

InTouch: UNC Employee Forum News

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Happy Birthday!

UNC System Staff Assembly Turns One Year Old

Once upon a time, long, long ago, in the State of North Carolina, a small group of staff employees in the University system were kicking a conversational ball around when they happened to hit upon an interesting idea. They observed that while all faculty in the UNC System had a statewide assembly to look out and advocate for their interests, and while public school teachers did, too—the tens of thousands of staff employees in the UNC System did not.

It was time, they thought, for that to change. It was time for a Staff Assembly.

Tommy Griffin, a UNC-CH employee who was there that day, thought this idea was “the greatest thing there ever was—to meet as a group and discuss issues that we have that are different and issues that are alike at all of our schools.”

But it was to take a lot of work from a lot of people before this dream would become a reality.*

The first hurdle was to convince the President of the UNC System that such an organization would be a good idea. Dubious, she pointed out that it didn't make much sense, because not all of the System schools even had their own individual forums, so how could they be expected to participate in a statewide organization like the one being proposed?

Assembly supporters were discouraged, for it was true. While some of the system schools had their own staff forums back then, UNC-Chapel Hill and several others did not. The idea of a Staff Assembly had to be shelved.

But as the years passed, more and more of the System schools began to see the wisdom and value of being able to communicate with their staff employees through an organized group of delegates. More individual forums were created, and the chairs of those forums would meet, sometimes, to share ideas and talk about issues.

“Every year when we had our state-wide forum chairs' meeting,” said Griffin, “we would talk about it. Some schools weren't that sure it was a good idea, at first. But eventually we all got interested in it. Next thing you know, all 16 schools were on board.”

With growing grass-roots support, advocates of the Staff Assembly idea approached the President again with their request. But again they were rebuffed. “We don't need it,” said the President. “We already have representation locally at each campus.”

Discouraged but not daunted, the supporters kept asking and kept getting turned down until one day there was a new President—Erskine Bowles. Being new to the job and open to ideas for how to manage his employees most effectively, he was asked early-on to support the creation of a statewide Staff Assembly. And this time, the Powers That Be said

yes.

So it was that one year ago, on a day much like today, the system-wide Staff Assembly was born when it convened for the very first time.

Setting up the Staff Assembly took quite a bit of work, says Tommy Griffin, who in the intervening years had become a past chair of the Chapel Hill Employee Forum.

“We had a lot of work to do to get the charter established, draw up guidelines, etc. It took a lot of hard work by a lot of people.

“One of the most important questions we had to address was how to set up the selection of delegates. Some wanted to do it like we do on the Forum in Chapel Hill—with all staff employees divided into occupational divisions and delegates assigned proportional to the numbers in each division.

“Several of us thought that wasn’t such a good idea, though. We thought there should be a fixed number of delegates per campus. That way power would be equally distributed among the different campuses—which is important, since we have very large and powerful campuses in the University System as well as smaller and more specialized campuses. If this thing was going to work, we realized, we would all need to be able to work as a community of equals.

“One of the side-benefits of having the Staff Assembly is that we got General Administration involved. Staff workers there are a part of the Staff Assembly and have their own, individual forum now, too.

“Today, at the end of our first year, I can say for certain that having the Assembly has been a good thing. I admit that I’ve worked on this for so long that I’ve been impatient to see the group get set up and hit the ground running. But we’ve got some good leadership coming in—a group who are not afraid to exercise their leadership roles on behalf of staff throughout the state, asking important questions and communicating openly both up and down the line.

“It’s going to turn out to be a great organization, where both administrators and legislators can turn for advice and opinions about staff interests. It’s just a matter of time. After all, we represent a lot of voters. We have a lot of influence. It’s time for us to stand up and use that influence to protect and improve the work life of staff employees throughout the UNC System.”

*Special mention goes to Bob Schreiner, who drew up the original proposal for the Staff Assembly, and to all the forum chairs from all of the constituent institutions who worked together over all those many years to make the Staff Assembly into a reality.

