

HR Update

September 2008

Saint Martin's University
Office of Human Resources

Open Enrollment for Benefits

Open Enrollment will begin soon for employees who are eligible for benefits at Saint Martin's. Our plan year is November 1—October 31. If you want to make any changes to your current enrollments (medical, dental, flexible spending account), you will have an opportunity in October to submit changes to Human Resources.

This year there are no changes to our health care plan as far as benefits offered. If you are satisfied with your current benefit selection, you do not need to do anything; your current selections will continue. *However, if you are enrolled in a **flexible spending account** (medical or day care), you must re-enroll each plan year, or you will be dropped from the plan.*

The good news is that the premiums that employees pay for medical have dropped by 4.91%. While this is not a huge amount, most medical plan premiums have increased from 10 –13%. The dental premium rate has increased 6%. We will be sending the specific rate information to all employees in a subsequent email. The rate changes are in effect beginning November 1, 2008.

If you would like more information about your benefits, there are two opportunities to meet directly with our benefit providers. You do not have to register to attend any of these events.

Flex Plan Services, our flexible spending account provider, will be at Saint Martin's to provide detailed information. Flexible spending accounts are ways to save money on health care and day care costs that are not covered by your insurance plan. Please plan to attend one of the following information sessions:

When: Monday, September 22, 2008 **Where:** O'Grady Library Conference Room

Session 1: 11:30 a.m. –12:30 p.m.

OR

Session 2: 12:30 p.m.—1:30 p.m.

Group Health (medical), **Propel Insurance** (our insurance broker), **Guardian Insurance** (life, dental, disability, employee assistance program), and **Flex Plan Services** (flexible spending account), will be available to discuss your benefits any time during the listed hours.

When: Thursday, October 9, 2008 **Where:** Norman Worthington Conference Center (NWCC)
10:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m.

Local businesses that will also be attending are: Twin Star Credit Union, Costco, Strong Center (information on personal trainers, yoga, weight loss), and School Employees Credit Union of Washington.

Here is a chance to visit with our benefit providers, ask questions about what is available, talk with community businesses about services and resources they offer, win door prizes, and enjoy some delicious snacks.

You may check what benefits are available for employees at the Saint Martin's web site:

<http://www.stmartin.edu/FacultyStaff.aspx>

Click on Benefits on the left.

Human Resources will send out additional information through email about Open Enrollment in the next few weeks. As always, please contact Human Resources if you have any questions about your benefits.

Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at **Propel Insurance**

live well, work well

Aging Gracefully

You can change how you think, feel and act when you are older simply by changing how you think, feel and act now. Staying healthy, fit and active are the keys to successful aging.

Aging Gracefully

Although the risk of disease and disability clearly increases with advancing age, poor health as a person ages is not a foregone conclusion. Much of the illness, disability and death associated with chronic disease are avoidable through known preventive measures. The secret to aging gracefully is to establish a healthy lifestyle early, and stick to it as you grow older.

Eat Right and Exercise

Good nutrition, including a diet that is low in saturated fat and contains five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day, is vital to maintaining good health. Improving the diet of older adults could extend a productive life span and reduce the occurrence of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. Regular exercise and physical activity are also important to health and longevity. Regular physical activity greatly reduces the risk of dying from heart disease, and decreases your risk for colon cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure. Physical activity also helps:

- Control weight
- Contribute to healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- Relieve the pain of arthritis
- Reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Decrease the need for hospitalizations, physician visits and medications

Finally, physical activity does not need to be strenuous to be beneficial. People of all ages benefit from moderate physical activity. However, people tend to be less active as they age. By age 75, about one in three men and one in two women do not engage in any physical activity. People who are normally sedentary and have lost a tremendous amount of muscle mass can gain it back, increasing strength.

Stop Smoking

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Cigarette smoking is responsible for one of every five deaths in the U.S., or more than 430,000 deaths each year. Tobacco use increases the risk for heart disease, cancer and stroke. Smoking cessation has major and immediate health benefits for men and women of all ages, regardless of smoking-related diseases.

Mind over Matter

Your mind plays an important role in your ability to age well and feel good when you are elderly. Being engaged and maintaining good social connections can help older individuals retain cognitive function. A healthy attitude can help aging as well as:

- Maintain positive self-esteem
- Exert control or autonomy
- Develop quality relationships with others
- View life as meaningful

Upcoming trainings

Human Resources will present two trainings in September.

Performance Evaluation is for anyone who supervises employees. This will be an overview of information to help supervisors (at any level of experience) enhance their skills. Some of the topics to be covered are: why have evaluations, characteristics of effective evaluations, and pitfalls to avoid during evaluations.

When: Friday, September 26
9 –11a.m.

Where: Norman Worthington Conference Center

Please register by calling Human Resources @ x8131 or x4502, or send an email to: smiller@stmartin.edu



Effective Business Writing is open to any interested employee who would like to learn more about ways to improve writing skills. Some of the topics to be covered are: writing clearly, concisely and correctly, taking a positive approach to your writing, formatting your document, and writing effective emails. As always, check with your supervisor to be sure you may attend.

When: Tuesday, September 30
9 –11a.m.

Where: Norman Worthington Conference Center

Please register by calling Human Resources @ x8131 or x4502, or send an email to: smiller@stmartin.edu

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Did you know?

Human Resources has had some questions recently about topics that you might find informative.

Personal days: These days must be used by the end of each fiscal year; they do not roll over to the next fiscal year, nor are employees paid out for these days if they leave the university. Personal days need to be used as full days. They can't be used as partial days off.

Tuition remission: After one full year of working at the university, full time employees are eligible for 100% tuition remission for themselves and for eligible dependents. Part time regular employees and their dependents receive a discount off the full tuition rate.

Time spent in class during the regular work hours (must have a supervisor's approval), must be made up by adjusting the work schedule.

This is a very generous benefit for employees. Keep in mind that during the regular work schedule that university duties need to be completed, not homework from a class. ◆

