



Matters

The Newsletter of the Office of Human Resource Services

Volume 4, Number 2 Spring 2006

Message from Michael



The staff of Human Resource Services wishes you and yours a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2006. This edition of *HR Matters* offers a veritable smorgasbord of information and tips that will help make the new year bright.

For example, everyone likes to save money. Brooklyn College employees can save a bundle just because they work here. Cell phone bill too high? Wish you could get a break when you buy lunch in the neighborhood? Planning to purchase a new computer or iPod? Getting ready to buy new clothes for spring? If you answered “yes” to one or more of these questions, be sure to read about all of the discount opportunities that are available.

Preparing and filing one’s taxes is a spring ritual to which almost no one looks forward. Look inside for information about a free service that can help make it easier for many College employees.

Want to feel better and more relaxed? Check out the section on our wellness program, and don’t forget to send us your ideas for future wellness seminars and other ways to expand the program. If gardening is your thing, we have tips from an expert on spring planting. It’s not just April showers that bring May flowers, so find out how to achieve that green thumb.

We also extend a warm welcome to the College’s retirees with a special inaugural page dedicated to information of particular interest to you.

You have a lot of reading to do! Here’s to a productive semester.

What a Deal!

Did you know that working for Brooklyn College can save you money? All sorts of deals are waiting to be had at the CUNY portal. Log onto the CUNY Web site at www.cuny.edu and click on “Log-in.” Register to the site by creating a username and password and begin shopping by clicking the brown bag eMall icon.

Discounts abound, and College employees can save on clothing, communications software, computer and office supplies, entertainment, financial services, and health and fitness. Those who are interested in software for their personal computer may purchase it at a discount through a special licensing agreement with **Microsoft**. If you register for a government **Nextel** account, you can save 10 percent off your bill and 27 percent off equipment. And if you absolutely must have the latest technological gadget, purchase an **iPod nano** through the CUNY portal and receive \$20 off the price as well as free shipping.

Local Savings

Your Brooklyn College ID entitles you to many savings available around campus. Show your ID at the following local vendors for a discount:

- Blimpie’s
- Burger King
- Dynasty Chinese Restaurant (no tax for College employees)
- Quiznos
- Remix Gem Variety Store

Brooklyn Center on Sale

The Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College offers discounts on most of its performances. For more information, call the box office at (718) 951-4500 or visit the box office on Campus Road and Hillel Place, Tuesday through Saturday, 1 to 6 p.m.

For a full schedule of performances, visit the center’s Web site, www.brooklyncenteronline.org.

Dressed to the Nines

Macy’s wants our employees to look their best. Brooklyn College has been accepted into the Business Smart Pass program. Beginning this spring, College employees will receive a 15 percent discount on all their clothing purchases on any single day of choice within a particular time frame. In addition,



personal attention and professional guidance will be available from experts by appointment at no cost. Watch your e-mail for the dates of coupon distribution.

Calling for Less

The fall 2005 issue of *HR Matters* mentioned that you needed to complete an application in order to receive the **Verizon Wireless** discount, but Verizon has made changes since then. You must now contact the Verizon business account executive, Paul S. Gonzales, at (917) 620-6989 or paul.gonzales@verizonwireless.com, if you are a new customer. Existing customers should call (866) 456-7892 and follow prompts to receive the employee discount.

Cingular Wireless customers should visit www.cingular.com/universities or call (800) 388-3235.

New **Sprint Wireless** customers should go to www.pcsorders.com/cuny or call (866) 782-6789. Existing Sprint customers should do the following:

- Call Sprint at (866) 853-4931.
- Select Option 1 to request discount.
- Mention code 0544390298.

Every twenty-four months, eligible Sprint customers can receive up to \$150 off a new Sprint PCS phone. For eligibility, visit www.SprintRebates.com or call (877) 319-6489.

We are sorry to report that **T-Mobile** does not offer discounts.

Information from the Benefits Office

Disability Income Insurance

What would happen if your paychecks suddenly stopped because you were too sick or injured to work? What if you couldn't work for months or years?

Disability Income Insurance provides answers to the above. This insurance is designed to protect your income and pays your monthly bills, including food, utilities, and mortgage and car payments.

