CORNERSTONE UPDATES

Remember that user guides are available on the HR website
https://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/applicant-tracking-system-hiring-manager-resources

- **8/1 Updates**
  - Cornerstone Divisions have been updated to reflect changes made through the Academic Reorg. Please remember that a Division is required in every Requisition Request; however, it is up to the Hiring Manager how granular to get with this designation (School/Discipline/Department).
  - All active faculty and staff employees have been added as users in Cornerstone. Active employees should now access Cornerstone using their SOAR credentials through the single sign-on links via the HR website https://usm.csod.com/samldefault.aspx. Active employees are now asked to use the Career Center under Internal Job Postings to review and apply for open positions.

- **Coming Soon** – We will be finalizing phase 2 of implementation with improved “Internal” job posting functionality in the coming weeks. In the meantime, Hiring Managers are asked to continue adding information to the “Special Instructions to Applicants” section and discussing with their HR Partner when they prefer that a position be open to only internal candidates.

- **Requisition Request** – When copying your job description into the Requisition Request please only copy into the “External Tab”. The Internal tab should always default to “Clone External Description”. It is important that the job descriptions be consistent while we work through our internal job posting process and implementation.

- **Offer Details** – When adding the Offer details under the Statuses tab please do not add commas to 4 digit numbers this will cause an error and not allow you to save and generate the offer letter properly.

CORNERSTONE 201 TRAINING

You have applicants... Now what?
Tuesday, August 14, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. in Cook Library 123
Open to any Cornerstone users; No registration necessary- just show up

Learn more about changing statuses, creating and sending offer letters, assigning recruitment forms, moving to background check, and when to move to hired status.
CHANGE IN PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCE
University HR would like to encourage departments to begin to use this new form for funding changes. It can be found on the HR website under forms, or on the Office of Research Administration website https://www.usm.edu/research/forms-and-budget This form can ONLY be used to change the funding source within the SAME department. If the department changes a PAF must be submitted to HR.
If you have any questions about this form or the PAF please contact your HR Specialist.

PAF UPDATE
University HR has a new Personnel Action Form (PAF). Please come by our office, McLemore Hall Room 301, to obtain a few if needed. Effective August 1st we will no longer accept copies.

TUITION WAIVER
All faculty, staff and dependent child tuition waivers are due in University HR by August 20th for fall semester. For additional information on eligibility, procedures and fees, please reference university policy 4.1 and 4.2 in the Employee Handbook located on the HR website. Waivers can be found at https://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/forms-

STUDENT WORKER TRANSFER TO STAFF
The policy changes we made in July are affecting some of the ways we do things, so we want to point those changes out to everyone as we come across them. Many departments employ student workers that lose their full time enrollment status, in which case the department has historically transferred them into a temp staff position to continue employing them 20 hours each week until their full time enrollment status is restored. As the updated policy requires all positions- other than student workers- to be posted, such a transfer cannot take place without a job posting. University HR will not process these transfers in the future unless and until the posting occurs. Please reach out to your HR Partner to discuss further if you have specific questions or needs.

I-9 REMINDER
I-9 and E-Verify are federal and state laws (Immigration Reform and Control Act and Mississippi Employment Protection Act) that require the University to verify the identity and employment authorization of each person we hire within 3 business days of start date. We must retain records of our compliance (or lack thereof) which is subject to audit and penalties by these agencies. Fines can range anywhere between $200-$2,000 per each offense (per each hire). Patterns of non-compliance are treated with harsher penalties. In extreme cases, willful violations of the law can include civil and criminal penalties for individuals. Please note that this law extends to all employees of the University, including student workers.

Ideally, all new hires should fully complete all new hire paperwork with HR prior to starting work. When that is not possible, we need your assistance in getting them to HR on their first day of work to ensure these critical legal documents are completed timely.

Please note that all new hire processes are posted on the HR website https://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/hiring-processes.
OFFICE OF AA/EEO UPDATES

University Human Resources is excited to share some changes affecting the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity.

**Pattie Teague** will become the Director of Affirmative Action. This role will be centered on our affirmative action program, which includes oversight and monitoring of the University's affirmative action obligations, promoting diversity in recruitment and selection in all aspects of the hiring process, providing training & education to the University community, and ensuring compliance with legal & regulatory requirements. Increasing the profile of these critical functions will encourage more proactive leadership and training in the area of diversity, and is a reaffirmation of the University's policies against discrimination of any kind.

