

# Human Resources & Payroll News

Issue #6

February – April, 2011

## Tips to Help Achieve Work/Life Balance

**Do you remember a time when you were able to focus on work while at work, and on home while at home?**

If you're like many, it's becoming more of a challenge. Work invades your home life, and the demands of home life invade work. It's important to recognize that work-life balance may not be possible each and every day, but there are ways to strike a better balance over the long haul. Here are some ideas from the Mayo Clinic that may work for you:

### Track your time.

Track everything you do for one week, including work-related and personal activities. Decide what's necessary and what satisfies you the most. Cut or delegate activities you don't enjoy or can't handle — or share your concerns and possible solutions with your employer or others.

**Learn to say no.** Whether it's a co-worker asking you to spearhead an extra project or your child's teacher asking you to manage the class play, remember that it's OK to respectfully say no. When you quit doing the things you do only out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, you'll make more room in your life for the activities that are meaningful to you and bring you joy.

### Leave work at work.

With the technology to connect to anyone at any time from virtually anywhere, there may be no boundary between work and home — unless you create it. Make a conscious decision to separate work time from personal time. When you're with your family, for instance, turn off your cell phone and put away your laptop computer.

**Manage your time.** Organize household tasks efficiently, such as running errands in batches or doing a load of laundry every day, rather than saving it all for your day off. Put family events on a weekly family calendar and keep a daily to-do list. Do what needs to be done and let the rest go. Limit time-consuming misunderstandings by communicating clearly and listening carefully. Take notes if necessary.



“To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan and not quite enough time.”

Leonard Bernstein

Illustration by: Elizabeth Gibbins

### Bolster your support system.

At work, join forces with co-workers who can cover for you — and vice versa — when family conflicts arise. At home, enlist trusted friends and loved ones to pitch in with child care or household responsibilities when you need to work overtime or travel.

### Nurture yourself.

Eat healthy foods, include physical activity in your daily routine and get enough sleep. Set aside time each day for an activity that you enjoy, such as practicing yoga or reading. Better yet, discover activities

you can do with your partner, family or friends — such as hiking, dancing or taking cooking classes.

Remember, striking a healthy work-life balance isn't a one-shot deal. Creating work-life balance is a continuous process as your family, interests and work life change.

**Periodically examine your priorities - and make changes, if necessary - to make sure you're keeping on track.**

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**NEW!**

## Family Violence Leave Policy



A new Connecticut law provides employees who are victims of family violence with job protected leave. Family violence is defined as an incident between family or household members that results in physical harm, bodily injury or assault. It also includes threats of violence when there is fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury or assault. Please note that verbal abuse or argument is not considered family violence unless there is present danger and the likelihood that physical danger will occur.

Family Violence Leave is available for the following reasons:

1. To seek medical care for physical or psychological injury or disability,
2. To obtain services from a victim services organization,
3. To relocate, or
4. To participate in a civil or criminal proceeding.

When the leave is for medical care or counseling, employees are paid using their sick time. If an employee does not have sick time available, or if the reason for the leave is non-medical, the leave is unpaid, although employees have the option to use accruals, such as vacation or personal leave. Unpaid leaves are limited to 12 days in a calendar year.

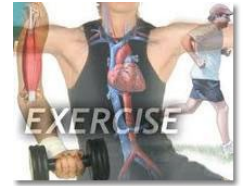
Questions about Family Violence Leave may be emailed to [Vicki Fry](#), Leave Administrator, or by telephone at (860) 486-0411.



Exercising 30 minutes a day, either in a row or broken up, is beneficial to your health.

## Fire Up Motivation to Exercise with 21 Reasons

The article that follows is from the January 2011 edition of *FrontLine News*, a monthly Employee Assistance Program (EAP) newsletter available online to all employees from the [EAP website](#).