For more information about disability income insurance, contact the resources below:

- www.aflac.com; (800) 992-3522
- www.FamilySecurityplan.com; (800) 243-2292
- www.memberbenefits.nysut.org; (800) 626-8101

- www.metlife.com/disability
- www.nylaarp.com; (800) 449-1548, extension 100

Note: The above sites are not endorsed by the Office of Human Resource Services and are only for informational purposes.

Long-Term Disability Insurance

Long-term disability is defined as an employee's inability to perform any occupation for which they are reasonably suited by education, training, or experience because of an illness, injury, or pregnancy.

Under the Professional Staff Congress (PSC-CUNY), the total disability plan consists of two parts: the basic plan and the optional contributory plan.

- The basic plan is provided at no cost to the employee and is applicable after one year of full-time employment. The benefit pays 50 percent of salary with a monthly minimum of \$1,250 and a monthly maximum of \$2,500.
- In the optional contributory plan, your benefit is increased from 50 percent to 60 percent of salary, with a monthly minimum and maximum of \$1,500 and \$5,000, respectively.

Under the PSC-CUNY plan, you must be on disability for a continuous period of six months before the basic long-term disability program pays benefits. *Note: This benefit offsets such employer-provider benefits as Social Security, workers' compensation, sick leave, or other retirement or disability benefits from your monthly disability check and may be subject to federal, state and local taxes.*

Short-Term Disability Insurance

Short-term disability is a self-funded plan for income replacement for employees who are unable to work due to illness, pregnancy, or injury.

The short-time disability benefit is usually 67 percent of the employee's base weekly wages or salary. The benefit payment may be up to \$200 a week and cannot exceed twenty-six weeks.

This benefit is provided through the welfare fund/union; if you are unsure of your eligibility for short-term disability, please contact your respective union.

Welcome, Retirees!

The Office of Human Resource Services welcomes retirees to our newsletter. A new column will be devoted to retirees and news that is of interest to you. E-mail us at hr@brooklyn.cuny.edu with any suggestions you may have.

Medicare Prescription Coverage

By now, your welfare fund has sent you information regarding the Medicare Part D program. Please be aware that as a Brooklyn College retiree your welfare fund usually provides prescription coverage that is more generous than the coverage under the new Medicare Prescription Drug Program. Thus, most College retirees do not need to enroll in the Medicare Prescription Drug Program and incur any additional cost.

Individual situations are unique and may require different solutions. For additional information, visit www.medicare.gov or call (800) MEDICARE (633-4227) twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Spring Entertainment

Visit the College and take in a show! As a valued member of the College community, you are entitled to a 10 percent discount on most performances. Below are a couple of the exciting events on tap this spring. For information about and tickets to these and other shows, call (718) 951-4500.

March 25—An Evening with Bob Newhart, 8 p.m.

Bob Newhart's brilliant career includes decades of stand-up comedy and two long-running television series as well as numerous movies, including the recent *Elf* and *Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde*. Newhart brings his immensely popular classic comedy routines to Brooklyn College for one hilarious performance.



April 22—Russian/American Kids Circus on Stage, 1 p.m.

Want to treat the grandkids to a great afternoon, or maybe just treat yourself? Come see one of the world's most exceptional children's circuses at its one-day-only performance. For ten years, this circus—by kids, for kids, and not just for kids—has performed around the world, marveling audiences as kids balance on the high wire, ride a unicycle, and juggle all sorts of objects.

Stay connected to the College: Check out the new retirees Web page at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/hr.

Another Technological First!

This year, with the help of the Office of Information Technology Services, Academic Personnel and Employee Relations established a Web page devoted to faculty promotion and tenure. This is a big step in our continuing effort to simplify a very paper-intensive process into a more user-friendly experience. You can visit the new page at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/offices/hr/employee. Just follow the links to Academic Personnel.



Staying Well

This fall, the Office of Human Resource Services began a series of seminars designed to assist you in balancing your work life and your home life. Professionals from Methodist Hospital discussed ways to keep heart healthy and provided free cholesterol and glucose screening. Professor of Physical Education and Exercise Science Charles Tobey led an inspirational session that convinced all attendees that the mind has significant power over our level of wellness. Linda Camarda, from the Natural Balance Massage and Wellness Center, shared relaxation techniques and tips for attaining a healthy lifestyle.

We have had a great time bringing these events to you and look forward to more in the spring.