Personnel Flexibility for Employees: Making the Grievance Process Work Fairly for Everyone

by Steve Hutton
Epidemiology

For a number of years, the term “personnel flexibility” has been used to talk about a series of proposed reforms to University human resources practices. In 2002 a study was done by the Chancellor’s Committee on Personnel Flexibility that made a number of concrete suggestions for improving the system on the Chapel Hill campus. More recently, President Erskine Bowles’ PACE Report (2006) suggested several reforms geared toward the same end for the entire UNC system.

When reading through the recommendations of both reports, it is clear that “flexibility” in this context primarily means management flexibility—not flexibility for workers. A long-standing concern about increasing management flexibility is that it might be accompanied by a loss of employee rights.

In the 2001-2 discussions of the UNC-CH Personnel Flexibility Committee, SEANC District 25 suggested that management flexibility be considered separately from employee rights. In other words, SEANC suggested that it would be possible to enhance management flexibility without eroding employee rights. But the recommended discussion never took place.

With the publication of the PACE Report last year, and as President Bowles’ Personnel System Task Force begins its three-month effort to thoroughly research, analyze and make recommendations on a variety of personnel issues, it seems like a good time to bring up once again the importance of flexibility and equity for both managers and workers.

One of the most important areas where this conversation needs to take place is with regard to a right guaranteed to most SPA employees by the State Personnel Act: the right to a fair and timely grievance process for work-related disputes. Having been a support person for grievances for several years, I’ve concluded that the process does not work well in its current form. Our larger society tolerates a system that works perhaps 90% of the time. But would it tolerate one that works only about 70% or less?

Note: The grievance process currently has two Steps. In Step 1, the grievance is usually heard and adjudicated by the supervisor of the grievant’s supervisor (i.e. the next-level supervisor). If the Step 1 decision is unsatisfactory to the grievant, he or she may appeal.

In Step 2, the grievance is heard by three SPA employees who have volunteered to serve as panelists, have received training from HR, and have kept their credentials up-to-date by service on a panel or through annual refresher training. The panel’s recommendation is reviewed by the Chancellor, whose decision is the final agency decision.

Certain types of grievances may be further appealed to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). Employees are allowed to represent themselves at OAH, but it’s usually advisable to have an attorney.

The Major Problems

There are several problems with the grievance process. The first is its reliance on panelists as decision-makers. It’s been my experience that most panelists, though not all, approach their work in an unbiased, dedicated, and forthright manner. Still, there are types of cases for which panelists are not well-trained. There are also cases that are so complex that even professionals would experience difficulties.

Panelists don’t receive adequate training in assessing the burden of proof. Depending on the type of grievance, the burden may fall on the grievant or it may fall on the respondent. Some grievances with multiple issues may have one issue’s burden on the grievant and another issue’s on the respondent.

Sometimes the law may dictate a shifting burden of proof. For example, in an age discrimination case, the initial burden falls on the plaintiff (grievant) to make a *prima facie* case (sufficient at first impression). Once established, the burden shifts to the defendant (respondent). Sometimes professional judges have difficulty assessing when a *prima facie* case has been made. Panelists aren’t trained on this at all.

A similar weakness is in the definition of “retaliation.” The grievance process and certain federally guaranteed leaves, such as Family Medical Leave, prohibit retaliatory acts. Case law and guidelines from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are fairly clear as to the forms of proof a supervisor must offer to counter a retaliation claim. However, the grievance policy does not define “retaliation.” Once again, panelists are not trained to recognize when a *prima facie* case supporting charges of retaliation has been made and the burden of proof therefore shifts to the respondent.

A second problem with the grievance process is even more fundamental: The Chancellor has dual responsibilities. The

Chancellor makes the final decision in many grievance cases, but the Chancellor also has an obligation to protect the University from lawsuits. These two imperatives sometimes conflict, and when they do, the Chancellor almost always protects the University over the rights of employees.

A third problem is that the grievance process requires employee time to implement. There's the time of HR personnel assigned to the process, training time for panelists and support persons, the time of employees who serve as panelists and support persons, plus the time of the employees themselves and their witnesses who are involved in any given grievance. As a rough estimate, every grievance that is heard by a panel costs about \$1500.

In order to minimize this cost, HR tries to minimize the time investment. They try to squeeze each side's presentation into an hour and a half, which is often too little time for an employee whose livelihood and career may be on the line. I'm aware of one case that was appealed to the Office of Administrative Hearings where the State's attorney asked for a whole day just to present the State's side of the case.