**Christian Cameron**'s job title will continue to be EEO Coordinator, but the role now takes on a different look. Christian is assuming a greater role on EEO matters, which includes reviewing criminal background checks, reviewing and approving disability accommodations, and investigating EEO complaints. Christian will continue to support Pattie in Affirmative Action, and will have a dual reporting relationship to **Krystyna Varnado**, AVP for Human Resources, who will assume the responsibilities of EEO Director.

The realignment of these functions will place an even greater emphasis on the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion across all of its campuses and functions.

OPPORTUNITY TO SELF IDENTIFY FOR DISABILITY

Recently, you may have received an envelope with a form inside asking you to voluntarily self-identify for a disability. It is the policy of The University of Southern Mississippi, as a government contractor, to provide equal opportunity to any employee or applicant for employment, regardless of whether he or she is an individual with a disability.

The Office of Affirmative Action is working to update its records as required by the Department of Labor. If you receive this form via interoffice mail, please consider completing the form (even if you wish not to self-identify) and return it to the Office of Affirmative Action at Box 5111 or scan and email to Christian.n.lewis@usm.edu.

Submission of this information is voluntary and refusal to provide it will NOT subject you to any adverse treatment. The information provided will be kept confidential and used only in ways that are consistent with Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.
JULY 2018 POLICY CHANGE REMINDERS

As we announced in last month’s newsletter, the employee handbook was revised effective July 2018 with some important policy changes. Below is a summary of those changes, and full and complete policies are posted in the Employee Handbook on the HR website:

**Employee Definitions**
As policies may apply differently to different groups of employees (benefit-eligible vs. non-benefit eligible or staff vs. faculty), a key has been added defining specific employee groups to identify which policies apply to which employee groups.

**Pre-Employment**
The Pre-Employment policy (formerly Retrieval #1002 now Recruitment 2.2.1) was updated with the following changes:
- All openings except student worker positions must be posted using the Applicant Tracking System (ATS).
- The requirement for non-exempt positions to be posted for 5 days and exempt for 10 days has been changed to all positions must be minimally posted for 5 working days.

**Pre-Employment**
The Pre-Employment Policy (formerly Retrieval #1002 and now Hiring Process 2.2.2) was updated to require an offer letter for all hires.

**Grant Employees**
Several policies have been updated to better clarify consistency for employees paid from external funding sources regarding compensation, leave and benefits.
- 2.4.3 was updated to address compensation for externally funded employees.
- 5.10 was added to address raises for externally funded employees.
- 6.12 was added to address benefits and leave of absences for externally funded employees.

**Retirement Notice**
Policy 3.4.3 has been clarified to include that the notice requirement also applies to retirements.

**Interim Assignments**
Policy 3.3.4 has been added to provide guidance on interim assignments.

**Student Worker Health Insurance**
Policy 4.4 has been added to provide information about the Student Worker Health Insurance.

**Discipline**
The policies Standards of Conduct (formerly Retrieval #1005) and Discipline Policy (formerly Retrieval #1015) have been eliminated and replaced with a new Progressive Discipline policy (7.1). The new policy:
- Establishes our guiding document as the Code of Ethical Conduct
- Outlines a multi-step process for addressing performance and behavior issues
- Requires terminations to be reviewed by University HR in advance.
ASK HR- WHAT IS THE ACA?

Q. What is ACA?
A. The Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as “Obamacare,” is a complex piece of legislation that attempts to reform the healthcare system. Its intention was to provide more Americans with affordable quality health insurance while attempting to curb the growth in healthcare spending in the U.S.

Q. What is the Employer Mandate?
A. The ACA requires that all large businesses (including USM) provide affordable health insurance coverage that meets minimum value requirements (as defined by the ACA) to full-time employees.

Q. Who is considered a full-time employee?
A. The ACA defines “full-time” as employees who work at least 30 hours per week or whose service hours equal at least 130 hours a month for more than 120 days in a year. The ACA does not concern itself with the status we label someone; they look at actual hours worked to determine “full-time equivalency.”

Q. How do we measure hours worked for determining full-time designation?
A. The ACA requires businesses to conduct an “initial measurement period” to determine an employee’s eligibility for health insurance coverage. This assesses how many hours the employee works within the first year to determine their benefits eligibility for the following year. From there, we must conduct an ongoing “standard measurement period” to reassess a person’s eligibility each and every year to determine eligibility for the following year. For USM, our measurement periods are on an annual basis beginning October 1 to correspond with open enrollment.

