GW InTouch
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Meet UHR

Faculty and staff enjoy the Proud to be GW Festival.
Photo Credit: William Atkins
I am delighted to introduce the first edition of *GW In Touch*, our internal faculty and staff newsletter.

With a diverse population of more than 11,000 faculty and staff, the George Washington University is a complex and dynamic institution. I applaud Vice President Sabrina Ellis and her entire Human Resources team for providing this new source of information about issues and topics that affect us all.

There are many inspiring stories of people among us who are dedicated to advancing our mission of teaching, research and service. This edition features Dr. Christopher Cahill, Associate Professor of Chemistry, and his efforts to introduce a new curriculum in nuclear science and policy. *GW In Touch* will help bring stories like this to light and will also keep us apprised of important HR services and programs. I hope you enjoy and profit from reading this edition and those to follow.

Sincerely,

Steven Knapp

Meet UHR

The main hub of the GW Division of University Human Resources is on the 1st floor of Rice Hall. University Human Resources is committed to supporting our diverse body of faculty and staff. Collectively we serve as advocates for the GW community to consistently provide discreet, valuable, and personalized service that is timely and responsive. The primary operational units within UHR are described below.

- **Faculty and Staff Service Center**
  
  The Faculty and Staff Service Center (FSSC) is a one-stop resource for GW employees desiring support with human resources, parking & transportation, tax, payroll, and benefits transactions.

- **Office of Equal Employment and Affirmative Action (EEO)**
  
  The Office of Equal Employment and Affirmative Action supports the university’s commitment to equality and fairness in all employment practices at the university. We expand and support diversity throughout the university working with members of the GW community to promote equity in the workplace and in providing counseling and impartial mediation when needed.

- **Client Services**
  
  The Client Services Group is responsible for providing HR services within the individual schools and divisions. Client Partners serve as the primary point of contact between UHR and their respective areas. In addition, Client Partners act as an advocate for the GW community and consistently provide confidential and personalized service that is responsive, timely, and adds value.

- **Organizational Development and Effectiveness (ODE)**
  
  ODE offers services that assist departments in their efforts to continuously improve, build skills, and enable career growth. Our vision is to help executives, managers, and employees at all levels reach their full potential. ODE also develops programs for GW employees that support employee engagement.

- **Human Resources Administration**

  **Compensation**
  
  - Supports GW’s efforts to ensure that our compensation plan is optimized to achieve the institution’s mission and to attract and retain top talent
  - Ensures that compensation plans align internally and externally
  - Ensures that there is parity and internal equity based on job pay for job worth

  **Benefits, Wellness, and Colonial Community**
  
  - Partners with GW leadership in offering a comprehensive benefits package at a competitive cost
Welcome to our first edition of *GW In Touch.*

The faculty and staff of GW are critically important to fulfilling the mission of the university in teaching, research, and community engagement. With so many things to do throughout the day, worrying about the specifics of a benefits package or even maintaining a good work-life balance often comes last. *GW In Touch* is here as a resource to provide you with relevant and timely information about the workplace. This is your newsletter, so please send us recommendations of people to profile in future articles, or other article suggestions. Enjoy!

Louis Katz  
Executive Vice President and Treasurer

Sabrina Ellis  
Vice President for University Human Resources
Faculty Spotlight

Meet Dr. Christopher Cahill, Associate Professor of Chemistry at GW

Photo Credit: William Atkins
For many, the first day of classes is a step into the unknown. This fall, Dr. Christopher Cahill and a group of graduate students began a journey into newly chartered territory together. Dr. Cahill’s graduate level nuclear science course for “non-science individuals” is the first of its kind at GW and will bridge the gap between policy and nuclear science.

"Unfortunately those two camps don’t play well," said Dr. Cahill, an associate professor of Chemistry at GW. "Their educational paths diverged early on and they don’t have the vocabulary of one another. Each is suspicious of the other."

This semester Dr. Cahill introduced this new curriculum, a fusion of nuclear science and nuclear policy, to twenty Elliott School graduate students. The class meets in a newly renovated laboratory in Monroe Hall once a week, for two hours. The first hour is lecture and the second hour is laboratory. The uniquely structured course reflects the work of students, many of whom work full-time for government agencies and have a heavy workload from their policy courses.

"Somebody goes off into a political science or international affairs degree course after freshman year and we’ll never hear from them in the sciences," said Dr. Cahill. "Those are the ones who end up making the key decisions about energy and nuclear policy in the world and I’d like to address that."