Once the internal grievance process ends, the problems don't. Some types of grievances, e.g. layoffs, cannot be appealed to the Office of Administrative Hearings unless the employee is a veteran or unless there's been discrimination.

Even if an appeal is permitted, nothing from the grievance process is admissible as evidence. Because the internal process does not allow for sworn testimony or transcripts but the OAH process requires these, the grievant essentially has to start anew.

Furthermore, once a case goes to the OAH, there's an unequal distribution of power because there's usually unequal access to sufficient finances. The State's attorneys represent administrators and are paid from tax dollars, no matter how long a case may take to resolve. Employees have to hire their own attorney. A principal tactic of the State and its administrators is to try to wear down employees (or former employees) financially.

Binding Arbitration?

Most of these problems could be resolved with binding arbitration. For example, if the Step 1 Hearing does not successfully resolve a situation and leaves the door open for a more protracted grievance process, each side could agree on the name of an outside, independent arbitrator selected from a list. This arbitrator would then hear both parties' sides and reach a decision based on the evidence presented by each. In some states, agencies bear the cost of the arbitration, in others it's borne by the losing party, and in others cost is apportioned on a percentage split.

Arbitrators would be an effective improvement because they are already professionally trained. They understand burdens of proof and shifting burdens of proof. In addition, they don't have an inherent conflict of interest. They are free to find completely for either party or negotiate a settlement agreeable to both parties. Then the process ends.

Binding arbitration can be the final step in dispute resolution at UNC Healthcare, but implementing it in other agencies will require a change in the law. The legislature, then, could grant the Office of State Personnel (OSP) the authority to pilot-test binding arbitration.

In the Interim

In the interim, there are a number of improvements that could be made to the grievance process:

1. Include a definition of "retaliation" in the grievance policy.
2. Train panelists on *prima facie* cases and the shifting burden of proof.
3. Allow support persons to represent the grievant. Presently support persons are not allowed to represent employees in hearings. This often creates an unbalanced situation in which an administrator with college training who is familiar

with public-speaking is making a case against an employee with less education and no public-speaking experience.

4. Allow employees' attorneys to participate in the process. Presently, employees can hire attorneys as consultants, but the attorneys are not allowed to participate in the actual grievance process. This restriction, however, doesn't prevent the administration from having attorneys involved on its side. What happens if a grievance is filed against an attorney? What if a respondent wants an attorney for a support person? What if a Step 1 Grievance is heard by an attorney? What if a panel's report is reviewed by an attorney in University Counsel's office? All these situations have occurred, allowing respondents to benefit from legal expertise that has been unavailable to grievants.

Since the administration is incapable of keeping attorneys for their side out of the process, it's only fair to allow grievants to have their attorneys represent them.

5. Change the rules for who can be a respondent. One provision of the grievance policy is that no panelist can be in the respondent's chain-of-command. This rule is designed to prevent panelists from being swayed by their employment ties. However, if the respondent is at a high enough level, this can deprive grievants of a chance for their case to be heard by their peers.

For instance, a frequent problem in Facilities Services has been that the Director, as a matter of personal policy, would often choose to be the respondent on any grievance filed from that area. This meant that no one from Facilities could serve as a panelist for grievances arising out of Facilities, and, as a result, Facilities employees have often felt they are not being judged by their peers. In addition, this situation has meant that Facilities employees have been discouraged from being trained as panelists and serving in the grievance process.

One remedy would be to stipulate that the respondent can never be more than two or three levels above the grievant in the chain-of-command.

6. Shift the task of scheduling panelists to the Ombuds Office. There's long been skepticism about having HR schedule panelists for hearings, because HR might assign those who favor management to more critical cases. HR has said they have to retain the scheduling function in order to maintain panel balance by race and gender. But the Ombuds Office could do this equally well.

7. Train more African-American men as panelists. In the years I've been involved, including training, refresher training, and panel hearings, I only recall ever seeing one man of color, and I believe he was Polynesian. There are fewer male panelists than female, and very few non-white males. I once offered to help recruit African-American men for panel training, but HR never responded.

