When Christoph M. Kimmich assumed the presidency of Brooklyn College some seven years ago, he came with an ambitious plan for improving the institution. A small but significant part of that plan was the implementation of a civility campaign and an Employee of the Month program.

President Kimmich’s plan for change and improvement grew out of his intimate knowledge of the Midwood campus. He had joined the faculty as an associate professor of history in fall 1973, was elected to chair his department, and then served as provost for nine years before being named interim chancellor of CUNY from 1997 to 1999, after which he returned to Brooklyn.

Kimmich was well aware that, for any plan to be successful, he needed the commitment and support of the campus community. At the Stated Meeting of the Faculty in February 2000 he spoke of his strong belief in the College and outlined his plans, emphasizing the importance of the faculty.

But addressing the faculty was only the first step. “I set out to meet all members of the staff, to visit every workshop, every office, every facility on the campus—places that had never seen a president before,” he explains. He wanted not only to meet the people who worked at the College but also to find out where they worked and what they did, and to talk to them about his plans for change.

“If you’re going to move an institution, you need collaboration and solid, productive working relationships,” he says. “The staff is full of extraordinary, competitive, high-achieving people. We need to recognize this openly and to enlist them in what needs to happen to achieve change. When all is said and done, it’s the staff that keeps the wheels turning, that supplies the wherewithal that makes teaching and learning possible. We have to recognize this.”

As part of that recognition, Kimmich directed the Office of Human Resource Services to design and manage a program that, each month, would single out and reward an exceptional employee. “Human Resources was the obvious choice—it is central to how the College functions,” he explains. “They know and can advise us on the rules and regulations that govern our lives here from arrival to departure; they know what it takes to get hired, qualify for benefits, get paid, and achieve tenure and promotion, to mention but the most obvious.

“If they do their job well,” he continues, “morale is high. And high morale and civility always go hand in hand. That’s the secret to getting things get done.”
The Employee of the Month program, as President Kimmich envisioned it, would recognize outstanding service by lauding and rewarding members of the staff. But at the heart of the program was what it meant to the individual who had been recognized. “The true reward of this program is to be singled out and praised by your coworkers for your personal dedication and for your achievements,” he says. “That’s a source of great personal satisfaction. It’s an honor.” But the program, Kimmich says, “also serves as a great motivator, for it allows you to become and to set an example for others. That’s an incentive to strive for similar recognition.”

Meeting and talking each month with the latest star employee is a source of great pleasure. Each of them, he says, stands out with something special and unique. But all “share a common quality—their dedication to Brooklyn College; a commitment to, even a passion for, what they do; and, yes, a strong belief in the value of the education that makes this College so prominent.”

“And each of them,” he notes, “is fully aware that the role they play is indispensable, whether it’s to maintain the grounds, keep the books, run our computer systems, or support faculty and departments. Without exception, they have a reputation for being helpful and responsive to those who need their help.”

The recognition program will play an important role at the College for as long as members of the staff believe in it. “Keep your eyes open for coworkers who exhibit qualities that deserve recognition, qualities that make you proud to be their colleague,” Kimmich says. “Look for commitment to the College, a ready willingness to go the extra mile, unflagging interest in students and education.

“Most important: Let us know who those people are. Nominate them as an Employee of the Month.”

How Are We Doing?

By now you should have received the 2007 HR Survey. Please take the time to respond to either the paper copy or the online survey, available in the “What’s New” section of the Already an Employee page on the Human Resources Web page. We really want to hear what you have to say!
Payroll News

If your paycheck has been lost, stolen, or destroyed, contact the Payroll Office immediately! Here’s what we can do for you:

• Contact the Treasury Department and find out the status of the check. If the check is outstanding, we will place a stop payment on it.
• The state will send a form that you must complete. Once returned to the state, it will reissue the check and mail it to our office.
• The entire process may take about three to four weeks.

Direct Deposit and You

Make your life easier: Enroll in the Direct Deposit program, and let us do the work for you. With Direct Deposit, your paycheck is deposited in your bank account automatically. Simply stop by the Payroll Office or download the enrollment form at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/offices/hr/.

Here are a few of the benefits Direct Deposit offers:

• It's convenient. No waiting for your paycheck on payday—the money is already in your account.
• It's safe. No worrying over lost, stolen, or destroyed paychecks.
• It saves time. Avoid long lines at the bank on payday.
• If you miss work on payday or you're on vacation, your money is placed in the bank automatically.
• You can have portions of your pay deposited into eight different accounts.

Note: Any changes or cancellations must be received by the Payroll Office two weeks prior to the payday for which the change is to occur.

Questions regarding Direct Deposit may be directed to the Payroll Office, 1156 Boylan Hall, (718) 951-5091.

