Colgate’s retiree health benefit

Earlier this year a subcommittee of the Benefits Committee was formed and tasked with researching options for the redesign of Colgate’s Retiree Health Care Benefit. Updates on this initiative were given at the fall All-Staff meeting and during faculty meetings this past spring. The Retiree Healthcare Subcommittee members are David Hale, Amy Ryan, Pamela Prescod-Caeser, Michael Haines, Trish St. Leger, Steve Cook, Don Martin, Ephraim Woods and Natalya Stolova. The charge of the committee is to examine approaches for redesigning Colgate’s retiree health care benefit.

Colgate is required to record the liability for the future university obligations for retiree benefits. As of May 31, 2011, these future retiree health care obligations for current active employees totaled $25.6 million, triple the liability amount booked for all participants on May 31, 2000. Due to the escalating cost of healthcare and the growing number of Colgate retirees, this rapid growth in liability is not likely to slow and would not be financially sustainable over the long-run.

The subcommittee set four major objectives:

- Maintain the current defined benefit plan approach for retirees and those close to retirement
- Provide employees with time to plan for changes to the University’s retiree healthcare program
- Implement changes that have minimal impact on retirement patterns
- Ensure that a new approach is financially sustainable while providing Colgate retirees with access to retiree healthcare insurance

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Calendar of events

December 23 – holiday
December 26 – holiday
December 27 – winter break
December 28 – winter break
December 29 – winter break
December 30 – holiday
January 2 - holiday

Retirement Individual Counseling Sessions
December 5 – TIAA-CREF
December 12 - Fidelity Investments

Next Issue: January 6

Deadline for articles and ads: December 22

Submit articles and items of interest to: humres@colgate.edu

Happy holidays and all the best for the New Year from the staff in Human Resources! May the coming year be better than all the others and may you make time to do some of the things you have always wanted to do.
Keep your back healthy

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), back injuries are one of the leading causes of disability for people in their working years and account for 1 in 5 of every workplace injury each year. These numbers are huge but do not have to be. Although there is probably no way to completely eliminate all back injuries, there are preventative measures that can be taken to reduce the risk as well as prevent a certain number of the injuries that occur each year. Before getting into the practices that can help prevent a back injury, let's look at the practices that can put you at risk for a back injury. According to OSHA, there are many factors that can contribute to an injury including:

- Poor posture while standing or sitting
- Reaching while lifting
- Staying in one position for too long
- Twisting while lifting
- Bending while lifting
- Maintaining bent positions
- Poor footing
- Repetitive lifting of awkward items
- Fatigue

OSHA also points out that although most people attribute an injury to a single event, many injuries occur because of years of weakening of the musculoskeletal support system by micro-trauma. This means that the task itself may not have been the only contributing factor to the injury and such severe injury may not have occurred if past practices had not caused weakening of your support system prior to the task. There are many practices that can be adopted to decrease your risk of having a back injury at work or home. The first and most simple is the way that you lift objects. It is important to use your legs for lifting and not your back. Check an item before you lift it to see how heavy it is and don't be afraid to ask for help. Team lifting is a great way to keep your back safe, but they must be coordinated to make sure that no injuries occur. The set-up of your office/home spaces can also be assessed and changed to decrease the risk of a lifting related injury. To decrease your chances of having a lifting related injury, heavy items should be stored on shelves that are not below your knees or above your shoulder. The area between the knees and shoulders is the least strenuous to lift from. The items that you are lifting should also be close enough to contact your body. Lifting over barriers that prevent the load from making body contact can also increase your risk of having an injury. Sharing lifting responsibilities and rotating tasks can also decrease your risk of getting an injury. Lastly, keeping yourself in good physical condition can also decrease your risk of getting a back injury.

There are many things that you can do in your office and home that will help you to avoid a back injury. Just look around and see what changes you can make with storage and work practices to reduce your risk of injury. Make sure that you are using the proper lifting techniques and never be afraid to ask for help if something is too heavy or awkward to lift. For more information on safe lifting see OSHA's website: http://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_vii/otm_vii_1.html

Special thanks

Thank you to all who took the time to complete the online survey regarding this year’s Wellness and Benefits Fair. Your feedback is appreciated and we are already at work to make next year's event an even bigger success. Congratulations to all who received door prizes; if you haven't stopped by the HRD to collect your prize please do so at your earliest convenience. Special congratulations to Bob Neilan, the grand prize winner of the reimbursement of his 2012 annual deductible for the health insurance plan. Again, thanks to all who attended; we hope to see even more of you next year!
Colgate’s green offices

The Sustainability Office hosted the first annual Green Office Program Celebratory Lunch on Tuesday November 15th, 2011. At this event, those teams who have been participating in the program since its inception were formally recognized for their achievements.