Contact Therese Marrocco with any idea topics you may have for our seminars at therese@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

Payroll News

Adjunct Pay Dates—Spring 2006

February 2 and 16

March 2, 16, and 30

April 13 and 27

May 11 and 25

Direct Deposit Wants You

All full- and part-time employees are eligible to participate in the state's direct deposit program. For an application, stop by the Payroll Office, the check distribution desk in the Y.E.S.S. Center, or 1156 Boylan Hall. Applications are also available on the Human Resources Web page under "Forms."

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

The VITA program offers free tax help for people with low to moderate incomes (\$37,000 and below) who cannot prepare their own tax returns. Volunteers sponsored by various organizations receive training to help prepare basic tax returns in communities across the country. Check your e-mail for further information on this program.

Take a Walk

With spring just around the corner, you might very well be anxious to get in shape. If you're looking to start an exercise program, consider this: take a walk on your lunch hour. The Office of Athletics, Intramurals, and Recreation is surveying interest in starting a club, so if you'd like to get involved and burn off a few holiday pounds, contact the office at (718) 951-5369.

Classified Staff News

Welcome to new employees:

Campus Peace Officers Simone Morris and Bonnie Rawls
Carpenter Nelaton Rouzeau
CUNY Office Assistant Tracey Madkins
Custodial Supervisor Joan Brown
Purchasing Agent Verna Kinlock
Steamfitter Glen Smyth

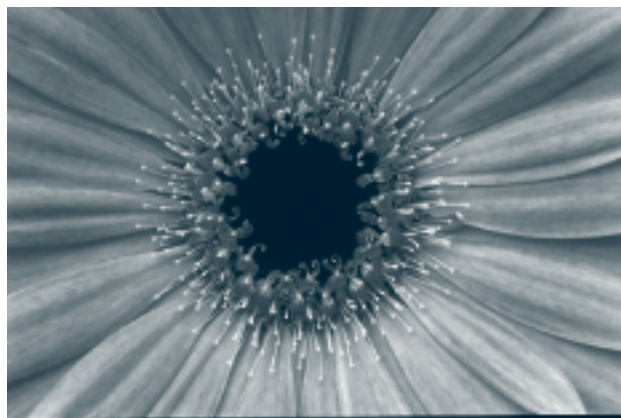
Recent Retirees:

CUNY Office Assistant Thelma Rohde
Painter Frank Trotta

2006 NYCERS Seminars

New York City Employees Retirement System (NYCERS) is again offering pension seminars. If you are interested in attending these seminars, please contact the Benefits Office one month in advance of the seminar you wish to attend. All seminars listed below begin at 3 p.m. at NYCERS, 335 Adams Street, Brooklyn.

February 1 and 15	Tier 4
March 1 and 15	Tier 4
March 29	Tiers 1 and 2
April 12 and 26	Tier 4
May 10 and 24	Tier 4
June 7	Tier 4
June 28	Tiers 1 and 2
July 12 and 26	Tier 4
September 6 and 20	Tier 4
September 27	Tiers 1 and 2
October 11	Tier 4
November 1 and 15	Tier 4
December 6	Tier 4
December 13	Tiers 1 and 2



Spring Planting Tips

by Steve Alliano, Office of Facilities Planning and Operations

Did you know that if you plant any bulb with the pointed tip upside-down the flower will still grow toward the surface? If you don't believe it, just try it! While you're at it, keep these tips in mind when you're doing your preparation for an enviable garden come April.

With the arrival of winter, you should have already put your lawns to sleep with a 20-8-8 fertilizer that will enhance a quick spring green-up, tested your soil to see what you might need to add to make it richer, and planted your bulbs that will emerge as beautiful and colorful flowers in the spring. If you haven't planted bulbs, don't worry—invariably, there are a couple of warm winter days before the ground completely hardens so that you can get them in. Keep in mind that bulbs need six to eight weeks of temperatures below forty-five degrees before they will be ready to emerge.

Bulbs and annuals need a steady food supply and a healthy root system, so adding a 5-10-5 fertilizer before planting and incorporating super-phosphate (root enhancer) or bone meal and some peat moss would be the right start for your investment. Bulbs should be planted five inches deep in the fall, and annuals at the same depth in the spring; you should only go as deep as the top of the root system. As a rule, both bulbs and annuals should be placed four to six inches apart, staggering each row for a nice display, for example, or arranging them any way you think would make an attractive design.