Do you need better reasons (or more reasons) to boost your motivation to exercise? It could make a big difference. Keep the following list handy, and consider how many of the reasons listed here fit your purposes for exercise:

1. reducing stress,
2. reducing blood pressure,
3. role modeling healthy behaviors for your children,
4. feeling better,
5. reducing fatigue,
6. improving sleep,
7. feeling a sense of achievement,
8. releasing endorphins to relax mood,
9. managing stress,
10. showing "them" and proving to yourself that you can do it,
11. reducing cholesterol,
12. improving heart health,
13. improving stamina and energy,
14. increasing life span,
15. improving muscle tone,
16. getting more sun and vitamin D by exercising outside,
17. reducing risk of burnout,
18. fighting depression,
19. reducing isolation and increasing interaction with others,
20. achieving a better work-life balance, and
21. improving your fight against diabetes or "pre-diabetes" symptoms.

### Can you think of more?

The EAP is a confidential assessment, brief counseling and referral service available to all employees. It is designed to assist in the identification and resolution of any personal problem that may be affecting an employee's job performance. For more information visit the [EAP website](#).



## Help for Supervisors Through EAP

(Employee Assistance Program)

**Did you know there is both a guide and a newsletter for supervisors on the EAP website?**

*"Employees with long term performance issues often have long histories of being enabled. The patterns result from the fact that the work styles have been 'reinforced' as being acceptable. This makes changes tougher, but still possible."*

~January 2011 EAP Newsletter

# TAX

Corner



## Tax Preparation by VITA for International Faculty, Staff and Students

Did you know that the School of Business provides free tax preparation sessions for international faculty, staff and students that are on F1 or J1 statuses? This IRS-sponsored service is offered through the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program. The dates and locations of sessions will be announced via the Department of International Services and Programs (DISP) International listserv and the [DISP website](#). Please notify the international students and employees in your department so they don't miss this opportunity!

## Tax Return Deadline Extended to 04/18/11

Because of Emancipation Day, Connecticut taxpayers will have until Monday, 04/18/11 to file both their Federal and State 2010 tax returns, and to pay any taxes due. This holiday is observed in the District of Columbia and this year, it falls on Friday, 04/15/11. By law, District of Columbia holidays impact tax deadlines in the same way that federal holidays do; therefore, all taxpayers will have three extra days to file. Taxpayers requesting an extension will have until 10/17/11 to file their 2010 returns.

## 2010 W-2 Distribution

W-2 forms were distributed to departments with checks dated 01/14/11. If you have not yet received your 2010 W-2 form, you may request a reissue by calling (860) 486-2423, or emailing [Renee Ferriere](#). Please note that W-2 reissue requests take two to three business days to process.

## Get to Know Your W-2 Form

Your 2010 W-2 form reflects the taxable earnings that you were paid in calendar year 2010. Sometimes, employees can be confused by the differing earnings amounts that appear in boxes one, three, and five. We hope that you will find the definitions provided below helpful.

- **Box 1 Wages, tips, and other compensation** are your total earnings less before-tax deductions such as health and dental insurance, retirement health fund, regular and supplemental retirement, and dependent care.
- **Box 3 Social Security wages** are your total earnings less health and dental insurance deductions, and retirement health fund contributions. The 2010 limit for Social Security earnings was \$106,800.00. If your taxable earnings exceeded this amount, the total in Box 3 will only reflect \$106,800.00.
- **Box 5 Medicare wages and tips** are your total earnings less health and dental insurance deductions, and retirement health fund contributions. Unlike Social Security earnings, there is no wage base limit for Medicare.

## Supplemental Retirement Plans



Having the money you'll need to live the life you want in the later years requires careful planning now, especially if you are concerned that your retirement plan and Social Security may not be enough. Through your employment at the University, you have two additional ways to save for retirement, the 403(b) and the 457 defined contribution plans. Each is a flexible, pre-tax retirement savings vehicle administered by ING.

There are many benefits to participating in these plans including:

**Tax-deferred Accumulation** – You pay no current federal or state income taxes on the money you contribute – or any of its earnings – until you receive it.

**Convenient Payroll Deduction** – You decide how much to contribute and that amount is automatically taken out of your paycheck and contributed to your account.

**Investment Option Flexibility** – There are a variety of investment options from which to choose. In addition, there are online tools to help you select an investment portfolio.

