

September 2020

BENEFITS OPEN ENROLLMENT

Open Enrollment is quickly approaching. Remember this is the once a year opportunity for benefit eligible employees to make changes to your pre-tax insurance plans. No action is needed if you do not wish to change anything except for Medical and Dependent Reimbursement which do not carry over and you must sign up for each year. All changes will be effective January 1, 2021. Due to Covid-19, all changes will be made online this year. Any required paper forms will be available on the HR website. More detailed information will come in October. Please visit the [Benefits Summary](#) for all benefits information.

GA HEALTH INSURANCE WAIVER DEADLINE

The last day to waive the GA health insurance will be on September 11th. All GAs have been automatically enrolled in the policy and must actively waive the coverage in order to opt out, which cannot be done after September 11. Please visit www.gallagherstudent.com/USM to complete the waiver process. For returning GAs that had the insurance last year, the monthly cost will be \$129. For all new GAs or GAs that are new to the insurance plan, the monthly cost will be \$167. No refunds will be processed for those who do not complete the waiver process by the deadline.

STUDENT WORKERS

Students cannot work more than 20 hours per week year round, which includes breaks and summer. If the student is working more than one job, collectively their hours cannot exceed 20. During the fall and spring semester, all student employees must be enrolled full-time for 12 or more credit hours in order to be employed on campus.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

GAs are first and foremost students pursuing an education. Assistantships provide much needed experience for graduate students as well as financial support while pursuing their education. During fall and spring semesters, all GAs must be enrolled full-time for 9 or more credit hours to be defined as a GA and receive a stipend and tuition waiver. GAs can work no more than 20 hours per week year round, which includes breaks and summer semester.

Q. Do GAs have to make up time missed from work during holidays due to University closures?

A. No. GAs paid monthly are not required to make up time when the University is closed for holidays or any emergency closure declared by the President. GAs should observe holidays the same as Faculty and Staff.

STAFF EMPLOYEES TEACHING CLASSES

Staff employees who teach classes or work camps during their normal working hours and who receive additional compensation above their normal salary will charge this time to personal (vacation) leave in their home department. It is the responsibility of the director to ensure the employee complies with this policy. If the employee does not have sufficient accrued personal leave to cover this time, the employee will be required to report the time taken as leave without pay.

VEHICLE USE AGREEMENTS

Any employee who drives a USM vehicle (including golf carts) must complete the [Vehicle Use Agreement](#) form upon hire and again annually for UPD to verify driving credentials. Please note HR does not perform this as part of the criminal background check; the vehicle use agreements are the responsibility of each department. Each department is to name a responsible party, requested that it be the same person who is responsible for inventory, and that person must ensure the checks are conducted timely and that all issues- such as UPD reporting a suspended license- are remedied appropriately. When UPD returns a vehicle use agreement with driving restrictions, we ask that you contact your HR Partner for assistance in resolving the situation- both with new hires and current employees. We are here to help!

RECORD KEEPING

University HR would like to remind departments that they should not be keeping personnel files on employees in the department that may include personal information such as social security numbers, birthdates, banking information, copies of identification, and tax information. This information should only be found in the employee's original HR file. If you have this information on file in your department, please have the information shredded. Contact Kameron Dale, HR Director, at ext 6-4056 if you have questions.

PART-TIME FACULTY PAY SCHEDULE

Full Fall Session:

August 13, 2020 – December 3, 2020 will be paid September through December

Fall Session I:

August 13, 2020 - October 5, 2020 will be paid September and October

Fall Session II:

October 6, 2020 – December 3, 2020 will be paid November and December

COMPLETING I-9s FOR OUT-OF-AREA HIRES

Due to new USCIS guidance, we can no longer accept a notarized I-9 Form for out-of-area hires. USM will instead have to utilize an authorized representative to complete the I-9 on our behalf, which we define as any HR representative from an institution of learning, which includes universities, community colleges and K-12 school districts. This document, along with the rest of the hiring paperwork will need to be mailed in. We cannot accept the packet through fax or email. Whenever possible, the preferred practice is for the new hire to present at either the Hattiesburg Campus or Gulf Park Campus to complete their paperwork (via appointment!). This information is available on the [New Employee Forms](#) page on the HR website.

UPDATES TO THE PAF

We have updated the PAF on the HR website. <https://www.usm.edu/employment-human-resources/internalportal/forms-a-z-employee.php#p>

There are two changes to the form:

- 1) We have added a revision button at the top of the form. Please select this only if you need to submit a change to a PAF that has already been submitted. This will not take the place of the data change section. Also, we can only accept the revised PAF if it has a copy of the original PAF included with it. We currently do this with Personnel Data Sheets and it is successful.
- 2) We recently realized that the “Supervisor ID” box was not big enough. We have made it bigger. Please remember that all PAFs must have the supervisor ID included.