Follow these practices, and all you should have to do is wait for that spring flush and nature will take over.



Focus On: Environmental Health and Safety

“Right to Know” and Hazard Communication Training

Both the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard and the New York State “Right to Know” law require that employers provide safety training to all employees who work with hazardous materials in the course of their duties. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) holds such training for the College on both a regular and an as-needed basis. During training, employees receive general and campus-specific safety information regarding the proper storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials.

In addition, instruction in the use of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) must also be given. The MSDS is a document that manufacturers, importers, and distributors of hazardous chemicals must develop and supply with shipments of hazardous chemicals. Recipient entities must, in turn, collect, maintain, and make these MSDSs available to their employees for each hazardous chemical being used. EHS maintains a central file of all MSDSs received on campus. Employees may request a copy of the sheets for the particular hazardous material(s) they work with. The information will be provided within seventy-two hours of receipt of a request.

The above laws also require that labels on chemical containers indicate the identity of the hazardous chemical(s), appropriate hazard warnings, and the name and address of the manufacturer, importer, or distributor. Original labels must not be removed or defaced until each container is empty.

If you have any safety-related questions or concerns, please contact Aldo Orlando, Office of Environmental Health and Safety, at (718) 951-5400 or Aldo@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

West Quad Update... Plus Other Construction

East Quad Entrance

You can't miss it: The East Gate entrance has been remodeled! Changes include a new wrought-iron gate, a new public safety booth, more grass, and a wider sidewalk on Bedford Avenue. This style will be mirrored on the new West Quadrangle to be constructed next year.

West Quad: New Quadrangle

All that remains of Plaza Building is the huge pile of debris that you can see peeking over the fence on Bedford Avenue. This material, along with earth that will be dug for the foundation of the new West Quad building, will be used to fill the former basement of Plaza Building to create a level surface for the new grassy quadrangle.

New Facades: Roosevelt Hall and James Hall

Once the new West Quadrangle is level and landscaped, new entrances to Roosevelt and James halls will be constructed. Until the 1960s, the main entrance to Roosevelt was from a quadrangle—that former entrance will be restored. James Hall does not have an entrance on the south side, so an entirely new entrance will be built there.

Other Construction

Though all the moving and shaking in the West Quad is most noticeable, there's plenty going on throughout the campus during the winter to make it a safer and nicer place to be, according to Kathleen Kovach, director of facilities planning and construction. These are some of the things you'll see:

James Hall—Look for brand-new signs and department bulletin boards on the first floor.

West End Building—There will be new landscaping and improved parking around the W.E.B.

Sidewalks—These will be under repair along Campus Road near Boylan and Whitehead halls.

Stay Tuned for Details...

If you have any health and safety questions, please contact Aldo Orlando, director of environmental health and safety, (718) 951-5400. For all other questions, contact the Office of Facilities Planning and Operations, (718) 951-5094 or westquadproject@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

Calendar

February

February 1

NYCERS Pension Seminar*

February 7

New Employee Orientation**

February 7–9

Blood Drive

Noon–5:30 p.m. Mobile unit on Campus Road

February 13

Lincoln's Birthday

College closed.

February 15

NYCERS Pension Seminar*

February 20

Presidents' Day

College closed.

February 22

Brown Bag Luncheon

Noon–2 p.m. Gold Room, Student Center

March

March 1

NYCERS Pension Seminar*

March 7

New Employee Orientation**

March 15

NYCERS Pension Seminar*

March 29

NYCERS Pension Seminar*

April

April 4

New Employee Orientation**

April 6

Melanoma Awareness

1:30–3:30 p.m. Call (718) 951-4505 for location.

April 12

NYCERS Pension Seminar*

April 26

NYCERS Pension Seminar*

May

May 9

CUNY Wellness Festival

Noon–3:30 p.m. Quad

May 9–11

Blood Drive

Occidental Lounge, Student Center

May 10

NYCERS Pension Seminar*

May 24

NYCERS Pension Seminar*

May 29

Memorial Day

College closed.

* To schedule an appointment, call (718) 951-4255.

** Time and location to be announced.

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COLLEGE

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