. To schedule an appointment, call toll-free (800)-842-2005, extension 255674 or on-line at <http://www.tiaa-cref.org/moc>



## UPCOMING MAILINGS-STAFF BENEFITS & WRS STATEMENTS

There will be a change in the distribution of the annual Staff Benefits Statements. Benefit Statements will be sent electronically in April to applicable employees. Employees will receive an email with their statement as an attachment. The statement will itemize the benefit plans you are currently enrolled in as well as any coverage amounts for those plans. It lists annual premiums the employee is paying as well as the annual premiums the University is paying. More information will be sent as soon as our office receives the information from our System Benefits Office.

Employees covered under the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) will receive their annual statements in late April or early May. This statement reflects employee retirement account contributions and effective interest earned in 2008. Please retain these statements with your personal records. Contact your payroll and benefit representative with questions.

## UNCLASSIFIED LEAVE REPORTS

Unclassified employees receive monthly leave reports as pdf attachments via email. It is important for unclassified employees to complete and submit the report to their supervisor each month, even if no leave was used. If leave reports are missing, sick leave earnings for the fiscal year will be capped at 8.5 days for annual appointments and 6.4 days for academic-year appointments. If a duplicate report is needed, please contact Human Resources & Diversity or use the generic form found on the HR&D website under "Documents."

## EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNT (ERA)

**REMINDER—2008 ERA claims must be filed by April 15.** Eligible claims for 2008 are payable for expenses incurred from January 1, 2008 to March 15, 2009. Funds left in your account after claims are processed will be forfeited. More information is available at: [http://etf.wi.gov/members/benefits\\_era.htm](http://etf.wi.gov/members/benefits_era.htm)



## **FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)**

Employees are reminded to contact HR&D when they will be away from work due to a serious health condition or to take care of an immediate family member with a serious health condition. Employees must complete an FMLA request form and send to HR&D. Once HR&D receives the request, employees will receive a notice that indicates if the employee is eligible for FMLA. Employees will receive a Physician Certification Form that needs to be completed by the physician. Once all the information is received in our office, the employee will receive a Designation Notice which approves or denies the leave under the FMLA provisions and will identify if any other information is needed. A copy of this form will then be sent to the employee's supervisor. FMLA information and forms can be found at: <http://www.uww.edu/adminaffairs/hr/fmla/index.html>.

## **MAKING WORK PAY TAX CREDIT**

New tax tables have been issued by the IRS under the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009. The new federal tax tables will be effective with paychecks issued on or after April 1, 2009. Eligible taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes of less than \$75,000 may receive up to \$400, and married couples filing jointly with adjusted gross incomes of less than \$150,000 may receive up to \$800. The tax credit will be provided through the new tax tables. If you are eligible, federal tax withholdings will be reduced. Even if you are not eligible for the tax credit, your withholding may also be reduced under the new tax tables. For more information please visit: <http://www.bussvc.wisc.edu/uwpc/tax-information-notice-200903.html>.



## **HR&D DIRECTOR'S CORNER—"Give No Objection to Personal Protection"**

My favorite sport is hockey. Whenever the ice froze, I would be on the pond – practicing my moves and shots, or playing with my school mates. My first career dream was to be professional hockey player. But I soon learned that being pretty good on a pond in Crete, IL wouldn't even qualify me to be the bucket boy for the Junior A teams in Canada. Nonetheless, I played on various recreational leagues thru high school and college and enjoyed every minute. Way back in that prehistoric time, the pros didn't wear helmets, so I determined that I need not wear a helmet either. My reasoning was typical for a 17 year old: pros don't need helmets; helmets are uncomfortable; helmets obstruct your vision and make sweat run into your eyes; I'll never get hurt; and even if I take one in the chops, that face was never destined to be on Hollywood's silver screen anyway. One day we played a team on the South Side of Chicago. The linesman told me I needed to wear a helmet, and I told him I didn't. As the dialog escalated, the rink's General Manager came over to me and put things in a perspective that I could understand. He said, "Look kid, da helmet is for your own protection. Just because you're foolish enough to play without a helmet doesn't mean that I'm foolish enough to let you. You wanna skate on my ice, you put on a helmet. You wanna argue, you go to dat pay phone over dare and call my lawyers." So I bought a helmet. It bears the dents and cracks and scrapes of many errant sticks and pucks, collisions with goal posts, and crashes into the boards. That \$6 investment paid strong dividends in protecting the paltry amount of gray matter that I started with. And, the rules of that rink led to valuable, long term protection for me, despite my lapse in initiative to protect myself.

In a far broader, more important, more professional sense, our government sometimes implements rules that help in our protection. Such is the case with FMLA – the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. The intent of FMLA is to allow employees to balance their work and family life by taking reasonable unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons. After an approved and compliant FMLA leave, the employer must restore the employees to their old job – or offer a similar position that has equivalent duties and pay. That's why if you're out for an extended period, usually three days or more, your HR Payroll and Benefits Specialist may contact you to complete FMLA paperwork. Please do so because the intent of FMLA is to protect your job. Moreover, your action is required. As the ice rink manager once explained to me, "the rules are simple – you gotta do it." In a recent District court ruling, the court determined that employees must *provide sufficient notice of their intent to take FMLA leave*. The Court went on to say, *The FMLA does not require employers to play Sherlock Holmes, scanning an employee's work history for clues as to the undisclosed, true reason for an employee's absence. There is simply nothing in the record (of this case) that would excuse the employee from failing to notify the employer of the employee's need for FMLA*. So, for your own protection, please take the initiative to notify us when you take an extended leave that falls under FMLA. That action is required to preserve your rights to job protection and continuance.