The Internal Revenue Service sets annual contribution limits. For tax year 2011, the contribution limit is \$16,500. Employees who will be age 50 or older on December 31, 2011 are able to contribute an additional \$5,500 into each plan.

Francis LeBlanc, an ING representative, is available on campus every Thursday during the academic year between the hours of 10am and 4pm in the Student Union Room 321. You can schedule an appointment by contacting him by telephone at (860) 580-1675 or toll-free (800) 784-6386, press 1, or by e-mail [Francis LeBlanc](#).

Information is also available online from the Human Resources – Benefits website under [Retirement](#), or by contacting ING directly at 1-800-584-6001.



## CEUI (NP-2)

### Technical Training Courses

Submit Applications to  
Your Department by:

**March 3, 2011**

→ [more information](#)



## Interim Appointments

Have you been asked to fill a higher position for someone who is out or while a department or section is being reorganized? If you agree, you are in an **interim appointment**.



Decisions to make interim appointments are within the purview of the managing official, and are made to enhance the department's functionality while reorganization is being implemented, to staff a position while it is being advertised and filled through the search process, or to cover for a key person's extended absence due to illness or for other reasons.

Interim appointments may range from affecting a single person to reorganizing an entire department. These appointments must be done in accordance with controlling policies and the contracts, and duties are only assigned to qualified personnel within their job specifications. If a person temporarily assumes higher duties, they may receive compensation for temporary service in a higher class to compensate them for their new role and additional responsibilities.

When interim coverage is no longer necessary, interim assignments expire, and the person will revert to their prior position.

If an interim assignment is being used to fill a vacant position, the interim appointee is free to apply for the job and will be a candidate reviewed by the University's search process. The University neither rewards nor penalizes a person who has served in an interim position, and the person is free to choose to compete for the position or not.

For additional information about interim appointments, please contact Labor Relations at (860) 486-5684 or your Employment Specialist.

## Longevity Payments to be Made in Paycheck of April 21, 2011

**April 1<sup>st</sup> is not JUST April Fool's Day**



Eligible faculty and staff can expect their semi-annual longevity payment, as defined in Section 5-213 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Longevity payments will be made in the payroll check dated April 21, 2011 to State of Connecticut active employees on the regular payroll who have attained 10 or more years of service as of the first day of April. "State service" for longevity purposes is prorated for part-time work. It includes military service during specified war periods, but does not include certain unpaid leaves of absence.

For further information and criteria on State longevity, please refer to the [Longevity Information Form](#) located on the [HR Website forms](#) page or contact [Melody Noonan](#).

## Helpful TIPS & REMINDERS



1

### Reduction to Social Security Tax Rate

For the year 2011, the Social Security tax rate for employees has been reduced from 6.20% to 4.20%. Those employees who are subject to Social Security tax (Fed OASDI/EE) will notice reduced Social Security withholdings effective in check date 01/14/11. Please note that the Medicare tax rate of 1.45% has not changed. More information regarding the change in the Social Security tax rate can be found on the [IRS website](#).

2

### Deduction for Employer-Provided Educational Assistance

The Tax Relief Act of 2010 allows the extension of several payroll-related provisions that were set to expire at the end of 2010, or during 2011. One of these provisions is an income exclusion, up to \$5,250.00, for employer-provided undergraduate and graduate educational assistance (Internal Revenue Code §127). This provision has been extended for two years, through 12/31/12.

3

### 2011 Maximum Contributions to Social Security, Alternate Retirement Program, and Defined Contribution Plans 403(b)/457

Despite changes to the Social Security tax rate for employees (see below), the 2011 Social Security wage base remains \$106,800.00. The maximum Social Security tax employers can pay in 2011 is \$6,621.60. The 2011 Social Security tax maximum that employees can pay is \$4,485.60.

The compensation limit for the Alternate Retirement Program remains at \$245,000.00 for the year 2011. The 2011 contribution limit for supplemental retirement plans 403(b) and 457 are \$16,500.00, each. The limitation for catch-up contributions to 403(b) and 457 plans, for individuals age 50 or over, remains \$5,500.00.

