DEAR COLLEAGUES,

Happy Summer! As we all just participated in our Fourth of July celebrations (either in traditional ways or non-traditional ways), I want to remind everyone that we should all feel celebratory about the academic year we just put behind us and the great work we did to keep the college moving forward. Much has been accomplished and it is refreshing to know that the collaboration and dedication of our people is alive and well at Ursinus!

While it has been communicated that we will return to the full in-person residential experience in the fall, from an HR perspective our focus has been on how we begin to embrace the “marrying up” of your safe return to campus while also continuing to provide flexibility for you as experienced in your “new normal.” We have also continued our efforts with the strategic initiative of the performance management platform and hope that staff will experience a better and more user-friendly experience for their annual reviews.

This edition of our quarterly newsletter provides you with HR updates with respect to expectations as we reacclimate to the in-person experience, vaccines and guidelines from the task force, flexible work opportunities, and the annual review processes and timelines. We also continue to spotlight the great things our employees have been involved in and opportunities for you as we begin to plan for a new academic year.

Have a great summer, enjoy your families, enjoy your vacations, think mindfulness, be hopeful and grateful for all the little things in life (smell the roses)!

Sincerely,
Kelley Williams
Associate Vice President for Human Resources

Teagle Foundation Awards $65,000 Grant to Bolster Ursinus’s Core Curriculum

Grant funds will be used from July 2021 through June 2023 for the creation of additional classes and a conference on liberal education.

The project, titled “Strengthening the Core,” was proposed by a team of faculty led by Professor of Education and Assistant Dean of the College Stephanie Mackler and Professor of Politics Paul Stern for a grant program aimed to revitalize the role of the humanities in general education.

“Ursinus already has a really unique core curriculum that asks students to engage meaningfully with life’s biggest questions,” said Mackler. “Our hope is that this grant will enable faculty to strengthen and extend the work they’ve already done to help our core make an even more profound impact on our students. We think this is an opportunity to really distinguish Ursinus as a place that is unusually deliberate and thoughtful about what it means to engage in liberal education.”

Faculty will be invited to information sessions to learn more about the grant and how to apply for it over the summer so that the groups can be up and running by fall 2021. Read more.

BUILD YOUR SUMMER READING LIBRARY

In addition to an array of great fiction and nonfiction books, the Barnes and Noble bookstore in the Schellhase Commons is offering a 10 percent discount on books on the Perkiomen Valley School District reading list to all PV families. Hours are Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For fall book adoptions, use this link.
A NEW ONLINE SYSTEM
For Performance Reviews

Retirement Contribution Reinstated for Employees

Effective July 1, 2021, the college reinstated college contributions of seven percent to employee retirement plans.

As a reminder, all full-time employees and part-time employees working over 1,000 hours are required to participate in the mandatory plan. In addition to the mandatory plan, employees may make elective deferrals to their retirement plan up to the IRS maximum allowance.

Employees can adjust their retirement contributions by completing the salary reduction form found via this link to the website.

Promoting a Safe & Healthy Campus

Earlier this spring, Ursinus joined hundreds of other higher education institutions in requiring COVID-19 vaccinations for all students taking classes on campus this coming academic year—a step that will allow us to further strengthen the health and well-being of our residential community here in Collegeville. All faculty and staff who are fully vaccinated should inform the college by clicking on the form in the “Fully Vaccinated Information” section of the website at https://ursinus.edu/vaccinations.

Introducing Wellness Days!

All employees are now entitled to five wellness days that can be used during FY22 in addition to vacation and sick/personal time. When recording this time in ADP, please enter the new earnings category title, “Wellness.”

All employees and supervisors should now be completing their performance reviews, which have shifted to a new online format. As communicated to you earlier this spring, the online system is a much more streamlined and user-friendly experience taking place on Blue, a platform by Explorance, a recognized industry leader that provides the same platform that our students currently use with great success for their faculty reviews.

The evaluation reflects your performance based on your job descriptions (35%), goals set last year (35%), and community values (30%). Rather than describing each individual job responsibility like you did in the past, there is consistent criteria applied to your responsibilities based on your job description. You will also have the opportunity to again discuss professional development needs, career aspirations, and reflect on the four questions.

