The purpose of HR Intercom is to reinforce the partnership of the Office of Human Resources with all University departments by keeping the University community informed of HR policies, programs, issues, and points of interest.

News

Health Plan Changes for 2021

In an ongoing effort to provide high-quality and affordable health care to our faculty and staff, the Office of Human Resources is announcing key changes for the upcoming plan year. Beginning January 1, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield will be the sole administrator of the University’s health care plans. For many years, the University offered two options for health plan administration—Excellus and Aetna. Consolidating to Excellus, which 80 percent of our faculty and staff enrolled in healthcare currently use, will result in cost reductions that will help curb increases in healthcare costs for both the University and employees while providing first-rate health care. A special website has been created for Aetna members to help with the transition, which will be made during open enrollment this fall.

Also effective January 1 is a new University-sponsored Medicare Marketplace for retirees through Via Benefits, which offers a greater number of medical and prescription drug plans from multiple insurance companies in the geographic areas of our retirees. Other benefits include a Health Reimbursement Arrangement fund, more individualized coverage, expert advice, and year-round customer service. The University is also changing how we evaluate eligibility for retirement. Under the new program, employees who were hired on or after January 1, 1996, will receive the full University contribution at 15 years of service, instead of 25. The new service requirement may be met by employment at the University as well as at other higher education institutions. More information is available online regarding the changes to retirement.

For more details about these changes, please visit the Human Resources website.

Vacation Balance

As we enter the last few months of the calendar year, the University wants to ensure that faculty and staff maintain access to earned vacation time. Please keep in mind that at the beginning of the first full pay period on January 1, 2021, a maximum of one and a half year’s (1.5 year’s) accrual may be carried forward. Employees can view their vacation balance as of their last paycheck in HRMS. It is important to discuss your vacation plans for the remainder of the year with your manager or supervisor to avoid any lost vacation time.

Workplace Flexibility

Employees who would like to request flexibility in their current work arrangements should start by discussing their needs with their immediate supervisor (manager, department chair, program director, or unit leader). Supervisors are encouraged to work with their employees and their HR Business Partner.

As we all continue to navigate the current environment, a flexible approach to work will not only support our colleagues but also allow the University to move forward in fulfilling its educational mission. As reminder, the following resources continue to be available to support supervisors and staff in exploring flexible work scheduling:

- Life-Work Connections Employee Assistance Program
- University Intercessor

University Vision and Values Reminder

In a time of great anxiety, frustration, and distress, it may feel as though our country has become more divided. The Office of Human Resources encourages our community to demonstrate tolerance and respect for differing viewpoints based on our shared vision and values of equity, leadership, integrity, openness, respect, and accountability. As the country readies for election season, we understand and encourage faculty and staff to be active and engaged citizens in their personal affairs while demonstrating University values consistent with the University’s Policy on Political Activities (Policy 112) when at work. It is up to each of us to ensure our community is welcoming to all and is a place where all can thrive.
Manager’s Tip

Updated Careers Site

With the new Careers site, managers are strongly encouraged to ask external applicants to apply for positions via the University’s webpages. Please avoid sharing a link to a job opening. With the Job Opening ID information, an applicant can locate the position via the All Other Openings link. For internal applicants, employees can apply via their Self-Service pages in HRMS. For questions, please contact the HR Service Desk.

Planning Ahead for Employee Returns

Before an employee returns to work from furlough, there are a few steps needed to ensure employees feel their work tools are familiar. Appropriate PAF forms need to be completed in advance and submitted to HR to ensure timely return for an employee within the HRMS system. Their return in the system assists the HRMS team to reinstate any security permissions requested by your HR Business Partner. Security permissions in HRMS are reinstated once an employee has returned to work. For questions, please contact the HR Service Desk.

Learning & Development

Get Back-to-School with Career Development Classes

URMC Learning & Development is pleased to announce that we are now offering career development learning opportunities for all Medical Center staff. Classes will be offered virtually until further notice and include topics that will foster key workplace skills:

- The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback
- Communication Essentials
- Effective Email Communications
- Navigating Beyond Conflict
- The Secrets of Successful Time Management

For class descriptions, dates, and registration, please search the titles in MyPath.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Preventing Harassment and Discrimination

On August 3, employees received notice that the University’s annual course on Preventing Harassment and Discrimination launched through MyPath. This course is not only required by state and federal law but is also critical to the mission and values of the University. The September 30 deadline is approaching quickly. If you have not completed the course yet, please work with your supervisor to schedule time to complete this important requirement. If you have any questions regarding the training, visit the online FAQs or contact the University’s Office of Learning and Organizational Development at UR_OLOD@rochester.edu.

Total Rewards

Career Path Modernization Project

With the full support of the Office of the President, the University is embarking on the Career Path Modernization (CPM) Project, an initiative that was planned long before COVID-19 entered our lives and will have a profound effect on so many who currently work at our great institution or will one day join us. This project reflects our commitment to creating a supportive, equitable, and inclusive work environment where everyone can thrive and to making the University a model employer that attracts, engages, and motivates the best people.

