

HR Polytechnote

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2004

WELCOME

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Gregory Rivera	Wanda Skopayko
Cailin McCafferty	Douglas Laremore
William Biggs	James Phelps
Matthew Washock	Scott Card
Scott Reynolds	Barbara Brown
Silas Jennings	Dennis Wood

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GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Deborah Altenburg
Patricia Parker-Casey

HUMAN RESOURCES

Peter Caracappa	Leigh Kopcuzk
James MacLain	

LALLY SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY

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Lawrence Ruff	

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Carolyn Marbley

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

Carol Trifaro	Bridget Beelen
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STUDENT LIFE

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Jill Bruins	

RETIREE RECOGNITION

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Elaine O'Grady
Bill Jennings '66
Prof. A. Bruce Carlson
George Brown
James Oeffler
Dr. Robert Athanasiou '62
Leslie Winner



HOYTS MOVIE PASSES

On sale for \$6.50 in HR

Stop by to purchase them and take advantage of the great savings!

Published by the Division of Human Resources

ANNOUNCING RENSSELAER'S NEW ONLINE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The Human Resources Division will begin utilization of an online employment service. The new system is designed to address the needs of University recruitment and to provide new technology to simplify the employment process. It will replace paper applications and make applying for a job easier for job seekers and faster for hiring managers!

In January 2004 HR began working to identify key service needs for the employment process. After extensive research, PeopleAdmin, Inc., was chosen to provide the software for a state-of-the-art system to simplify and improve the employment process at Rensselaer.

Implementation is slated for the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2004. Further information will be provided as implementation of the new process nears. □

TOTAL COMPENSATION INITIATIVE

The Division of Human Resources has been working with the leadership team in the Division of Institute Advancement to finalize career ladders, position classification, and titles. Implementation of the new structure is planned for the third quarter of FY04. □

THE DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES WELCOMES NEW MANAGER

Mr. James MacLain '95 has been hired as the Manager for Human Resources Information Systems. He assumed the responsibility for the management and oversight of information systems related to the core Human Resource functions effective January 2004.

Mr. MacLain has nearly 10 years in the information technology field. Most recently he held the position of Systems Analyst in the Department of Integrated Administrative Computing Solutions in the Division of the CIO where he was responsible for providing administrative computing solutions to campus. Mr. MacLain holds a degree in Management with a concentration in Information Systems and Marketing from the Lally School of Management and Technology at Rensselaer. □

HEALTH CARE SPENDING AT A FEVERISH LEVEL

Federal figures show medical costs soared to a record \$1.7 trillion, almost 15% of the economy in 2003. This represents on average of more than \$5,800 for every American.

Health care spending accounts for fifteen percent of the nation's economy, the largest share on record according to the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid. Health care spending is projected to outpace growth in the rest of the economy for the next 10 years and by 2013, the annual spending on health care is expected to reach \$3.4 trillion and be more than 18% of the economy.

The Department of Health and Human Services said that health care spending shot up 7.8 percent in 2003, which followed the largest increase in 11 years in 2002. That represents an average of \$5,800 for each person in the United States.

The growing demand for prescription drugs, hospital services and rises in the number of admissions, the length of hospital stays, the cost of malpractice insurance and the wages and benefits of hospital employees, including nurses are contributing factors.

The Division of Human Resources will continue to monitor and analyze these trends in order to continue to offer the most competitive, comprehensive benefit offering at the most reasonable cost. □

THE NEW SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT PROGRAM 457(B)

Attention: All Executive level faculty and staff, please join Curtis Powell, Vice President for Human Resources, and Christopher Trombetta of TIAA-CREF on Wednesday, March 10 from 10:30-11:30AM at the Heffner Alumni House Conference Center to hear about the new 457(b) supplemental retirement program.

For more information please contact Jim Sinnock, Assistant Manager of Retirement, at extension 6369 or sinnoj@rpi.edu.

WHAT IS NEW IN YOUR BENEFITS PROGRAM FOR 2004

Key benefits plan features and modifications for 2004 include:

New Cards for Rensselaer HMO and Rensselaer Health Plan Cardholders

All Rensselaer HMO and Rensselaer Health Plan (RHP) members will receive new cards for the plan year beginning January 1, 2004. These cards will reflect the prescription drug co-pay structure and the co-pay structure for physician visits.

Medical Flex Spending Account Limit Increased

Flex Spending is a great way to save money on any health related costs that are not covered under your health or dental insurance plan. This year the limit will be increased to \$3K. By putting away money in your Flexible Spending Account you save Federal, State, and FICA taxes. This is an annual benefit and any monies contributed must be expended by the end of the plan year.