According to OSP statistics, African-American men receive higher rates of disciplinary actions than white men. (See: <http://www.osp.state.nc.us/divinfo/frames/divisions/eos/SEP-Females%20Report.pdf> p.10) It seems only fair that African-American men be available to serve as panelists in proportion to their numbers in the workplace. I've sometimes considered asking a judge to bring a halt to the grievance process at UNC on this point alone. If I've considered it, it's possible that one day an attorney will raise this issue in a suit against the University.

8. Prohibit respondents from having access to the personnel files of witnesses. Currently, a respondent can ask HR for personnel information about witnesses who are in their chain of command. The respondent can then use that information to try to discredit witnesses for the grievant. Grievants have no such access.

9. Make a clear policy decision about whether or not to allow group grievances. For example, in an outsourcing case, HR allowed the administrator conducting Step 1 to hear grievances as a group. But when it was time for the panel hearing, HR wouldn't allow a group hearing. This was in spite of OSP's okaying group hearings so long as each grievant signed a waiver about hearing the personnel information of the other grievants.

10. Require that any delegation of authority in the process must be transparent. If, for example, the Chancellor delegates the writing of the final decision to someone else, then that person's name must also appear on the finding.

Building a Sustainable Economy

Student Action with Workers

by Salma Mirza

Sophomore, UNC-Chapel Hill

Member, Student Action with Workers

Student Action with Workers (SAW) is an organization at UNC-Chapel Hill that is made up of students, faculty, workers, and community members. We exist to mobilize support for worker-led campaigns on the UNC-CH campus, in North Carolina, and in the UNC supply chain. We strive both to raise awareness and mobilize action around economic justice issues and to build solidarity between students and workers. We support freedom of association, collective bargaining, healthy working conditions, and a living wage for all workers.

UNC-CH has a long history of student-labor solidarity, best exemplified in the support that the Black Student Movement and various faculty members mobilized for striking Lenoir workers in 1969. SAW has existed in its current form since 2003, formed during the controversy surrounding the summer reading choice *Nickel and Dime*d, Barbara Ehrenreich's expose about the difficulties of getting by on low-wage jobs.¹

Since then, SAW has organized support for a variety of worker-led campaigns on campus, including the card-check unionization drive of Aramark workers, the successful farm worker campaign against Mt. Olive pickles, and advocating for housekeepers concerned with the implementation of the OS-1 Team Cleaning Program. SAW also protested the layoffs of the fifteen dental technicians a year ago, which we believe were not only conducted contrary to University procedure but also reflected a move toward increased privatization and a lack of respect for employees who have been working for the University for years.

Recently, SAW has stepped up its efforts to support the collective bargaining rights of North Carolina employees. We support House Bill 1583, which calls for a repeal of Jim Crow-era N.C. General Statute 95-98. We think it is a travesty that in 2007, public employees are still being legally denied their human right to collective bargaining. SAW has helped collect more than five hundred signatures on the following petition:

To: UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Moeser and UNC System President Bowles

We the following members of the UNC-Chapel Hill community support UNC and Triangle area workers in their struggles to exercise their right to collective bargaining and support the repeal of Jim Crow-era N.C. G.S. 95-98, which criminalizes that right for public workers.

We demand the following:

-That you reverse the University Gazette's decision to censor the collective bargaining article from the Employee Forum's newsletter insert.

-That a written apology is sent to the Daily Tar Heel and that the article is sent to all students, alumni and UNC-CH community members.

-That the University community is encouraged to discuss collective bargaining issues in open forums attended by the administration

We delivered these signatures in an action on Friday, October 29, at the office of UNC System President Erskine Bowles. The action was co-sponsored by Students for a Democratic Society, the Young Democrats, and Students United for a Responsible Global Environment. We plan to continue mobilizing around these issues until the administration adequately addresses worker concerns and until the legislature has repealed Statute 95-98.²

SAW has also been deeply concerned about ethical contracting in the UNC supply chain. We believe that the contracts

that UNC signs should show a commitment to doing business only with companies having good labor practices, which is why we objected last year to the UNC-CH athletics endorsement deal with Continental Tire, which was involved with a labor dispute with U.S. employees affiliated with the United Steelworkers. Unfortunately, this has not been the only case of the University turning a blind eye to the welfare of workers.

