



## ***HR Continues Progress on Six Point Plan***

As part of the Division of Human Resources' Six Point Plan, William M. Mercer (Mercer), an international compensation consultant, has been engaged to develop an institute-wide approach to compensation. Mercer has begun working with the Division to learn more about pay practices at Rensselaer.

The next step will be for representatives from Mercer to meet with members of the President's Cabinet, Deans and an advisory group that will be established to learn more about our current pay practices and define pay expectations.

## ***Check Your Pay Stub!!***

It's a good practice to periodically check your pay stub to be sure that the appropriate benefit deductions are being made.

Many times, either through year-end activity or changes in enrollments, the appropriate benefit deductions are not made. Also, be sure you are paying for the appropriate level of coverage for the medical and dental plans. Many participants think to change to a lower level of coverage when the children are no longer dependents, but many employees do not also change the level of dental coverage. This additional coverage not only causes you to pay more than is necessary, but also Rensselaer pays for coverage that is not necessary.

Changes to the medical and dental plans can only be made effective each January 1 unless you have had a "qualifying event" (spouse changes employment status, birth of a child, etc.) Qualifying events must be reported within 30 days of the event.

If you are not currently participating in the supplemental retirement program, you may enroll for the first of any month. Be sure to request a Maximum Exclusion Allowance calculation to determine the amount that you may shelter from taxes.

## ***New Rensselaer ID Numbers Coming Soon***

Recent New York State legislation prohibits universities from using social security numbers as key identification numbers for students. This legislation is effective July 1, 2001, and Rensselaer is currently working to ensure compliance with this new legislation.

The BANNER system currently uses the social security number as the key identification number for all students and employees. Because the population of the entire campus is maintained in the same pool within BANNER, any change to the student ID must be similarly applied to the employee ID. Thus, every student and employee will be assigned a new Rensselaer Identification Number (RIN). The new RIN will be made available to each student and employee during the summer of 2001.

Rensselaer identification cards currently have the social security number printed on them. Every student and employee will need to obtain a new card that will have the new RIN printed on it. Current ID cards will need to be exchanged for the new ID card, so do not discard your current ID card. Any comments or concerns can be sent to:  
RIN-L@lists.rpi.edu.

## ***Kiosk Now Available in HR Office***

A computer is now available for employee use in the Human Resources office, which is located at 2144 Burdett Avenue. The computer is set up in a private kiosk with a local printer, and provides access to the Internet and to Microsoft Word. If you don't have Internet access elsewhere, this is a great place to come take a look at the Human Resources website, which can be found at [www.rpi.edu/dept/hr](http://www.rpi.edu/dept/hr).

## ***KUDOS***

*Kudos to the Rensselaer at Hartford staff for coming together in the spirit of volunteerism to make a difference in their community and to have a positive impact on important and valuable causes.*

*In February, Rensselaer at Hartford celebrated National Engineers Week with a contest to guess the number of drywall screws in a five-gallon jug. At the conclusion of the contest, the drywall screws were donated to the Greater Hartford Habitat for Humanity.*

## ***VISA Information***

The H-1B program is a prompt, lawful way for U.S. employers to hire foreign-born professionals on a temporary basis. This program allows U.S. businesses to recruit and hire the best-qualified candidates for around the world, and compete on a level playing field with foreign companies in such key industries as high-tech, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and education.

Generally, the H-1B process is a three-step process which requires the following:

**Obtaining of Prevailing Wage Approval.** This is usually obtained from the New York State Department of Labor and as of the date of this Notice it could take approximately 4 to 5 weeks to obtain such approval, if there are no problems such as New York State Department of Labor backlogs, computer failures, etc.

**Obtaining Labor Condition Application Approval.** This is obtained from the United States Department of Labor. A new "Faxback" system has been put into place recently and there appears to be a number of problems with it. It can take anywhere from 2 to 6 weeks, or more, to obtain such approval, depending upon the computer problems experienced by the US Department of Labor.

**Obtaining INS approval.** Once the above Prevailing Wage approval and Labor Condition Approval are obtained, the I-129 (H-1B) petition is prepared by the attorney, signed by Human Resources and submitted to INS for its approval. As of the date of this notice, INS is formally notifying petitioners it is taking 60 to 90 days to adjudicate I-129 petitions. As of April 30, 2001, INS was processing I-129 cases it received prior to March 15, 2001. That is a 45-day backlog. In addition, due to a 100% increase in the number of petitions filed for April, 2001, there is a backlog in the mailroom causing a

possible 30-day delay in data entry and sending Receipt Notices from Vermont Service Center (INS). The 45-day backlog plus the 30-day data entry delay, plus a 90 day processing time means a probable 5 and ½ month wait, or more, for INS to process an H-1B petition. INS is currently working on reducing these delays.

## ***The Changing Face of Rensselaer***

### New Hires

#### **Chester Burzynski**

*Systems App. Dev., Administration Systems Support*

#### **John Amodeo**

*Business Analyst, Ctr for Advanced Technology Office*

#### **Christine Bess**

*Associate Director, Extension Programs*

#### **Michelle Campbell**

*Receptionist III, LRC*

#### **Webster Carroll**

*Computer Repair Specialist, Management Academics*

#### **Brian Gabriel**

*Coord. of Program Ops., PDE Program Operations*

#### **Peter Harris**

*Technical Sales Specialist, CIS Campus Comp. Store*

#### **Deborah Kerwin**

*HR Assistant, Human Resources*

#### **Jude Klein**

*Recruiter, Human Resources*

#### **Reuben Knoblauch**

*Officer I, Public Safety Office*

#### **Thomas Ricciuti**

*Sr. Env. Specialist, Environmental Services*

#### **Linda Veiga**

*Clerk Specialist II, Campus Maintenance Center*

#### **Danette Vigil**

*HR Assistant, Human Resources*

#### **Jennifer Ward**

*Environmental Specialist I, Environmental Services*

#### **Amy Windisch**

*Marketing/Site Administrator, P&DE*