Getting to Know Your Pay Stub/Advice

What is on your pay stub/advice, and what does it mean?

• Advice date—date of payment
• Current deductions—deduction amounts, by type, for this pay period
• Current earnings—amount paid this pay period before taxes and deductions
• Current total gross—gross earnings paid this pay period
• Net pay—earnings paid for this pay period after all taxes and deductions
• Pay rate—for annual-salaried employees, an annual amount; for hourly employees, an hourly rate
• Tax data—a summary of federal, state, and local tax status data, as identified by employee, including marital status, number of exemptions, and any additional withholding amount identified by the employee
• YTD deductions—deduction amounts, by type, for the calendar year
• YTD earnings—earnings, by type, for the calendar year
• YTD total gross—gross earnings paid to date for the calendar year

For more information on understanding your pay stub/advice, contact the Payroll Office, (718) 951-5091.

Identity Theft and What You Can Do about It

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal identifying information (e.g., your name, Social Security number, credit card number) without your permission to commit fraud or other crimes.

You can help prevent identity theft by always remaining aware of your surroundings when conducting personal business! But if you should become a victim, immediately place a fraud alert with any one of the credit reporting agencies listed below and contact your local police precinct. Keep a record of the details of your conversations and copies of all correspondence. The agency that you contact is required to notify the other agencies, and all three will send you a letter of confirmation. The alert will remain on your credit reports for approximately ninety days.

• Equifax—(800) 525-6285; P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241; www.equifax.com.
• Experian—(888) 397-3742; P.O. Box 9532, Allen, TX 75013; www.experian.com.
• TransUnion—(800) 680-7289; Fraud Victim Assistance Division, P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92834-6790; www.transunion.com.

For more information about identity theft and your credit report, log onto www.ftc.gov.
Payroll News continued

Fall Adjunct Instructional Staff Pay Dates
During the fall semester, adjuncts shall be paid on nine successive adjunct pay dates. The first pay date was September 13, 2007 (payroll #12), and the final pay date will be January 3, 2008 (payroll #20).

September 13 and 27, 2007
October 11 and 25, 2007
November 8 and 22, 2007
December 6 and 20, 2007
January 3, 2008

Timesheets at Your Fingertips
Nonteaching adjunct and continuing education teacher time sheets are available on the College Web site. They are easily accessible for you to download and print whenever needed. Simply log onto www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/offices/hr/include/pdf/nonteaching.pdf.

W-2 Statements
The Office of the State Comptroller will once again mail W-2 statements to employees’ home address as it appears on their paychecks/advises. If your address has changed or will change, it is important that you stop by the Payroll Office or the Office of Human Resource Services to complete a Basic Personnel and Address Form. You may also download the form at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/offices/hr/.

Information from the Benefits Office

Fall Transfer Period
The annual Fall Transfer Period will be held this semester (exact dates to be announced). During the Transfer Period, employees can:

• Transfer to another health plan
• Add or drop an optional rider

Any changes made during the Fall Transfer Period will become effective the first day of the first full payroll period in January 2008.

Flexible Spending Accounts
The Open Enrollment Period for the Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) Programs will also be held in the fall. During this period, employees may enroll in the following programs:

• Dependent Care Assistance Program (DeCAP). This program allows you to pay for expenses for a dependent child or other eligible dependents, thereby reducing your taxable income. The minimum contribution is $500; the maximum contribution is $5,000.

• Health Care Flexible Spending Account (HCFSA). This program allows you to pay for eligible out-of-pocket medical expenses, thereby reducing your taxable income. The minimum contribution is $260; the maximum contribution is $5,000.

• Medical Spending Conversion (MSC) Health Benefits Buy-Out W aiver Program. This program allows eligible employees who have non-city group health benefits to waive their city health benefits in return for an annual cash incentive payment.

Any changes made for the FSA Programs will be effective January 1, 2008.

Benefits Fair
The Benefits Office will host its Fourth Annual Employee Benefits Fair on Wednesday, October 10, 2007, from noon to 2:30 p.m. in the Bedford Room, second floor, Student Center. Health plan vendors and representatives from the New York City Office of Labor Relations Flexible Spending Accounts, the Municipal Credit Union, and many more will be on hand to answer your questions.

