

# HUMAN RESOURCES HIGHLIGHTS

## COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR APPLICANTS

Faculty and Staff who agree to write a letter of recommendation for an applicant applying for a position on campus should be sure that the letter is received by the search committee by the deadline listed in the vacancy notice. Failure to receive the letter by the advertised deadline may result in the applicant not being considered due to their failure to provide all requested documents by the deadline.

## 2004 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The 2004 Holiday Schedule is now available. For a list of University Closures and Holidays please visit the HR website at the following address:

<http://www.selu.edu/Administration/Depts/HumanResources/holiday.html>

## NEW CRISIS LEAVE POLICY FOR CLASSIFIED STAFF

The Civil Service Commission approved Southeastern's Crisis Leave Policy for Classified Staff on December 3, 2003. The policy was effective January 1, 2004. The Crisis Leave Program is a means of providing paid leave to an eligible classified employee who has experienced a serious illness or injury to themselves or an eligible family member.

Contributions to the Crisis Leave Pool are strictly voluntary; no employee shall be coerced or pressured to donate leave. An employee donating to the pool may not designate a particular employee to receive donated time. Donations are accumulated in the pool on a calendar basis and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible employees. Donations must be renewed annually. Donations are limited to the following terms:

- an employee may donate a minimum of four (4) hours of annual leave and up to a maximum of 240 hours of annual leave per calendar year (no sick or compensatory leave).
- donations are made in whole hour increments.
- the donor must have a balance of at least 120 hours of annual leave remaining after the contribution.

The employee must complete a leave donation form and designate the leave as a “Donation to the Crisis Leave Pool”. This form should be turned in to the immediate supervisor for approval, who then forwards the form to the Janet Rester, Payroll Director, at SLU 10720. Ms. Rester will manage the leave pool.

For more information, a copy of the policy is available on the HR website at the following address:  
<http://www.selu.edu/Administration/Depts/HumanResources/crisisleavepolicy.pdf>

The following is a link to classified leave pool donation form located on the Controller’s Office website:  
[http://www.selu.edu/Administration/Depts/Controller/crisis\\_leave\\_policy.html](http://www.selu.edu/Administration/Depts/Controller/crisis_leave_policy.html)

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## SHARED SICK LEAVE

Southeastern Louisiana University has a Shared Sick Leave Program to be used by **faculty and/or unclassified staff** employees. A summary of the University Policy is:

Shared Sick Leave is sick leave hours donated by faculty and/or unclassified staff into a shared sick leave pool to be used by fellow faculty and/or unclassified staff who are suffering from their own serious health condition which has caused or is likely to cause the employee to take leave without pay or to terminate employment. Faculty and/or unclassified employees may irrevocably donate sick leave to the shared sick leave pool.

For those faculty and/or unclassified staff who are interested in donating a portion of their sick leave to the Shared Sick Leave program please complete a Leave Donation Form. The full policy and the Leave Donation Form are located on the Human Resources Website at:  
<http://www.selu.edu/Administration/Depts/HumanResources/hroleave.htm>

Once the form is completed, it should be forwarded to the Controller’s Office for processing.

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## REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Several employees have already participated in Southeastern’s Rewards and Recognition Program. Some of the awards were for certifications for CHN, CNA, CNE, among others. Employees are encouraged to review the policy on the Human Resources Office website at:  
<http://www.selu.edu/Administration/Depts/HumanResources/rewardsregmenu.html>

Employees who have completed approved certifications listed in the program may be eligible for monetary awards. Applications must be received no later than March 30, 2004, in order to be considered for the 2003-2004 awards program.

Supervisors are encouraged to review all the possible awards to ascertain if any employees they supervise may be eligible for an award.

## CIVIL SERVICE CHANGES

Civil Service is implementing a new procedure for filling clerical positions. Effective March 1, 2004, Human Resources will begin posting all clerical positions on the Civil Service Job Search website in addition to our own website. Human Resources will no longer use registers or certifiable scores for clerical positions. Instead, Civil Service will issue percentile grades. Filling all other positions will remain the same. These positions will only be posted for one week unless there is an insufficient applicant pool, in which case the vacancy notice can be extended.