On the first day, students measured the amount of radiation emanating from materials. A GW radiation safety officer also took the time to lay rest to any concerns students might have had about their safety.

"The idea was that in the first week, we had to dispel myths about radiation to our non-technical people," said Dr. Cahill. "I wanted people to feel comfortable about the class and not be nervous about the stuff they were handling."

According to a class survey conducted by Dr. Cahill, only two students had taken a science course since high school. One student dropped the course after the first class because of a lack of a scientific background. Dr. Cahill was still eager to teach the new curriculum to his class of “non-science individuals.”

"It’s a different mindset when you’re a graduate student," said Dr. Cahill. "A lot of these students are already working in the security arena so these guys know what they’re doing and what they want for career advancement."

This newly developed course is the brainchild of Dr. Cahill and Doug Shaw, associate dean for planning and external relations in the Elliott School and nuclear non-proliferation expert. Dr. Cahill often taught "Nuke 101"—a 30-minute crash course in the fundamentals of nuclear science—to Shaw’s class. Both men talked about a need to expand the course but it was not until they received a $30,000 grant from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission that their dream became a reality. Dr. Gerald Feldman and Dr. William Briscoe, both physics professors in the Columbian College, came on later to further develop the curriculum. Dr. Cahill has enjoyed the journey thus far.

"In the last two years or so, we made a complete departure from our comfort zone and started on this curriculum development stuff," said Dr. Cahill. "It’s been kind of the career progression."

Dr. Cahill joined the faculty in 2000 after a one-year post-doctoral position in the Environmental Mineralogy group at the University of Notre Dame. He specializes in synthetic and organic chemistry of uranium and other elements at the bottom of the periodic table. While he admits his research is not as “sexy” as many would like to make it sound, Dr. Cahill takes pride in creating new knowledge for future use.

The same goes for the impact of this newly developed class.

"... I want to remove ALL scientific illiteracy from the world."

"While I hope that we’ll offer different forums whether they’re dean’s seminars or what have you, I’m thinking more locally in terms of the immediate impact," said Dr. Cahill. "The big picture, of course, I want to remove ALL scientific illiteracy from the world."
**News You Can Use**

Featuring news and updates relevant to your work and worklife. Take a moment to read these tidbits of information and stay up-to-date on changes around your departments.

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**What’s New for Your 2013 Medical Plan?**

GW’s Benefits Administration department will host a series of sessions with UnitedHealthcare to explore the many tools and resources available to faculty and staff on GW’s medical plan. You may be surprised by the amazing things you can do online or from your mobile device! The sessions are interactive using a combination of iPads and/or tablets (provided by UHC) to give attendees a firsthand look and feel.

- **FOGGY BOTTOM CAMPUS**
  - **Date:** Wednesday, December 12
  - **Time:** 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
  - **Location:** Marvin Center Room 309

- **VIRGINIA SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS**
  - **Date:** Wednesday, December 19
  - **Time:** 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
  - **Location:** Enterprise Hall Dining Room

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**Smoking Cessation Program**

Beginning October 1, GW partnered with Alere Wellbeing to offer free telephonic coaching and 8 weeks of over the counter nicotine replacement therapy—gum or patch—at no cost to GW employees and members of their households, regardless of whether they participate in the UnitedHealthcare medical plans.

To learn more, visit: [www.gwu.edu/quitsmoking](http://www.gwu.edu/quitsmoking)

**Employee Assistance Program**

With this no-cost counseling service, GW employees can address stress and personal concerns that they or their family face with highly trained master’s and doctoral level staff at no cost to you. Calls are unlimited and service is available 24/7.

Check [www.gwu.edu/hr/colonialcommunity/worklife/FEAP.html](http://www.gwu.edu/hr/colonialcommunity/worklife/FEAP.html) for more information.

**Updates for UnitedHealthcare Medical Plan Participants**

Expanded Healthy Pregnancy Program—Expectant mothers participating in the UnitedHealthcare medical plan now have 24-hour access to experienced nurses and one-on-one support throughout the pregnancy. Those who enroll in 2013 will receive up to $250 in addition to free gifts and resources to ensure a healthy pregnancy for both mother and baby. Spouses are also covered if they are on the GW medical plan.