New York State Deferred Compensation Plan
A new and exciting benefit is being offered to all employees as of September 2007. This voluntary retirement savings program allows you to invest a maximum of $15,500 on a tax-deferred basis. For information, visit www.nysdcp.com or call (800) 422-8463, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Focus on: Environmental Health and Safety

**Electrical Safety**

Electric power is an essential source of energy for our homes, workplaces, and public areas. Electricity, however, can potentially be dangerous if not utilized correctly and can result in serious bodily injury or even death. It can also cause fire and property damage. Sound safety practices can help minimize electrical hazards and cut down the risk of accidents. These include making sure that:

- electrical lights and appliances bear the seal of a nationally recognized certification agency, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), which indicates that samples of the product have been tested for safety;
- warranty and product registration forms are sent to the manufacturer, so that you can be notified in case of a recall;
- electrical equipment is working correctly and is free of defects or damage;
- wires and cords on appliances, tools, lamps, etc., are not worn or frayed;
- electrical outlets are not overloaded;
- individuals who perform maintenance and repair work on electrical equipment are trained and qualified; and
- equipment is isolated from its energy source before any repair work is undertaken.

Most cord-connected appliances are equipped with polarized (one blade slightly wider than the other) or three-prong grounding plugs. This helps to ensure that the equipment is connected to the neutral or grounded part of the circuit. If extension cords are required, only the appropriate cords (polarized, three-prong, etc.) should be used. Never remove the third (round or U-shaped) prong, which is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of shock and electrocution.

Voluntary industry safety standards, including those of Underwriters Laboratories, require that new general-use extension cords have safety closures, warning labels, rating information about the electrical current, and other added safety features for the protection of children and other consumers. In addition, UL-listed extension cords must be constructed with #16 gauge or larger wire, or be equipped with integral fuses. The #16 gauge wire is rated to carry 13 amperes (up to 1,560 watts), as compared with the formerly used #18 gauge cords that were rated for 10 amperes (up to 1,200 watts). Don’t overload extension cords by plugging in appliances that draw a total of more watts than the rating of the cord. Use special, heavy-duty extension cords for such high-wattage appliances as air conditioners, portable electric heaters, and freezers.

Periodically check the body of the extension cord while the cord is in use. Noticeable warming of the plastic parts is expected when cords are being used at their maximum rating. If the cord feels hot, however, or if there is a softening of the plastic, this is a warning that the plug wires or connections are failing and that the extension cord should be replaced. Apart from being a fire hazard if used incorrectly, extension cords can also be a tripping hazard and should be limited to temporary rather than permanent use. If needed, a work request should be submitted to the Facilities Office for an additional outlet so that the extension cord can be removed.

Immediately report any hazards, damage, and defective equipment, tools, and machinery to a supervisor or manager. Also, report any open electrical control panels or receptacle boxes to Facilities. The hazard of electricity cannot be eliminated, but it can be safely controlled. The more you understand the proper use of electrical energy, the safer you’ll be at work and home.

Save Money

You can start earning valuable discounts on a plethora of goods and services simply because you’re a Brooklyn College employee! All it takes is your College ID. Check out the new discount page on the “What's New” section of the Human Resource Services Web site.
Focus on Civil Service
On and Off the Job,
Groundskeeper Follows ‘Art’

Early one morning recently, Heriberto Ferrer was assigned the job of digging holes outside the windows of the library’s Lily Pond Reading Room before planting rows of brightly colored yellow bushes.

“These flowers just came in,” he explained. “They’ve got to be in the ground in time for a reception for incoming freshmen tonight.” He regarded the bushes thoughtfully. “They’re pretty flowers, aren’t they? Very bright.”

Ferrer, called “Zookie” by his friends, was born in Coney Island. He attended public schools in the shore neighborhood but did not consider pursuing higher education. “I didn’t do well in the classroom,” he shrugs.

Now thirty-seven and a resident of Sheepshead Bay, he began working at the College in 1994. “I started out as a temporary custodial assistant,” he says. “They laid me off three times, but each time I came back. I guess the fourth time was the charm because I’m still here all these years later.”

He remains at the College, he says, in large part because it’s a good job and he likes the place, the people, and working outdoors, especially in the summer when the weather is nice and warm. “In the winter, when it gets snowy and icy, we can get held over all night to make sure the roads and paths are salted and sanded for the morning so that nobody slips, slides, and falls down.”

But he also continues working at Brooklyn College because the landscaping grounds work is another form of art. Just how artful? Consider that in January 2003 Ferrer and the other members of the then grounds crew—Steven Alliano, James Bryant, Julio Estrada, George Forstner, Johnnie Green, and Thomas Spoto—as a group earned the Employee of the Month Award after the College was named by the Princeton Review as having the most beautiful campus out of all the several hundred U.S. colleges that were evaluated.

Growing up, he never considered himself an artist. “I took one cartooning class in high school,” he says. “That didn’t take.” However, at home he spent a lot of time sculpting and painting. He shaped figures out of modeling clay and melted down crayons by placing them in milk bottle caps atop the old-fashioned cast-iron radiator in his bedroom and molding the colored wax. “I was alone a lot as a kid,” he explains. “I used my imagination to create little things and bits of art.”