Civil Service has issued revised rules for promotion pay.

- (1) *Pay rules for promotions to jobs within the same pay schedule (Example: WS to WS):*
  - When an employee is promoted to a position in a higher grade, his/her pay **shall** increase by at least 7%.
  - When an employee is given a two-grade promotion his/her pay **shall** be increased by 10.5 %.
  - When an employee is given a three or more grade promotion his/her pay **shall** increase by 14%.
  - An employee shall not be paid below the minimum of the higher range.
  
- (2) *Pay rules for promotions to jobs that are in a different pay schedule (Example: WS to AS, MS, PS, TS, SS)*
  - If the maximum of the job to which he/she is being promoted is less than 14% above his current maximum, his/her pay **shall** be increased by 7%.
  - If the maximum of the job to which he/she is being promoted is at least 14% but less than 21% above his/her current maximum, his/her pay **shall** be increased by 10.5%.
  - If the maximum of the job to which he/she is being promoted is equal to or greater than 21% above his/her current maximum, his/her pay **shall** be increased by 14%.

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## GA INFORMATION

Employment dates for GA's for Spring 2004 are Monday, January 12, through Friday, May 14. These are mandatory days. GA's beginning after January 12 will have their stipend pro-rated. Days missed due to holidays do not have to be made up—these are calculated in the pay.

The minimum number of credit a graduate assistant can be enrolled in is six. If a student needs to be considered full-time for financial aid or insurance purposes, nine credit hours are required.

It is the responsibility of the hiring department to advise GA's of the mandatory orientation session on Monday, January 12, at 9 a.m. in University Center room 133. They **must bring** a Xerox copy of their driver's license, Social Security card and a check for direct deposit to orientation. International students must also bring a Xerox copy of their passport (all pages with notations), visa, I-94, I-20 and a work permit. Graduate assistants must bring the original documents, along with the required Xerox copies, for review by the Human Resources staff.

Criminal background checks will be performed on all new GA's. The pre-application provides consent for this background check.

Unless the students have been previously employed by Southeastern, the hiring department must complete a telephone verification of one previous employer for all new GA's, including international students.

Pay dates for Spring 2004 are February 15<sup>th</sup> and the last working day of each month thereafter. Pay for additional duties performed during the break will be included in the February 15<sup>th</sup> check.

For further information, contact Rissie Cook at x2347.

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## **NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION**

Orientation for new classified and unclassified employees will be held on Tuesday, January 27, 2004, in room 139 of the University Center. Attendance is mandatory for classified employees and unclassified employees are expected to attend.

The program will begin at 8:30 a.m. with registration and coffee and will conclude at approximately 11:45 a.m. Attendees will receive up-to-date information on federal laws affecting University employees as well as information on benefits, university policies and procedures and general, helpful campus information. Employees who have missed a recent orientation or long-term employees who wish to update their training are also invited to attend.

A schedule of orientation dates for the 2004 calendar year is available by contacting the Training Department at extensions 5435 or 5771. If you plan to attend the January 27th orientation or have any questions, please email Jan Ortego at [jortego@selu.edu](mailto:jortego@selu.edu) or phone extension 5771.

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## **CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING**

A training program on effective customer service techniques for Southeastern employees will be held on February 18, 2004 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in Room 139 of the University Center. Topics to be covered include, effective telephone techniques, dos and don'ts of good customer service and how to deal with difficult situations. The program will be limited to the first 40 employees who register by emailing [jortego@selu.edu](mailto:jortego@selu.edu) or by calling x5435 or x5771.

Customer service training is also available for individual university groups including student workers upon request. These can be offered during staff meeting time or scheduled at a separate time. Please contact the Training Department at x5435 or x5771 for more information on the public program or to schedule a special program for your group.