4

### Timecard Entry from Home

Many employees are unaware that timecards can be entered, or approved, through the TAS system from home. Inclement weather or unexpected emergencies may make work computers inaccessible to employees and supervisors; however, being away from the office need not interfere with the timely entry or approval of timecards. To access TAS from home; simply click on the Time & Attendance System icon on the [Payroll home page](#) (and then log on by entering your user-name (six-digit employee number) and password as usual. Please note that only Internet Explorer 7 (or Safari for Mac users) should be used as the browser for timecard entry.



5

### Start the New Year with Direct Deposit

If you do not presently have direct deposit, make it your resolution to sign up in 2011! Don't let inclement weather leave you out in the cold financially; direct deposit ensures that you receive your funds regardless of closings and delays which can keep you from claiming your check. Sign up for direct deposit by completing a [Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement](#) and never worry about manually depositing your check again!

## Upcoming Events!



*Caring  
About  
"U"Conn*

### Support Group - Eldercare

#### Depression and the Elderly

March 10th - 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm  
Student Union, Room 320

#### Why Don't My Elders Listen to Me

April 14th - 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm  
Student Union, Room 320

For more information on any of these programs  
please contact [Pam Heath-Johnston](#)



**Maintain,  
Don't Gain!**

Join us for another successful Maintain Don't Gain program at Hawley Armory Fitness & Wellness. This is a 10-week program, meets weekly at noon.

Learn tips and tools for maintaining your weight this spring. There will be cooking demonstrations, fitness classes and more!

**WHEN:** Schedule as follows: (\*not all classes are on Mondays) **February 14, 21, 28; March 7, 15, 23, 28; April 4, 18, 25**

**WHERE:** Hawley Armory Classroom 102 or Hawley gym

**COST:** \$20 for the 10-week session

~ [More Information](#)

Manage  
Your  
Weight  
this  
Spring!

### February is Heart Disease Awareness Month!

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. The month of February is dedicated to raising awareness about heart disease and increasing knowledge about prevention. Check out Heart Disease on-line for more information and [Work/Life Connections](#) for other Health and Wellness information. Please consider going to:

#### Heart to Heart: A Conversation About Women and Heart disease with Special Guest Faith Middleton

Tuesday, February 15, 2011 (Snow Date: Thursday, February 17)  
7:00-9:00 pm, Keller Auditorium, UConn Health Center

Join us for a lively conversation that will address common risk factors and symptoms of heart disease in women, the importance of screenings and diagnostic tests, as well as tips for making healthy lifestyle choices.

#### Heart Disease Risk Factors: What are they?

Thursday, February 24, 2011

Noon-1:00 pm, Student Union, Storrs Campus, Findell Room 324  
Come learn about your risk factors for heart disease and what you can do to mitigate them. Tips and information will be provided.

~ [Register for this session](#)

### Giving Feedback to Others

Learn how to improve performance reviews!

**Thursday, February 17, 2011, 8:30 am - Noon**

Museum of Natural History (located between the Co-op and McMahon) in the Community Room on the 2nd floor.

**Presenter:** Celeste Barros, HR-OSD Leadership Consultant

**Parking:** Available in the South Garage

**Target Audience:** New to front-line or mid-level UCPEA supervisors with supervisory accountability in their current role. This program is also appropriate for faculty or principal investigators who supervise.

For more information, email [Fran Murphy](#) or call: (860) 486-6171  
~ [Register for this session](#)

### New Employee Orientation

February 14th & February 25th  
March 11th & March 25th  
April 8th & April 25th  
9:00 am - 12:30 pm  
Human Resources Brown Building  
Depot Campus  
Please check in at the front desk upon arrival.

~ [More Information](#)

### Need an Accommodation?

To request an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to attend any program, course or session listed in this newsletter, University employees are encouraged to contact [Human Resources](#).



[www.hr.uconn.edu](http://www.hr.uconn.edu)

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Newsletter and/or its Contents?

Email: [HRPY Newsletter](#)



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