



Human Resources Newsletter

October 2019



In This Month's Issue:

- New "Call Center" Answering System for Human Resources
- Welcoming Rita Jones, HR Assistant
- "How TAMUC's Health Benefits Helped Me During My Medical Emergency"
- An Overview of the Dispute Resolution Center (DRO)
- An Interview with Amber Dyer, Administrative Coordinator I for Training & Development

Website Updates On the Horizon

Human Resources has been discussing changes to the HR website, with the objective of ensuring up-to-date content and streamlined navigation. You may notice changes in the website over the next month.

Thank you for your patience as we try to improve your user experience.

Coming Soon: New Hiring Procedures

New hiring procedures and guidelines are in the process of being finalized and should be available within the coming weeks.

Please be on the lookout for an email announcement from Human Resources regarding this update. New hiring information will be posted to the website when it becomes available.

Introducing Human Resources Assistant, Rita Jones



Human Resources would like to welcome our new HR Assistant, Rita Jones, to A&M-Commerce! Rita handles the main HR phone line and can assist in answering your questions or directing you to a staff member who can assist you. Here is her introduction:

"My name is Rita Jones. I am 35 years old, am married and have 2 awesome kids. I'm originally from the great plains of our

wonderful state. I have worked primarily for the City of Greenville in the Central Services Department, Community Development as well as Public Works Department. Most recently I held an Escrow Assistant position at the North Texas Title company just before I had the pleasure of joining the A&M team. I'm very excited to be here and look forward to growing and achieving with this University. In my spare time I like to cook, clean and spend time outdoors with my family."

She has two cats, two dogs, and a great customer-service attitude. We are very happy to have her. If you would like to contact Rita, her phone number is (903) 468-8741.

HR Gets a Pizza Break

It would be an understatement to say that summer and fall have been a busy time for the Human Resources department. From hiring for summer camps to onboarding new employees for the Fall semester, HR has processed hundreds of individuals since June 2019.

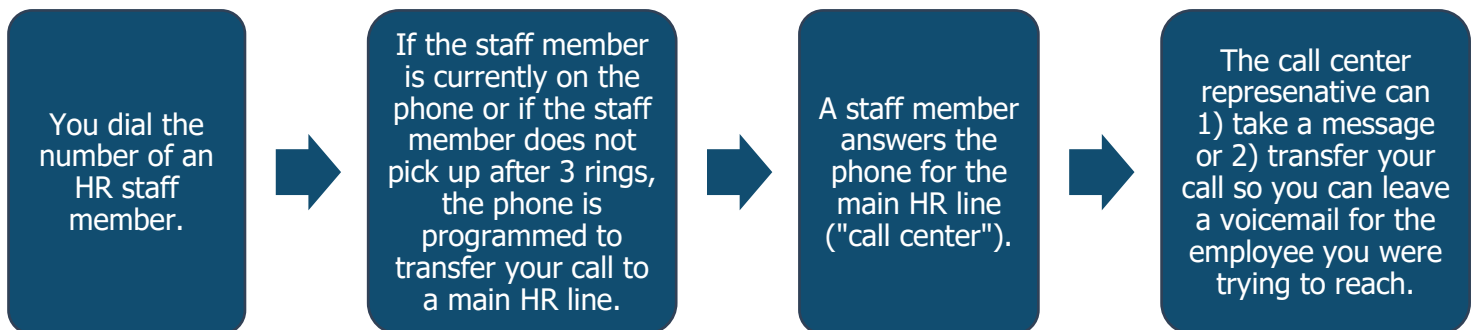
To celebrate this accomplishment, HR held a pizza party on Friday, September 27th. We had a chance to relax, chat, and eat.

The verdict is still out on whether pineapple is an acceptable pizza topping.



New Answering System for HR Phone Lines

In September 2019, Human Resources began implementing a "call center" system to help ensure that callers will get to speak to a live person, not just a voicemail inbox. Here's how it works:



If you would like to contact Human Resources and are not sure who to call, you can dial (903) 468-8741 to speak to an HR representative and have your call directed as appropriate. We hope that you find this new system helpful in addressing your questions and concerns in a prompt manner.



How TAMUC's Health Benefits Helped Me During My Medical Emergency: A Personal Story



By: Danielle Trevino, HR Administrative Coordinator and Data Analyst, Human Resources Dept.

From my view, it seemed like September 2019 was going to be a great month. Labor Day Weekend was a chance to get out of town, and early September was when my health benefits would become effective for the new plan year. My flexible spending account (FSA) was going to be replenished with money that could help me afford things like contact lenses, dental visits, and even my prescription shampoo.

Yes, September 2019 was going to be a good month. I took a brief road trip to Oklahoma during Labor Day Weekend, and returned to work on Tuesday. It seemed like it was going to be a normal week—until I suddenly found myself with a medical emergency.

Looking for expert advice and knowing it could possibly take weeks before I could get in to see a specialist, I scheduled a phone consultation with a doctor through the MDLive service. This allowed me to speak to a doctor after-hours, without having to wait days or weeks to see a primary-care provider or specialist. I scheduled a phone call for 9 p.m. on Thursday, and spoke to a physician who advised me to get to an emergency room as soon as possible.