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## **VIDEO LIBRARY**

The Human Resources Office, through the Training Section, maintains an extensive video library on topics helpful for professional development, communication skills and productivity for employees. The videos include topics such as Professional Telephone Skills, Conflict Communication Skills, Dealing with Difficult People and Making Diversity Work. You may review a list of videos available to borrow by visiting the following link: <http://www.selu.edu/Administration/Depts/HumanResources/videolibrary.html>

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## **UNSCHEDULED ABSENCE POLICY TRAINING**

The University adopted an Unscheduled Absence Policy for classified workers on April 1, 2003. The next open training session on this policy and its implications is scheduled for Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup> in Room 139 of the University Center. There will be two, separate sessions, one from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. and an afternoon session from 1:30 to 2:45 p.m. This training is mandatory for classified employees who have not yet attended and recommended for supervisors of classified employees. Classified employees, with their supervisors' permission, and supervisors may attend either of these training sessions, but pre-registration is required by contacting Carol Cooper at [ccooper@selu.edu](mailto:ccooper@selu.edu) or by phoning her at x5435.

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## **COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC TRAINING PROGRAM SCHEDULED ON CAMPUS**

The Comprehensive Public Training Program, a section of the Louisiana Division of Administration, is sponsoring a training program entitled "Documenting for Performance & Discipline" to be held in the University Center on Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> from 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The program is open to classified supervisors or supervisors of classified employees, however, registration for this program is required and space is limited. For more information on this program, please contact Jan Ortego at x5771.

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## **LASERS IMPLEMENTS NEW SELF-DIRECTED DROP**

LASERS will implement the new Self-Directed DROP Account beginning January 1, 2004. Great West is the third party plan administrator. This is an irrevocable decision to use this plan. Current DROP participants can switch to this plan if they choose, or they can stay in their current plan. Great West will be contacting current DROP participants to try to convince them to move their money. With the Self-Directed Plan if an employee uses this plan and their investments lose money, their account will lose money. In the old DROP, participants can not lose any money. From January 1, 2004, forward, LASERS plan members entering DROP will be enrolled in the new self-directed plan. As long as employees keep their money in the DROP account and it is disbursed from there, it is exempt from the 6% state tax. If the employee chooses to roll their DROP money over to an IRA or to a Deferred Compensation account, then it becomes taxable and 6% is taken off the top for state taxes.

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## **OFFICE OF GROUP BENEFITS**

Office of Group Benefits has signed a contract with the Mayo Clinic. This contract gives members of the OGB system access to the Mayo Clinic database to do research about various health issues. Members can obtain access from the OGB website at: <http://www.groupbenefits.org/>

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## **TAX SHELTERED ANNUITY LIMITS FOR 2004**

Contribution Limits to 403b and 457 accounts increased to the following for 2004:

### **403b Accounts**

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Contribution Limit       | \$13,000.00 |
| Catch-up Limit (age 50+) | \$ 3,000.00 |

### **457 Accounts**

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Contribution Limit       | \$13,000.00 |
| Catch-up Limit (age 50+) | \$ 3,000.00 |

Employees who wish to increase their contributions limits must submit a new Salary Reduction Agreement Form to the Human Resources Office. The form may be downloaded from the HR website at [www.selu.edu/HRO](http://www.selu.edu/HRO) (see DOWNLOADS)

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## **SALE OF OCHSNER HEALTH PLAN**

Ochsner Clinic Foundation of New Orleans has announced the sale of its health plan to Humana Inc. The sale will now undergo review by the Insurance Commissioner as well as several other regulatory agencies, including the Federal Trade Commission.

OGB plan members who have chosen Ochsner Health Plan (OHP) should see no change in their coverage or providers.

Health care will still be provided by OHP physicians as part of a long-term relationship following the sale to Humana. OHP members will not have to worry about any transition in their care. As a side note, Ochsner Clinic Foundation will retain ownership of all its other entities, including Ochsner Hospital and 25 clinic locations throughout southern Louisiana.

OHP plan members will eventually have broader options, products and services. They will experience no reduction in the delivery of medical services. OHP members will receive additional information on the pending sale.

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## **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT FORMS**

If you have not returned your outside employment for this fiscal year please be reminded that these need to be completed and returned by January 14, 2004. If you previously completed an outside employment form but your employment status has changed (i.e. you now have outside employment to disclose), a new form must be completed, signed by the appropriate personnel, and returned to the Human Resources Office.