Rensselaer Health Plan Vision Benefits

Now you can visit any eye care professional for Eye Glass Frames/Lenses/Contacts under the Rensselaer Health Plan. The in-network requirement to obtain services at Empire Vision only has been eliminated.

Long Term Disability Plan Changes

All active, regular, full-time employees will now be covered under Basic LTD at no cost. The employer subsidy will increase from 75% to 100% for basic LTD coverage for 60% of pay starting after the 90th calendar day of disability. The elimination period has changed from 180 calendar days to 90 calendar days.

Dental Plan Yearly Maximum Increases

Dental premiums for all eligible employees will remain the same for calendar year 2004! Additionally, to provide a richer benefit we have increased the yearly dental maximum from \$1,250 to \$1,500!

Adoption Benefits Increased

In an effort to expand Rensselaer's competitive benefit package, the adoption benefit has been increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per qualified adoption to cover documented expenses.

Important Note

The beneficiaries of your life and retirement plans are listed according to your wishes, or for retirement, as required by law. Your dependents are covered as needed, under a health care and dental plans. If a dependent is no longer eligible to be covered under a health plan, you may save money by changing from family to two-person coverage. □

For more information visit our website - <http://www.rpi.edu/dept/hr/benefits.html>

Rensselaer Pensions – No COLA at this Time

The Rensselaer Division of Human Resources is working with a group of retired faculty and staff designated by the Rensselaer Retiree Forum to examine Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA's) in the Contributory Defined Benefit Retirement Plan. In a meeting on December 17, 2003, and in a subsequent letter, Curtis N. Powell, Vice President for Human Resources, informed the group that no COLA will be possible at this time.

Due to the negative impact of the financial markets in recent years, sponsors of pension plans nationwide have experienced huge increases in the contributions they must make to those plans. At Rensselaer, the Institute's contributions to the Defined Benefit Plan for the three years from 2001 to 2004 will be more than \$29 million.


As Mr. Powell stated, the necessity to fund the Plan at this high level means consideration of a COLA must wait until the economy improves and pension funding requirements abate. Human Resources will continue to work with the retiree group to define a specific, workable proposal for the future. □



PAYROLL SCHEDULES

SEMI-MONTHLY		BI-WEEKLY	
Pay Period	Check	Pay Period	Check
3/01— 3/15	3/15/2004	2/14 — 2/27	3/09/2004
3/16— 3/31	3/31/2004	2/28 — 3/12	3/23/2004

MARCH 2004 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

March 11	Workplace Violence: Calm before the Storm
March 16	Getting Your Point Across Brown Bag Lunch Series 
March 18	Conducting a Collaborative Performance Review
March 22	New Faculty & Staff Orientation
March 25	Preventing Sexual Harassment
March 29	Communicating Through Conflict
March 30	Connecting with Customers (Rensselaer at Hartford)
March 31	Correcting Performance Problems (Rensselaer at Hartford)

For more information about the programs offered and the schedule can be found at the HR web page <http://www.rpi.edu/dept/hr/index.html>

NEW IN SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT IN 2004

The 2001 federal tax law included a schedule of increases through 2006 in the maximum pre-tax retirement savings you may defer from your salary. In 2004, the limit is \$13,000.00 and, if you will attain age 50 on or before December 31, 2004, the limit is \$16,000.00. If you have been employed with Rensselaer for 15 years or longer, please contact Human Resources to determine if you are eligible for an even higher limit. Note: Employee contributions to the Defined Contribution Plan (1% of compensation) must be included in the limit.

You may change your supplemental retirement deduction effective the first day of any month. To do so, simply complete the Salary Reduction Agreement, located on the HR website, or contact Jim Sinnock, Assistant Manager of Retirement, at extension 6369 or sinnoj@rpi.edu.

The new 2004 Salary Reduction Agreement now has the option to elect the maximum allowable contribution. Checking this box will eliminate the need to re-calculate your deduction and submit a new Agreement each year as the limits increase. The contribution may be changed the first day of any month, through submission of a new Agreement. □

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND MERIT PROCESS

The Division of Human Resources is in the process of finalizing the guidelines for the annual performance management and merit process. The guidelines will be distributed during management workshops that will be conducted on March 15 thru April 2. □

FACULTY AND STAFF MEMORIAL SERVICE

On Wednesday, April 7, from 11:00 – 1:00, RPI will hold the first combined Memorial Service for Faculty and Staff at the Chapel and Cultural Center. Please mark your calendar to join us for this special tribute. A reception will follow.

In the interest of making sure we have a complete Service, please email Francine Fredette at fredf2@rpi.edu if you know of any faculty, staff or retiree who passed away since April 2003. □