The process began on June 21, and employees should complete their self-evaluations by July 16. Supervisors will be invited to complete their evaluations of direct reports and schedule their feedback meetings from July 19 through August 13. Divisional leaders will review the evaluations August 16 to August 30. Please speak with your supervisor or contact human resources with any questions.
Facilities Team uses Performance Review Process for Department Development

Opportunities for professional growth are important to most employees, and the annual performance review process that was implemented last year requires examination and discussion of personal and professional development goals. While this process was put to good use in many offices and divisions, one clear example of success can be seen in facilities services. Director Steve Gehringer explained how this worked for his team.

Though the process required Steve to meet only with his nine direct reports, he met with all 25 members of his team to review, in detail, their development goals. Sharing personal ambition and talents on paper doesn’t come naturally to many employees, but the exercise allowed Gehringer and the facilities team to make long-term plans to suit each employee. As a result, slight changes were made to position descriptions to enhance certain skills and responsibilities, and several employees moved into new positions that interested them, while others transitioned to vacant positions to encourage growth at the college.

A look at how Facilities successfully managed the performance review process:

- Remained Budget Neutral
- Six moves already completed in the department
- New and updated job descriptions
- Matched talent and interest to positions
- Staggered moves to allow for less disruption, time to learn and adjust, cross training

COMPLETE YOUR COMPLIANCE TRAINING
The college uses Thompson Reuters to provide required online compliance training. Employees who must complete it this summer will be notified via email and should finish the training by August 1.
Missy Bryant named Vice President for Student Affairs
She will oversee student engagement, residence life, student success, campus safety, prevention and advocacy, community standards and values, and matters related to compliance and Title IX.

Three Bears Honored for Inclusion Efforts
The 2021 Inclusion Awards were presented to Simara Price, assistant professor of biology and assistant dean of the college; Alvert Hernandez, assistant director of residence life; and Jalen Everette ’22 during the Celebration of Faculty and Student Achievement event in Myrin Library. See the photo gallery here>>

Citation Speaks to Important Role of Humanities
A web publication authored by Professor of History Susanna Throop and five students in her history capstone and core capstone seminar on the Black Death was referenced in the Bulletin of the History of Medicine. Read more.

DEP Awards Sustainability Grant
The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has awarded Ursinus a $3,000 2021 Environmental Education Grant that will enhance outreach and participation in sustainability programs for first-year students. It will mostly fund a scavenger hunt program designed by recent graduate Karen Herrera ’21.

Welcome New Employees!
Sergio Jackson
(assistant coach, strength and conditioning, athletics)

Justin Sillner
(assistant director of admission, transfer and first-year recruitment)

Stephanie Stefanik
(ISS coordinator)

Katherine D’Ascenzo
(assistant director of admission)

Bradley Emery
(mail services coordinator)

Keith Grierson
(campus safety)

Heather Heim
(mail services coordinator)

Recent Retirees:
Ann Breen (biology)
Pam Chlad (athletics)
Yvon Kennon (modern languages, philosophy, religion, classics)
Carol Nienius (athletics)
Rosemary Pall (advancement)

Faculty Promotions
Tenure has been awarded to:
April Carpenter, health and exercise physiology
Cari Freno, art and art history
Ann Karreth, politics and national relations
Kara McShane, English
Christopher Sadowski, mathematics and computer science

The following faculty have been promoted to full professor:
Patrick Hurley, environmental studies
Stephanie Mackler, education
Susanna Throop, history
URSINUS WELCOMES
THREE NEW TRUSTEES

Carol (Krajewski) McIlhenny ’84, P’21 is a health systems business director at Quest Diagnostics, where she has worked for over 30 years. Carol and her husband, Brian McInhenny ’85, have two children, Brendan and Erin ’21.

Karen Elizabeth (Abele) Scheu has been an assistant professor in the family nurse practitioner program at the University of Maryland School of Nursing since receiving her doctor of nursing practice there in May 2012. She also serves as chair of its DNP committee and is a family nurse practitioner at the Esperanza Center in Baltimore, where she received the 2019 Volunteer of the Year Award.


Join us on campus this summer as activities and events return!
The campus community will welcome friends and neighbors to two special “Movies on the Lawn” events:

- Friday, July 16: Raya and the Last Dragon (Rain date July 23)
- Friday, Aug. 6: Trolls World Tour (Rain date August 13)

Additionally, summer camps are back in full swing! Check the website for remaining dates and availability