Following a 72-hour sit-in in South Building by UNC-CH students affiliated with United Students against Sweatshops, UNC-CH adopted a code of conduct for workers who manufacture UNC-CH licensed apparel in 1999. However, in the past eight years, University licensees such as Nike, Adidas, and Russell have failed to enforce these ethical standards in their factories around the world. The prevailing norm in the garment and textile industry throughout the world remains sweatshop conditions in which workers are paid well below legal minimum wage in their areas, work forced overtime, and are harassed, intimidated, abused, fired and sometimes killed if they attempt to organize for their rights.

As an affiliate of United Students against Sweatshops, SAW has been calling for UNC-CH to adopt the Designated Suppliers Program since 2005, which would require licensees to enforce codes of conduct in their supply chains and enforce a living wage and freedom of association for factory workers. Thirty-eight universities, including Duke University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the entire University of California system (a total of nine universities) have already signed on to this policy.

In our commitment to workers' rights and building student-labor solidarity, we have organized in a variety of ways. At the core of our campaigns is actively meeting with workers and worker leaders on the UNC campus, in the Triangle area, and in other Universities and even traveling to speak with workers in the garment and textile industry in the Dominican Republic, Kenya, and India.

Both in theory and in action, SAW opposes systems of oppression that disadvantage workers and students alike, whether that oppression is based on class, race or gender. As such, we are committed to anti-oppression in our advocacy and group functioning. All of these activities are based on the radical idea that the only real basis for a sustainable economy is the creation of viable human relationships, and the only real way to create those viable human relationships is to actively promote and demonstrate respect for the dignity of other human beings.

SAW is, at its core, a source of support for workers. If you would like to contact SAW, you can e-mail uncsaw@unc.edu, visit our website at uncsolidarity.org, or come to one of our weekly meetings held every Tuesday at 7 pm in Alumni Hall 313.

1 See *DTH* 9/15/03 editorial "Taking a stand: A new campus organization is giving efforts to improve the workplace conditions for University employees a much-needed student voice," <<http://media.www.dailytarheel.com/media/storage/paper885/news/2003/09/15/OpinionsboardEditorials/Taking.A.Stand-1354945.shtml>>.

2 See *DTH* 10/30/07 article "Group Continues Petition Efforts," <<http://media.www.dailytarheel.com/media/storage/paper885/news/2007/10/30/University/Group.Continues.Petition.Efforts-3064097.shtml?refeature=htmlmailedition>>.

Report from University Controller Dennis Press Electronic Pay Stubs

In response to the Forum's concerns about the effect that an upcoming change in pay deposit and notification practices will have on some employees, University Controller Dennis Press made a presentation at the October 2007 Employee Forum meeting.

Press said that in 1999 new employees began being required to receive their paychecks via direct deposit and then-current employees were asked to voluntarily switch to direct deposit. Most did so, but approximately 300 were grandfathered under the old, paper check system. Currently, 97% of all permanent faculty and staff participate in direct deposit. However, Press said, a revised policy would require all remaining employees to convert to electronic pay as of

2008, barring exceptional circumstances.

Press noted the advantages of electronic pay, including the very secure and reliable deposit process and the decreased possibility of losing checks. For employees who do not have bank accounts, several local institutions, including Wachovia, Bank of America and the State Employees' Credit Union, will provide them with the opportunity to open free checking accounts. From the University point view, he said, there will be significant advantages in terms of the bank reconciliation process and internal controls.

In addition, he said, the University is planning to quit distributing the paper pay stubs that employees with direct deposit have been receiving. Three and a half years ago, the University began studying the use of an electronic distribution of paycheck stubs to replace the centralized paper distribution system. Starting next year, the University will offer a web-based process through which an individual can print out their own pay statement every payday. Failing that, an employee can ask a Human Resources facilitator to print out their stub on their behalf.

Press said that the savings created by these two measures would amount to approximately \$20,000, which Payroll would submit to General Administration as an expense cut pursuant to the mandate from the PACE initiative.