There are currently fourteen offices, representing 119 Colgate employees, actively engaged in the Green Office Program. In just a few months, these fourteen offices have already saved an estimated 19,000 pounds of CO2, as well as $1,800. This is significant savings considering that the program is only in the pilot stages right now.

The Green Office Program is a do-it-yourself program that is designed to be fun and educational. It entails office members collaborating with each other as well as with other offices to take measures which aim to reduce Colgate’s ecological footprint, save money and natural resources through conservation and efficiency, and provide motivated members the resources and tools to implement sustainability practices in their offices. Teams work through the Green Office Checklist to earn points for specific green practices such as ‘turning all lights off at the end of the work day,’ or ‘setting print double-sided as the default.’ When teams have earned a point total of 65 or higher, they have reached official Green Office certification.

There are four distinct levels of Green Office Certification, noted by Oak Leaves. We would like to congratulate the following offices that have achieved official Green Office standing at Colgate:

Oak Leaf One Certification (65 to 74 points):
Residential Life, The Annual Fund, Capital Works Office, and the Women's Studies Department

Oak Leaf Two Certification (75 to 84 points):
The Dean of the College Office, the Ho Science Center, and the Government Relations Office

Oak Leaf Three Certification (85 to 94 points):
COVE, Outdoor Education, and ITS

At the celebratory lunch, each of these teams was given a plaque with their particular certification to display in their offices. Attendees were able to share some of their best practices, which will further the success of the program and the overall cumulative savings. The lunch itself was a zero-waste event, which was achieved through the use of reusable dishes borrowed from the Outdoor Education Department, working with the local vendor to limit product packaging, attendees bringing their own water bottles to the lunch, and the leftover food scraps being composted at the end.

For those that are interested in learning more and/or participating in this program, feel free to email the Sustainability Office at: sustainability@colgate.edu and/or check out the Green Office webpage at: http://www.colgate.edu/about/sustainability/greencampusinitiative/greenofficeprogram

Sell and swap

Solid wood rectangular table w/leaf, and 6 chairs – S. Bent Bros. Asking $350. Call 737-8052

Colgate makes no warranty, expressed or implied, about the nature or condition of items advertised and accepts no responsibility for any transaction or item. The university reserves the right to suspend or terminate the program at any time.

Past Issues:
Published by the Human Resources Department
www.colgate.edu/opengate
www.colgate.edu/humanresources
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There have been no final decisions but currently the following recommendations are emerging:

• Continuing some form of a retiree health care benefit. Changing certain employees (based on age and date of hire) from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan. A defined benefit plan, which is currently offered to retirees, is when an employer provides the employee with a particular benefit (e.g. at retirement a health insurance supplement to Medicare with a prescription drug benefit). A defined contribution plan is when an employer contributes a specific amount to a “savings” account pre-retirement to be used for future retiree healthcare expenses, after certain eligibility criteria are met.

• Continuing the defined benefit approach for current retirees and for employees 40 years of age and older as of December 31, 2011.

• Employees hired July 1, 2012 and after, and employees under the age of 40 will not be eligible for the defined benefit approach but will be part of a defined contribution/savings plan approach that will be implemented and funded by the university.

• Take advantage of the improved Medicare Part D prescription drug benefits provided by the federal government, effective in 2020.

Again, it is important to reiterate that these are not final decisions. We are committed to keeping you well informed as the specific details of the new program are worked out. If you have questions or concerns about the work of this subcommittee, you should feel free to contact one of the members.

Position vacancies

Assistant Director of the Annual Fund
Associate Director for the Parents’ Fund
Biology and Animal Care Technician (11 months)
Business Analyst and Programmer
Campus Safety Investigator
Campus Safety Officer
Campus Safety Officer/Dispatcher (p/t, no benefits)
Information Literacy and Social Sciences Librarian, Assistant Professor in the University Libraries
International Student Services Director
Senior Associate Director of Athletics Fundraising
Senior Instructional Technologist
Stewardship Coordinator
Vice President and Dean of the College
Staff Nurse (per diem, no benefits)
Temporary - Athletic Event Staff (p/t, no benefits)
Temporary - Barge Customer Associate/Cashier (temporary and p/t positions)
Temporary - Equipment Service Assistant (no benefits)
Temporary - Maintenance/Laborers (no benefits)
Temporary - Office (no benefits)

For complete information on position vacancies and to submit an application visit our website at https://careers.colgate.edu.

COLGATE UNIVERSITY IS AN EO/AAE. Developing and sustaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student body further the university’s educational mission.

Anniversaries

20 years
Cynthia Harper, Library

15 years
Sarah Hughes, Advancement

10 years
Gerald Bugbee, Facilities
Makiko Filler, Cultural Center
Lauren Galliker, Advancement
Thomas Hoe, Mail Services

5 years
Ainslie Ellis, Advancement
Bruce Moseley, Government Relations
Heather Corey, Athletics