Q. How do we determine an employee’s benefits eligibility upon hire when the initial measurement period has not occurred yet?
A. At the time of hire, the ACA permits us to base that decision on the intended status they are hired into. For instance, if they are hired into a position that we have designated as non-benefit then we do not have to offer benefits.

When determining whether a non-benefit status is appropriate, consider the following:
- How many hours are you anticipating this person to work per week?
- How was the position advertised as far as expected hours?
- Was the position previously held by a full-time employee?
- Are other employees in similar positions full-time?

Additionally, you should not consider:
- Whether the person will terminate mid-year
- Employment breaks (such as summer)

Q. What is the “stability period”?
A. The stability period is the 12-month period following a measurement period in which benefits are to be offered regardless of hours currently working if the employee was determined to be full-time per ACA guidelines the previous year. This means that even if a person changes to a non-benefit status mid-year, his/her benefit-eligible ACA
status is locked in for at least the remainder of the 12-month stability period and could potentially even continue through the following year.

Q. If a person has been classified as non-benefit eligible but is determined to actually be “full-time” during the measurement period, what happens?
A. The ACA requires us to begin offering health insurance coverage for the next 12-month stability period (even if the employee stops working full-time hours). So for example, a person is hired into a non-benefit status and at the end of the measurement period it is determined s/he has worked enough hours to be considered full-time; s/he will become benefit-eligible at open enrollment and may remain so through the next year until a new measurement period determines otherwise.

Q. If an employee is determined to be full-time, are they required to enroll in our health insurance plan?
A. No. Just like any employee, they may decline. However, we are required to offer it.

Q. What is the 26-week rule?
A. The ACA does not consider an employee of an educational institutional as a “new hire” unless the employee has had at least a 26-week break in service. That means if a person transfers statuses with no break in service or is rehired in less than 26 weeks, the stability period remains the same 12-month period and the benefit-eligible status is locked in; the measurement period only restarts if there is a 26-week gap between the two employments. For example, a full-time employee resigns to become a full-time student and accepts a student worker position, a non-benefit position. If a 26-week gap of employment does not occur, the employee would maintain his/her benefit-eligible status, according to ACA, for the remaining stability period, even as a student worker.

Q. Why do we strictly enforce the 26-week break in service?
A. If a full-time employee were to transfer to a non-benefit status during the year, as in the example above, the ACA requires benefit eligibility to be maintained through the remaining stability period year and then possibly another year. We identify positions as benefit-eligible or not for reasons, so this would negate those reasons and be disruptive financially.

Q. What policies does USM have in place to ensure we are meeting ACA requirements?
A. We have several policies in place to maintain our compliance including:
   - We limit the hours of certain employment statuses such as adjunct faculty and GAs to not only comply with ACA but other rules and laws that govern us.
   - We do not allow the transfer from a benefit-eligible position to a non-benefit position without a 26-week break in service.
   - Temporary employees may only work forty hours a week for no more than three months. At the third month mark, the department must either move the individual into a benefit-eligible status or drop them to 19 hours per week.

Q. What happens if we do not offer coverage as defined by the ACA?
A. The University would be out of compliance with the law and subject to heavy fines.
Q. What are examples of non-benefit positions?
A. A full-time or part-time employee would be prohibited from transferring to one of the following positions without a 26-week break in service:
   - Adjunct faculty
   - Student worker
   - GA
   - RA
   - Temp

Note: Retirees who want to return to a non-benefit position must also sit out 26 weeks.

Q. Why are GAs and RAs considered non-benefit when they receive insurance coverage?
A. The insurance GA/RA’s receive is different coverage than benefit-eligible employees and does not meet the minimum value requirement the ACA requires, thus is treated as non-coverage.

Q. Can a person transfer from a non-benefit position to a benefit-position or from a non-benefit position to another non-benefit position without a 26-week break?
A. Yes. Only benefit to non-benefit job changes require a 26-week break.

Q. What does the future look like for ACA?
A. It’s hard to say. Repealing the ACA was one of President Trump’s first initiatives, but Congress did not support the repeal so it was unsuccessful. The GOP tax bill passed last year repealed the individual mandate (the requirement that all individuals carry insurance or pay a tax penalty); however, at this time the employer mandate is still in place, which means we must still comply with the requirements.

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