Chuck Brink raised questions about training individuals uncomfortable with the electronic means of obtaining their pay stubs. Press said that there would be some training or other assistance offered, but the policy would stand.

Camilla Crampton asked how long free checking would last for those employees who will have to open accounts at local banks in order to get paid.

Alan Moran asked how much would be saved on staffing. Press said that Payroll devotes approximately \$8,000 in staff time and \$12,000 to printing and envelopes each year. He said that given the requirements of PACE, there is not an option to redistribute this money to departments, where many employees will soon be printing out their own pay stubs. Some delegates commented that this was going to be less a cost savings for the University than a cost-shifting.

David Brannigan asked how much it would cost to maintain printed check and payroll stub distribution for the 300 grandfathered employees from 1999. Press replied that individual departments such as Facilities Services will have the option to print out stubs for their employees. Alan Moran commended the efforts of Facilities Services in this area.

Mike Hawkins asked whether the University is going to try again to implement a monthly pay schedule—an effort that was strongly opposed by the Forum when it was made in 2005 (see <http://forum.unc.edu/resolutions/2005/ressalaryperiods0405.html>). Press said that there are no plans to go to such a system at this time.

Full Speed Ahead with Career Banding

At its October meeting, the Employee Forum heard from Associate Vice Chancellor Brenda Malone that career banding is now moving forward again full speed ahead.

Citing a memo that had recently gone out to deans, directors, and department heads, Malone said that the moratorium on implementation of banding has been removed. The result has been a lot of interaction with General Administration and the Office of State Personnel as UNC's Human Resources department takes its place at the table and helps in the detailed and time-consuming process of defining career band specifications, competency profiles, pay ranges, and market rates for the remaining roles to be banded. As in the past, career banding materials will be validated statewide through focus groups.

The schedule is tight, with a goal of converting all remaining positions by the spring of 2008. To meet this goal, Malone said, HR will need the support of the campus community. "Within the constraints of the time we've been given to do this job, we hope to have as much full engagement with the campus community here at UNC as possible," she said.

Career banding has been promoted as a way to increase the State's ability to recruit, retain and develop a qualified, motivated, and diverse workforce. It does this by allowing compensation to be aligned with labor market pay rates relative to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies required in the position. Critics of the new system point out that without additional funding, the primary beneficiaries are new hires, who are more likely to be offered salaries closer to market value, while existing employees tend to face continued problems in getting pay commensurate with their job skills and experience.

Supporters, however, point out that this was the case under the old "salary grade" system as well. In fact, they say, career banding opens the door for managers to be able to correct these kinds of inequities more easily. Linwood Futelle, a past Employee Forum chair and Director of the Computer Repair Center, is one administrator who believes that career banding works well if it's used correctly.

"If I want to move somebody up in the pay scale as their skills grow on the job, I do not have to reclassify the position to do it," he said. "In the old system, I did. With career banding, you just move the employee from 'contributing' to 'journey,' which pushes them up the pay scale.

"Under career banding, the pay scales for each band have a much larger range than for any individual position in the current salary grade system. So if your department has the money or it is willing to reallocate money, you can bump a deserving employee up that scale without a whole lot of trouble, because the range is so much larger.

"Even better, if that person leaves, the position remains classified the way you need it, while enabling you to hire in a new person at a pay level that reflects their different skills and experience. From a management standpoint, it lets you manage your personnel resources better to match the job requirements and duties.

"In short, career banding helps you take people who get more skilled and more knowledgeable on the job, and be able to do something for them. I've been fortunate to be a part of a campus organization that has historically done everything possible to take care of folks. And if you take care of folks, then overall, everything else will be taken care of, too."

Questions about the TIM System: When Timesheets Get Delayed

An *InTouch* reader wrote:

Hi. I just read the article about the TIM project. Kim Curtis does not mention one problem with the new system—that if a staff member's online "timesheet" is not approved and turned in by the deadline (payday Friday), that person will not receive their pay unless some major administrative hoops are jumped through.

Unlike the current system in which the computer is programmed to generate a paycheck based on 80 hours of work for every full-time, permanent staff member (and makes adjustments to that based on what the time sheet says), the TIM system does not have a "default" pay programmed in and will rely on the "timesheet" to generate staff members' pay. No timesheet, no pay. In my opinion, this is one of the big drawbacks of the TIM system. Could you ask Ms. Curtis to comment on this?