Health Care Reform—For the 2013 plan year, GW will maintain its current health plan offerings and implement the following features in accordance with the Affordable Care Act:

- In-network coverage of recommended preventive services for women—mammograms, cervical cancer screenings, prenatal care, contraceptive care—are fully covered under all three medical plans.
- Distribution of the summary of benefits and coverage, which includes information about covered benefits, exclusions, etc.
- New IRS limit on health care FSA accounts of $2,500 per employee—if you wish to participate in 2013, you had to enroll during open enrollment. Your 2012 election will not rollover.
- Reporting the value of employer-based health coverage on IRS Form W-2. This will not impact the taxes that you pay. GW will report the total premium contribution that both you and GW pay toward the cost of your medical care coverage.
CVS Caremark Pharmacy Program

A decrease in faculty and staff use of the mail order prescription program has resulted in an increase of our overall prescription drug costs. The following changes will offset the increases and limit 2013 premium increases:

- Copays for generic, preferred, and non-preferred prescriptions will increase to bring them in line with the market.
- Under the new maintenance choice prescription program with CVS, if you have a condition that requires ongoing prescription medication, you will receive the lowest total copay possible when you request that your doctor provide a prescription for a 90-day supply of your medication. You can fill this prescription at any CVS/Pharmacy or through CVS Caremark mail order. If you fill your maintenance prescription at a retail store, you will pay a higher copay after the third 30-day fill.
- It only takes a few minutes to register as a member to order a 90-day prescription online. Visit www.caremark.com and click on the “Order Prescriptions” link to get started.
- For help or questions regarding your 90-day prescription, call CVS Caremark at 1 (800) 875-0867.

For additional details, visit www.financeoffice.gwu.edu/benefits to review information about the Maintenance Choice Prescription Program.

Breastfeeding Friendly University Project

As one of the fastest growing groups in today’s workforce, working mothers balance demanding work schedules and obligations to their families. The Breastfeeding Friendly University Project at GW is a progressive push towards creating a work and academic environment that fits the needs of working mothers and students in the GW community. In creating a breastfeeding friendly environment, the Project hopes to find better ways to support the breastfeeding families in our community, and to educate members of the GW community about the importance of breastfeeding.

The Breastfeeding Friendly University Project hosted its first major event on October 3rd, where panelists spoke about benefits of breastfeeding and the need to support breastfeeding women and their partners. Speakers included Lori Lerman, wife of Provost Steven Lerman and international board certified lactation consultant, Sabrina Ellis, Vice President for University Human Resources, Charles Macri, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Erica Hayton, Director of Benefits and Wellness, and Charys Williams, Director of Faculty Personnel Administration. Each panelist has dedicated their resources towards the creation of the Project and enthusiastically answered questions from an audience of approximately 70 people.

Since its inception in September 2011, the Breastfeeding Friendly University Project has been instrumental in the creation of seven dedicated “motherhood rooms” across the three GW campuses. Working mothers can breastfeed in private in rooms in the Marvin Center, Old Main, and on the Mount Vernon and Virginia Science & Technology campuses. La Leche League of GW, a support group for breastfeeding mothers, holds monthly meetings on the Foggy Bottom Campus. There are now two groups and four La Leche leaders in training at the university.

“This has been a very exciting project because it allows the many aspects of a large university like GW to work together to support the families in our community,” said Lerman. The health sciences curriculum will soon include breastfeeding education and the university hopes to provide certificate programs to train volunteers to help breastfeeding patients. As of January 1, 2013, coverage under GW’s health insurance plan will include full coverage for breast pump rentals and purchases and lactation support services.

At the end of October, the university was recognized by the DC Breastfeeding Committee (DCBFC) and the Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition (MBC) for the support provided to working mothers as part of the Regional Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Awards.

All mothers and expecting mothers are encouraged to visit the Breastfeeding Friendly University Project website (http://breastfeeding.gwu.edu) and the Colonial Community New Parent Support page (www.gwu.edu/hr/colonialcommunity/worklife/baby/index.html) for more information.
Fight the Flu!

The flu is a serious disease that affects millions of people every year. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine each year.

Faculty, staff, and dependents on GW’s health insurance plan are eligible to receive a free flu vaccination at any of a large number of local pharmacies, including CVS, Rite Aid, Target, and Walgreens. You must show your UnitedHealthcare insurance card when requesting your vaccination.