The CPM Project is a multi-year endeavor to transform our 40-year-old job description, job title, career path, and compensation program. Job titles and descriptions will be updated to accurately reflect the work being performed by our employees. The project will also establish a new pay grade structure that aligns salary ranges to the regional job market and appropriately compensates our employees with fair and competitive salaries. Importantly, CPM will provide clear career paths for employee development, which is of great importance to our staff, and develop policies that reinforce the University’s Meliora Values and its commitment to equity and inclusion.

We anticipate that it will take approximately three years to complete this initiative. In that time, the CPM Project team will review and update more than 1,000 non-faculty and non-union positions across the College, Eastman School of Music, Medical Center, graduate and professional schools, and Memorial Art Gallery.

We will also be building a website later this year, where we will post important milestones and information about the CPM Project. In the meantime, please reach out to your HR Business Partner with any questions.

Upcoming NYS Salary Threshold Conversion

New York’s salary threshold establishes the rate at which hourly-paid employees are entitled to overtime pay. At the end of the year, this threshold will increase from $46,020 per year to $48,750 annually or $937.50/week. As in the past, we will convert any salaried employees who fall below this new threshold to hourly-paid employees; this conversion will be effective September 27, 2020. Notification on this was distributed to impacted managers and employees in August.
University Home Ownership Incentive Program
To assist with the dream of home ownership, the University has teamed up with the City of Rochester and several banks/credit unions to offer regular full-time and part-time faculty and staff, residents and fellows $9,000 toward the purchase of a primary residence. For more information, visit the Human Resources website and explore our qualifying neighborhoods for your new home.

TIAA Offers Virtual Sessions with a Financial Consultant
Given the continuing need for social distancing, TIAA is offering complimentary virtual one-on-one consultation sessions, to help you with your retirement and other financial goals. Sessions are being held over the phone or via video conference. Go to tiaa.org/URschedule or call 800-410-6497 to schedule your personal consultation.

Upcoming Events
(Click links to register)
Well-U’s Fall Wellness Challenge: Yo Ho Ho
Monday, September 21
Register for Well-U’s 6-week challenge allowing you to compete against (or with) your mateys using the activities that you like best. The challenge runs September 21 to November 1 and, no matter what your activity level, there are chances for YOU to win.

Nutrition: A Macro Perspective
Tuesday, September 22
Join Well-U’s lifestyle management team virtually to learn how to make them work for your health goals.

Well-U Biometric Screening Appointments
Get out of your office, keep your health on track, earn money, and feel great about your forward motion. Schedule your appointment now at Helen Wood Hall.

Please see the University Calendar for all updates to Well-U events and programs.

WELL-U Health Tip: Beyond the Mat – Yoga for Wellbeing
"I'm not flexible enough, I can't even touch my toes!"
"I need to lose weight first."
"I don't own any yoga clothes."

Have any of these thoughts crossed your mind and convinced you that you can't do yoga? Silence! Yoga is not only for everybody, it is for every BODY, no matter the shape, size, color, what you are wearing, or whether you can touch your toes to your nose or not. Here's a little secret: the only thing that matters in any yoga class is - are you breathing?

Seems almost too simple to be true, right? You could go to a class and the instructor could be saying all the poses in Sanskrit (yoga language) and all you have to do is pay attention to your breath. The movements are optional. Am I hearing this right? I don't have to wrap myself up like a pretzel and wear special pants to do yoga? Nope! Just keep breathing. The intention behind the practice of yoga is to develop a connection between your breath and your body so that they become one. No one is ever expected to show up to their mat perfect. The mat is a place to comfortably make mistakes, to sweat, to be imperfect, to practice, to learn, to grow, to breathe, to move, to be still, to connect with yourself, your breath, and your body. The benefits of yoga extend far beyond the mat.

6 Ways Yoga Can Improve Your Life:

1. Reduce Stress: Yoga reduces the secretion of cortisol, the primary stress hormone.
2. Decrease Depression: The lower your cortisol levels, the less influence of serotonin which is a neurotransmitter associated with depression.
3. Relieve Anxiety: Yoga is a form of meditation that helps to improve breathing.
4. Sleep: Yoga increases the secretion of the hormone melatonin.
5. Improve Heart Health: Yoga reduces many of the risk factors for heart disease by lowering blood pressure, pulse rate, and cholesterol levels.
6. Reduce Inflammation & Chronic Pain: Yoga helps build muscle strength and increase flexibility & endurance while minimizing inflammatory markers & fatigue.

Interested in exploring more ways to thrive? Partner with a wellness coach with the condition management coaching program to learn how to move, eat, sleep and manage your way to better health. Condition management wellness coaching is available to eligible individuals as part of Well-U.

Contacting HR Intercom:
HR Intercom is distributed through @Rochester and URMC This Week on a ten-month basis: January through July and September through November. If you have comments or questions about HR Intercom, please contact: Samantha.burkett@rochester.edu