Effective September 1st, we will not accept the old versions of the PAF form. If one is submitted, we will send it back and ask that the current form be used. Please do not save the form to your desktop but instead link to the HR website so that you will always have the most up to date form available to you.

CORNERSTONE UPDATES

Offer Letter

USM policy requires all candidates who receive a job offer at USM be given a written offer letter. Templates for offer letters are included in the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) and should be sent to the candidate through the ATS. While edits may be made to the template, the information within the template should not be changed and you should include Human Resources as an approver if you add significant content or make material changes. Offer letter templates for all staff positions and statuses as well as Adjunct faculty are available within the ATS. For full-time faculty offer letters, please utilize the Faculty Hiring Toolkit and offer letter template outside of the ATS. For assistance with the offer letter process in the ATS, a demonstration video and step-by-step guide are available [online](#) or contact your HR Partner.

Closing Requisitions

The Hiring Team is responsible for giving all candidates a final disposition at the point in time when you are no longer going to consider them as candidates. Candidates will receive an automatic email from Cornerstone when moved to the “Not Hired” status thanking them for their application (please refer to [Guidance on Not Hired Dispositions](#) to select proper reason). Once your selected candidate has accepted the offer and cleared the background check, all remaining candidates should be set to “Not Hired” status. Then you can move the selected individual to “Hired” which should close your requisition if the number of openings have been fulfilled. If the hiring manager or committee has a failed search or decides to not hire for the position, please contact your HR Partner to cancel the posting.

REVISED STAFF HIRING TOOLKIT

The Staff Hiring Toolkit has been revised to ensure all information is current, correct and clear. The [toolkit](#) is available on the HR website and should be utilized as part of every hiring process. Contact your HR Partner with questions.

UPCOMING ONLINE EAP WEBINARS

The following online webinars are available to all employees of the University through our Employee Assistance Program, Guidance Resources.

Being Accountable in Work & Life

Wednesday, Sept 16

9am-10am

In work and life, successful people avoid making excuses, and instead take responsibility for their actions. This workshop defines what it means to be accountable, and offers some tips to help people build accountability into their own lives. Register online

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7822648508303926032>

Managing Your Emotions in the Workplace

Friday, Sept 25

3pm-4pm

Everyone experiences emotions at work. We worry about an uncertain future. We get frustrated, upset, even angry at times but with all these emotions, most people don't think they have anything to do with how they are feeling. They believe their emotions are a result of an external cause. That just isn't true. This workshop helps us identify the nature of our emotions and identify ways to take responsibility for them. Register online <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4935409039089732624>

SPEAKING OF THE EAP...

USM's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), GuidanceResources, has a Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources toolkit available on their website <https://pages.e2ma.net/pages/1807892/20932>.

Explore webinars and resource guides on topics such as:

- Coronavirus webinars
- Resiliency resources
- Working from home
- Returning to work guide
- Navigating life at home
- Relaxing interactive experience
- And more!

GuidanceResources is online at [GuidanceResources.com](https://www.guidanceresources.com) or the app GuidanceNow. To register, you will need the Organization Web ID which is COM589. When it asks for your company name, enter UNIVE and pause and a box should pop up with The University of Southern Mississippi for you to select.

Remember, you and members of your household also have telephonic access to talk to a counselor, financial advisor or legal advisor: 800-272-7255.

***If you have questions about any of the information contained in this HR Update, please contact our main line at 6-4050 or your HR Partner for more information.
SMTTT!***

HOW DID HUMAN RESOURCES SPEND SUMMER 2020?



Transitioned all of our HR training to online formats



Washed our hands a gazillion times a day



Scheduled all new hire processing by appointment to limit the number of people in HR at any given time



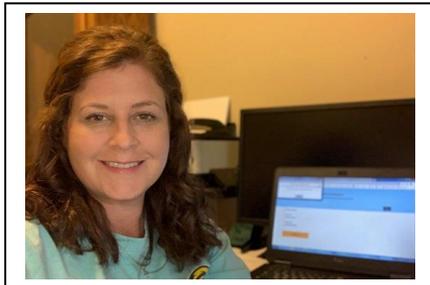
Ensured hand sanitizer was available in high traffic areas



Held all department meetings on Teams even when we were in the office



Avoided close contact by limiting elevator access to one person at a time



Worked from home whenever possible



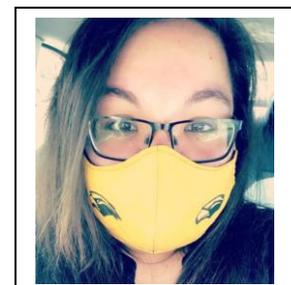
Implemented new leave policies earning Christian the nickname, "Lord of Leaves"



Sanitized common work spaces throughout the day



Took separate cars even when going to the same place to avoid close contact exposure



Wore our masks from the moment we stepped on campus until we left, except when in our office alone