Emergency rooms can be expensive, but this was not the time to contemplate cost. I drove to my nearest ER where I waited approximately three hours to be seen. Before I left the facility, I was informed that my co-pay was over \$300! They offered the option of a payment plan, but thankfully my FSA account had been replenished and I was able to pay for the cost in full. Additionally, I have been able to use my FSA to cover the co-pays for other appointments and procedures this month. It has been a big help during a stressful time.

I started taking advantage of the FSA over a year ago and loved it—I could elect a certain amount of money for healthcare savings and have this entire amount available to me on September 1st, but could distribute my deductions for the FSA over a 12-month period. It also reduced my taxable income because my FSA deductions were taken out before paying federal income and Social Security taxes. I also received a convenient debit card that allows me to pay for healthcare and prescriptions directly from my FSA account instead of using a personal bank card and having to apply for reimbursement.

I am extremely appreciative of the MDLive service that allowed me to speak to a medical professional at 9 p.m. on a Thursday and get immediate advice. I encourage everyone who has these health benefits to research them, because they might come in handy some day! They might save you a trip to the doctor's office or help you pay for an expensive procedure without devastating your monthly budget.

If you would like more information about health benefits for employees and retirees, please visit: <https://www.tamus.edu/business/benefits-administration/>

Staff Shout-Outs

Human Resources would like to take the opportunity to recognize individuals across campus who have helped us perform our jobs by offering their expertise and assistance to us:

David A. Fortin, Director of Application Solutions, CITE
Shout-out by Danielle Trevino

David Boyd, DMS Administrator, CITE
Shout-out by Kelly Barnes, Jayla Mayes, and Amy Patrick

Rick Riis, Sr. System Administrator, CITE
Shout-out by Kelly Barnes

Erica Contreras, Budget Manager, and
Janet Anderson, Senior Budget Manager, Financial Services
Shout-out by Kelly Barnes

Morgan Phelps, Administrative Assistant to the Director of Athletics/Chief of Staff, Athletics
Shout-out by Kelly Barnes

Carmen Frazier, Executive Assistant to the VP, Enrollment Management
Shout-out by Amy Patrick

Lisa Blackwell, Director, Payroll Services
Shout-out by Amy Patrick and Danielle Trevino

Tracy McQueary, Payroll Specialist II, Payroll Services
Shout-out by Danielle Trevino

Cynthia Rhodes, Executive Assistant to the Provost, Provost's Office
Shout-out by Brenda Walker

Maureen Preston, Administrative Associate III, Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction
Shout-out by Brenda Walker

Dispute Resolution Available to Campus

Unfortunately, when an employee files a formal complaint, they often do not realize that they have abandoned all outcome control: a third-party administrator eventually decides the dispute's outcome after an exhaustive investigation triggered by the formal complaint. Furthermore, the entire process is documented in the employees' files.

In order to prevent triggering this process, employees are encouraged to contact the Dispute Resolution Office (DRO), housed within Human Resources, to determine alternatives to filing a formal complaint. The DRO's problem-solving processes vary depending on the type of dispute or conflict. Our services, from coaching and negotiation to facilitation and mediation, give participants ultimate control over resolution outcome.

Understandably, some of the DRO's methods may not be the answer to all workplace disputes. **Claims of illegal discrimination against a protected class and claims of sexual harassment will require the Compliance Office.**

A few examples of how the DRO can help you include:

- Interpretation and/or application of workplace policies
- Disagreements arising from working relationships
- Disagreements about performance appraisals, discipline, wages, and/or hours of work
- Other employer-employee disagreements

We can also assist managers and supervisors design Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) and form collaborative intervention plans *prior* to discipline.

We are planning to post more information about the DRO and dispute resolution on the Human Resources website in the coming weeks. In the meantime, please call us at (903) 468-8741 if you have any questions about your options for dispute resolution.



HR Staff Spotlight



Name: Amber Dyer
Position: Administrative
Coordinator I,
Training & Development,
Human Resources Dept.

Q: Tell us about your journey: what is your career/educational background and how did you end up at A&M-Commerce in your current position?

A: I received my BBA with an emphasis in HR from Texas Woman's University; I worked in the HR office as a student assistant/benefits coordinator while attending school. I also participated in the student Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) organization as Treasurer.

Q: How long have you worked at A&M-Commerce?

A: I have worked at Texas A&M-Commerce since April.

Q: How would you describe your role in Human Resources?

A: I assist Training and Development with assigning trainings, tracking past due trainings, and scheduling any of the training rooms needed for departmental trainings. I also assist benefits with scheduling appointments needed for insurance and other projects they might need help with.

Q: What are some of the challenges of your role?

A: There is a wide variety of subjects that Training and Development as well as Benefits cover, so it can be challenging to answer the wide array of questions we receive.

Q: What are some of the positive aspects or highlights of your role?

A: I always get to meet new people and learn new, interesting things; I also have gained more knowledge and skills working in the position I am in.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like for us to know about you?

A: I have two children that are eight and nine, along with two cats, Mischief and Mystery. One of my beliefs is we should always strive to be kind to one another. By doing this not only is it rewarding to others but also to ourselves, and it also gives us gratitude for the little things in life.