Ferrer still uses his innate imagination to make art. Last fall, a sampling of his sculptures was displayed as part of an art exhibit in the Brooklyn College Library. Currently, he is working on scale model sculptures with a camera and computer. He is creating a series of posters that place photos of fanciful features from the façade of the former Childs Restaurant, a landmarked building on the Coney Island boardwalk, against backgrounds of the Brooklyn shoreline and beachfront. “The restaurant is closed now,” he says. “But if possible, I’d like to put my posters up on display with the sculptures around or inside the building.”

Who knows? Imagination may find a way.

Civil Service Corner

Upcoming Civil Service Exams
Title | Filing Period
--- | ---
Campus Peace Officer | To be determined
Supervisor Plumber | To be determined

Welcome to New Employees
Campus Peace Officer Jeffrey Palmer
CUNY Office Assistants Irene Uiles, Gale Troyansky, Urlah Valentine
Maintenance Worker Lawrence Chiarella
Painters Daniel Lunney, Vincent Rizzi

Recent Retirees
CUNY Administrative Assistant Mary Collins
CUNY Custodial Assistant Blanca Gonzalez
Retirees Page

Well-Balanced Seniors
As people age, changes in their vision, hearing, muscle strength, coordination, and reflexes make them more likely to fall. Older persons are also more likely to have treatable disorders that may affect their balance, including diabetes or conditions of the heart, nervous system, and thyroid. In addition, compared with younger people, older persons take more drugs that may cause dizziness or lightheadedness. It is important that you stay up to date with your health and get a regular check-up. The more you pay attention to changes in your body, the more you can prevent more serious health issues.

One of the best ways to maintain a healthy body is walking. In the fall, the Department of Aging will host a Senior Stroll, in which older adults are invited to participate in a fun-filled day celebrating the benefits of walking for good health. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/html/dfta.

Important Web Sites
Access America for Seniors—www.seniors.gov
This Web site has information that will help seniors conduct business with federal agencies faster and easier.

Administration on Aging—www.aoa.dhhs.gov
The Administration on Aging Web site educates older people and their caregivers about benefits and services that can help them.

American Association of Retired Persons—www.aarp.org
This site has education, advocacy, and community information for people over age fifty.

Benefits Check Up—www.benefitscheckup.org
Created by the National Council on the Aging, this free, easy-to-use Web site helps older Americans identify their eligibility for a wide range of public assistance programs. It compares the information you give with eligibility requirements for Social Security, Medicaid, food stamps, weatherization, in-home services, pharmacy programs, and state programs. A printable report of programs and enrollment information is available.

NIH SeniorHealth—www.nihseniorhealth.gov
The NIH SeniorHealth Web site, containing information for older adults, was developed by the National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine, both part of the National Institutes of Health. This site contains a wide range of information on many health topics, including Alzheimer’s disease, arthritis, balance problems, breast cancer, colorectal cancer, diabetes, exercise for older adults, hearing loss, lung cancer, prostate cancer, taking medicines, and many more. For even more information, visit www.medicare.gov.

And the Winner Is...
Carol Fusco! Carol was the first winner of the Administrative Professionals Day raffle. Eleanor Ortiz, of the Office of the Associate Provost (left, with Therese Marrocco, Human Resource Services), graciously did the honors of drawing the ticket in Lois Pilieri’s absence. Carol took home an iPod when her name was drawn. As you will recall, all staff in the Gittleson series of titles who came to the Office of Human Resource Services to pick up a $5 discount coupon for lunch in the cafeteria, the Georgian Room, or at Kosher Haven were entered into the raffle.
Calendar

October

October 8  Columbus Day  Observed  College closed.

October 10  Employee Benefits Fair  Noon-2:30 p.m.  Bedford Room, Student Center

October 11  Faculty/Adjunct Pay Date

October 16  New Employee Orientation*

October 21  Breast Cancer Walk  10 a.m.-noon, Prospect Park

October 25  Faculty/Adjunct Pay Date

October 30  New Employee Orientation*  College assistants only

November

November 6  Brown Bag Luncheon Series**  "Nutrition and You"

November 8  Faculty/Adjunct Pay Date

November 13  New Employee Orientation*

November 15  Thirty-first Annual Great American Smokeout®**

November 22  Faculty/Adjunct Pay Date

November 22-23  Thanksgiving Holiday College closed.

November 29  World AIDS Day Seminar**

December

December 1  World's AIDS Day Fashion Show**  6-11 p.m.

December 5  Brown Bag Luncheon Series**

December 6  Faculty/Adjunct Pay Date

December 11  New Employee Orientation*

December 15  Thirty-first Annual Great American Smokeout®**

December 20  Faculty/Adjunct Pay Date

December 24-25  Christmas Holiday College closed.

December 31  New Year's Eve Holiday College closed.

* Date subject to change.
** Location to be announced.

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