To get more information on coverage for your flu vaccination through a local pharmacy, please visit the Colonial Community website at www.gwu.edu/hr/colonialcommunity/health/flu.html.

Colonial Community’s Walking Challenge

Join the Start! Walking Challenge today and walk your way to great prizes and improved health. Colonial Community is proud to partner with the American Heart Association’s Start! Campaign, a physical activity initiative that gets people moving and fights against heart disease and stroke. As part of the program, if you walk a minimum of 30 miles in a calendar month you are entered in a drawing to receive an Ultimate Premier Movie Pack (2 movie tickets and $10 in concessions). For more information or to register go to: www.gwu.edu/hr/colonialcommunity/health/walkingchallenge.html

Important New Course for Supervisors and Above

Preventing Workplace Harassment

The Executive and Management Development Program (EMDP) recently launched “Preventing Workplace Harassment for Supervisors,” a new required online course. The primary goal of this course is to enable GW’s leaders to identify and prevent prohibited harassing behaviors, including sexual harassment. This course is important to help GW maintain an environment free from harassment, discrimination, and intimidation and to promote the GW Values.

The launch will be phased in over the coming months and reaches all employees in supervisory roles across our schools and divisions. Following the roll out, UHR will be working on a version of the training for GW’s staff. Watch for more information in future editions of this newsletter.
Performance Management at GW

Our formal annual performance review cycle is nearing the end with employees setting new goals and discussing their reviews with their supervisors.

We encourage you to make the most of your performance review discussions by using the Employee’s Checklist (http://ode.hr.gwu.edu/tools/employee_checklist.pdf).

We also encourage anyone who supervises staff to use the Reviewer’s Checklist (http://ode.hr.gwu.edu/tools/gw_reviewerchecklist.pdf) to ensure productive conversations.

In a recent memo from Vice President Ellis, she noted the following in regards to performance management: “Your role in the process will lead to increased employee engagement as you clarify expectations and set goals for the upcoming performance review period.” We know that as a part of the review process, employees are thinking about professional development plans. With that in mind, we hope all of you took advantage of the recent Service Excellence Conference and developed skills critical for success at GW. For more information, visit: http://service.gwu.edu/conference.
Dear UHR,

The tax code often confuses me. I am not sure how much is deducted from my checks and where it goes. This makes it hard to manage my finances. I heard it’s different depending on where you live, your benefits, and your marital status among other things. Please help!

GW Employee
Dear GW Employee,

Most employees are required to have federal, state, Social Security, and Medicare taxes deducted from their pay. The amount of tax withholding is different for each employee because the tax depends on several variables such as marital status, number of dependents, income level, number of exemptions claimed, state of residence, and the level of participation in pretax benefits, e.g. retirement, health and welfare benefits, etc. A change to any of these variables can cause your tax withholding to change, therefore changing your net pay. Your paystub will summarize all of these items.

Federal tax (Fed Tax)
Federal tax withholding is based on a progressive withholding scale, the more you make the larger percentage of withholding. Federal withholding is calculated on the amount of gross income minus pre-tax deductions and the number of exemptions you are claiming. The federal tax withholding rate is 10–35%.

To help calculate your federal tax withholding, please visit: www.irs.gov/Individuals/IRS-Withholding-Calculator

State tax
For employees living in DC, Maryland, or Virginia, state tax is withheld based on where you live. State withholding is also calculated on the amount of gross earnings minus pre-tax deductions and the number of exemptions you are claiming. The rates range up to 6–9% depending on the state.

Social Security (FICA-Old)
Social Security is comprised of Old Age and Survivor’s Insurance (OASI) and Disability Insurance (DI) and is funded by both employee and employer contributions. During 2012, the employee contribution is 4.2% of the first $110,100 of taxable earnings and the employer is 6.2% of the first $110,100 of taxable earnings. With the expiration of the Tax Relief Act of 2010 (TRA), effective January 1, 2013, the employee’s contribution will return to 6.2%.

Medicare taxes (FICA-Med)
Medicare taxes pay for benefits provided by the Health Insurance (HI) program, also funded by both the employee and employer. The employee’s and employer’s contribution is 1.45% of all taxable wages.

Please visit the Payroll Services website for more information to help you understand your pay and income tax withholding: http://financeoffice.gwu.edu/taxpayrollbenefits/payroll/payroll_taxwithholding.html
This is your newsletter! Please forward any article suggestions, ideas, and comments to scollins@gwu.edu.