Thank you.

Kim Curtis, TIM Project Manager, replies:

I'm glad this person wrote to you. I know the new TIM system will generate a lot of questions among staff employees as we launch it, and I'm happy to have a chance to clarify how it will work.

Ideally, under the TIM system SPA Non-Exempt employees will have entered hours into their timesheet each day so that the timesheet will be complete for the manager review and approval even if the employee is not able to be at work on Monday or Tuesday.

However, they do have the flexibility to be able to enter the entire pay period on the first day of the pay cycle.

At the end of each pay cycle, timesheet hours will be sent to payroll regardless of Online Manager approval. Therefore, if the SPA Non-Exempt employee does not enter any hours into TIM, zero hours for that pay period will be sent to the payroll system.

However, both the manager and the TIM Administrator have the ability to enter hours into the employee's timesheet if employees forget or unexpected events occur that prevent them from completing their timesheet on time. These hours will be sent to payroll even if the manager does not process the online approval.

If this occurs, the TIM Admin will get the managers' approval in writing after the fact. In addition, the payroll staff will follow up with all TIM Admins on any active employee who has no hours recorded.

A benefit of the new system is that with the more efficient process, the deadlines for submission to payroll will allow the TIM Admin to process up to Tuesday at 5pm and make adjustments through their payroll representative even after that. So there will actually be more flexibility in getting these types of situations addressed before the payroll processes.

Permanent SPA Exempt Staff and EPA Staff will process a regular paycheck regardless of hours in TIM. TIM is only used for leave reporting for those employee groups.

Hope that helps,
Kim Curtis

We Have Standards!

What You Can Do about Sexual Harassment on the Job

From time to time, Employee Forum delegates hear rumors about instances where UNC employees have experienced sexual harassment on the job. The Forum and the Administration are united in their opposition to such situations. Sexual harassment is unbecoming in a community like Carolina. It's also illegal.

Harassment is a form of discrimination on the basis of sex in which unwelcome sexual advances are made in the workplace by an employee's co-workers or supervisors. Actions may be considered harassment

- When an employee feels she or he must submit to them in order to *get* a job.
- When an employee feels he or she must submit to them in order to *keep* their job.
- When the actions have the effect of interfering with an employee's work.
- When the actions create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

But sexual harassment can only exist when people refuse to confront it.

Employees who feel they may be—or may have been—victims of sexual harassment can contact the Ombuds Office (843-8204) for confidential discussion of the matter and advice on the options and resources that are available to them.

Less confidential resources for the discussion of such situations include the Equal Opportunity Officer (966-3576), which is responsible for the enforcement of the University policy, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources

(962-1554), the General Counsel (962-1219), or Human Resources Employee Services (962-8830).

According to the UNC Human Resources website, “These [latter] individuals are prepared to help all members of the campus community understand the Policy. They are able to explain the options available for resolving concerns related to sexual harassment in academic or work settings at the University. They cannot assure complete confidentiality, however, unless a legally protected relationship exists.”

For more information on the University’s sexual harassment policy, see http://www.unc.edu/campus/policies/sexual_harass.html.

What Ever Happened To...?

The “Free Tuition” Proposal for Children of UNC Faculty and Staff

In January 2007, an ad hoc faculty/administrator group submitted a written proposal to the Administration that asked the Carolina First Campaign to spend part of its effort during its last year of operation to fund an endowment for a tuition scholarship for dependents of all faculty and staff who have served Carolina for ten years or more. The proposed scholarship was to be useable at any of the UNC system campuses and community colleges. In February the Employee Forum passed a resolution (07-04) supporting this proposal.*

Throughout the spring and early summer the ad hoc faculty group spoke to administrators and trustees to try to garner institutional support for the proposal. They promoted the idea as an important employee benefit that could help in the University’s quest to attract and retain top-flight professors and the staff who support them.

Despite continuing employee interest, the Administration has not moved on the issue. The proposal was viewed as a good idea by most people, but failed to win enough high-level support due to the amount of money that would be required for the endowment—estimated at \$40 million, or 2% of the Carolina First Campaign’s goal.

The idea, however, is not dead; it is only dormant. The ad hoc group reports that it needs a wealthy donor to champion the cause by making a major donation of \$5-10 million to get it started as a viable project. The group that initiated the proposal is currently quiescent, but if an opportunity arises, the group will move the idea forward again.

On the other hand, last year the Chancellor’s Office provided an additional \$32,000 for the Carolina Family Scholarship Fund, which this year was able to provide need-based support to four more college-bound children of UNC employees, bringing the total number currently supported by the Scholarship to about a dozen students. Bruce Egan, who originated the program, advises interested parties to go to www.unc.edu/familyfund or to contact him at 843-7777 to apply or to make a donation to this program.

*The Forum’s resolution in support of the tuition support benefit for the children of all long-term UNC employees can be found at <http://forum.unc.edu/resolutions/2007/res0704a.htm>.

Notice:

Full Text of Collective Bargaining Article Available Online

The full text of the controversial third article in the *InTouch*’s series on collective bargaining is available at <http://forum.unc.edu/documents/InTouch8-special2.pdf>. The Administration refused to allow the *InTouch* to publish the article in its yearly print edition in July. It appeared in an abridged form in the *Daily Tarheel* on October 10th.

Employee Forum Delegate Elections Rescheduled

The Employee Forum has recently received permission from the Chancellor to change its annual election cycle from a calendar year to a fiscal year. This will bring the Forum's operations in sync with the business calendar used at the University.

As a consequence of this change, the Forum will hold its annual election for new delegates this coming spring. Employees who have expressed an interest in running for delegate can expect to hear from the Nominations Committee as that time approaches.

Editorial Opinion

A Personal Note from the Editor

On "Editorial Opinions"

by Brenda Denzler

Chair, Employee Forum Communications Committee

It has come to my attention that after the last regular issue of the *InTouch* was published online, a ranking person at General Administration wanted to know whether the two editorial opinions therein were the official position of the Forum or even the opinion of the majority of Forum members. As if the words "editorial opinion" before each piece were not clear enough, this person went on to suggest that the Forum ought to print a disclaimer before such columns in the future.

First, in case the term "editorial opinion" too opaque, it should be understood that the opinions expressed in columns bearing that heading are the opinions of the authors, not an official position statement of the Forum. As one of last month's op ed pieces made clear, the Forum expresses its official positions and requests via resolutions sent to the Chancellor—not via op ed pieces published in the newsletter.

Second, no one knows whether the opinions expressed by op ed writers are shared by a majority of Forum members—or staff in general—or not. It seems reasonable to suppose that most op ed writers are probably not going to be inclined to share their views in print if they think they're going to get brickbats thrown at them by their peers. In other words, op ed writers are most likely not rogue elephants; they belong to a herd. How big that herd is, is usually unknown.

Speaking from personal experience, I know that there are a lot of opinions and ideas that get discussed fairly widely among Forum members but that (believe it or not) never make it into formal resolutions...and sometimes someone decides that these things deserve a public airing in front of a larger audience. Some ideas get plastered on sandwich boards and walked around at campus events. Others get written up as editorial opinions and published in the Forum's newsletter.

Third, it is interesting that just a few months ago the Administration refused to print a single disclaimer as a way to resolve the disputed question of what would be published in the print edition of the Forum's newsletter. Yet now an administrator at G.A. has suggested that the Forum print a disclaimer every time it runs an op ed piece. This seems neither necessary nor appropriate.

For the sake of clarification, however, a statement of the *InTouch's* stance on editorial opinions may be in order. That statement is:

It is the mission of the Employee Forum to determine staff employee interests and concerns and then to relay those issues to the Chancellor, the Trustees, and the larger community. Part of the fulfillment of that mission entails providing staff employees with opportunities to express their ideas and opinions. The *InTouch* newsletter is one venue where such ideas and opinions are welcome. Staff wishing to voice their opinions and ideas in the *InTouch* are welcome to contact the Forum office for more information on how to do so (962-3779). Editorial opinions from non-staff persons that speak to matters of staff concern are also welcome.

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