

Human Resources Newsletter

November 2020



In This Month's Issue:

- TRS Updates
- Overview of Hinge Health for Musculoskeletal Pain
- Wellness Programs for Diabetes and Hypertension
- Tips for Staying Motivated in Online Courses
- Conflict Resolution in the Workplace
- Wellness Events

And More!

Voting Leave Policy

Texas A&M University-Commerce employees are allowed to take paid leave for voting. System Regulation 31.03.03 Leave of Absence with Pay, Section 15 Voting, states, "An employee will be allowed sufficient time off to vote in national, state and local elections."

A&M Commerce will allow up to 2 hours for voting, which can be used for early voting as well as election day. Voting Leave is a paid type of leave. Leave would be taken via Workday and must be approved by the supervisor. The type of paid leave is the "4-Voting" option in the drop-down menu after selecting the date you wish to use your leave in Workday. If you have any questions, please speak with Crystle McIlveene at HR.Leave@tamuc.edu.

HR Employee Earns SHRM Certification

Human Resources would like to congratulate Richard Conner, HR Generalist I, for passing the Society of Human Resources Management Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) exam. Earning this credential sets him apart as a recognized expert and leader in the HR field. In order to achieve this certification, he had to demonstrate mastery of HR competencies and relevant knowledge in the constantly-evolving HR world. He is a very valuable asset to the Talent Acquisition team and we congratulate him on a job well done.



Staff Council and Employee Awards

Human Resources is pleased to feature the following announcement from Staff Council concerning employee recognition:

Staff Council wants you to recognize outstanding A&M-Commerce staff with the new quarterly Most Valuable Lion award. This new award is replacing the Employee of the Month and moving to quarterly recognition.

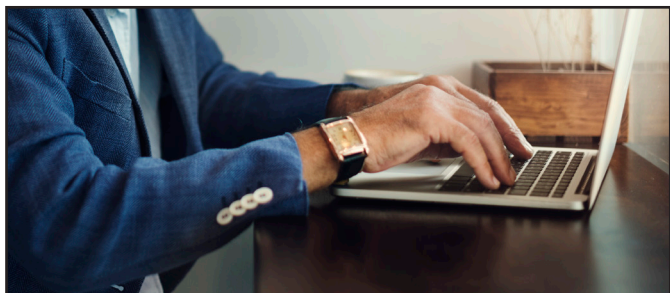
With the Most Valuable Lion award, recipients will have their choice of up to \$250 worth of prizes for selection as an outstanding staff member. This first quarter nomination will run from October-December, with the first Most Valuable Lion named in January 2021. [Nomination form.](#)



Check Your TRS Balance Online

Teacher Retirement System (TRS) enrollees are able to check their balances online with [MyTRS](#). Please keep in mind that the balance listed only includes the employee's contributions (no employer contributions included in balance). MyTRS can be used to update your contact information, access a retirement calculator, view your last annual statement, and more.

For new TRS members, please wait approximately 60 days from your initial date of employment to register for MyTRS.



TRS Annual Statements Update

Teacher Retirement System (TRS) members will soon be receiving their TRS annual statements. These statements contain the total amount of member contributions pertaining to the recently completed 2019-20 school year. The statement also includes the total accumulated contributions in the member's account and the amount of service credit TRS recognizes.

TRS encourages all members to review their annual statements carefully. If you have questions related to your statement, refer to the Your Annual Statement of Account (Annual Statement) section of the [TRS FAQs](#).

As a reminder, the annual salaries referenced on the statements are the amounts paid to the employee and reported for September 2019-August 2020. Please note that the amount reflected on your statement will be for the pay dates of September 1, 2019 - August 1, 2020. This statement does not include the August pay received on your September 1, 2020 pay date.



Virtual Retirement Planning Sessions in November

David Cook, TAMUC's representative from AIG Retirement Services, will be available via phone or Webex, on November 5th, 9th, and 10th, from 8:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. to help you enroll, increase your contribution, or make investment changes to your 403b TSA Retirement Plan and/or the 403b Optional Retirement Plan.

He can also prepare a complimentary financial plan for you, and answer questions about TRS. [Schedule an appointment with David Cook.](#)

I-9 Reminder for Hiring Managers

Please note that due to federal law, new employees must complete the form I-9 on or before their first day of work or training. This includes TrainTraq or any training conducted by the department. Employees must present acceptable I-9 documents in person to complete the I-9. Only original documents can be used; photocopies are not acceptable.

If an employee does not complete Section I of the federal form I-9 on or before their start date, they will be out of compliance and issued a non-compliance notice informing them of the reason(s) for the noncompliance. I-9s are being conducted by appointment only. Email Devante.Lampkin@tamuc.edu to schedule an I-9 session.



Sign Up or Renew Your Wellness Release Time

The updated [application form for Wellness Release Time](#) is now available online. The policy has been updated to reflect current Texas legislation.

While employees are still allotted 90 minutes total release time per week, sessions can be for no more than 30 minute increments. Please re-submit your application if you have listed increments larger than 30 minutes.

Employees should maintain a record of their Wellness Release Time usage, as managers are allowed to ask for the record at any time. Employees may choose, but are not required to use, the activity tracking sheet [Appendix B](#). Applications are valid for September 1st through August 31st.

Learn About Express Scripts

Are you familiar with our prescription drug program, Express Scripts? Express Scripts administers the prescription drug part of the A&M Care plans. They also offer programs to help covered employees save money on prescription drugs and specialty drugs. Click to read about [prescription drug benefits through Express Scripts](#).



FY22 Two-Step Incentive Checklist

The [two-step wellness incentive](#), a program to help employees save money on insurance premiums, is available and has new activities. Tasks that are completed in the current plan year (FY21) are applied in the following plan year (FY22).

When employees log into [MyEvive](#) and access their incentive checklist, they may see up to 11 health and wellness activities to choose from. New options include flu shots, nutritional counseling, and preventative skincare exams. The checklist may vary between individuals based on general demographic information. You can choose any two activities to complete by June 30, 2021, to earn the \$30 wellness incentive credit.

Please note that some activities can take 4-6 weeks to complete; start the process early to allow adequate time to complete before the deadline. Individual checklists may be personalized based on demographic information. Read more about the [wellness incentive for FY22](#).

Medical Cost Estimator Available

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas offers a cost estimator that can assist you in researching how much you might pay for healthcare. To access the Cost Estimator:

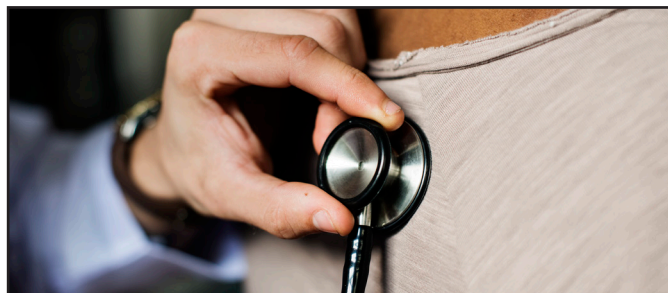
1. [Log in to Blue Access for Members](#) (BAM) or directly through your MyEve account.
2. From BAM, scroll down to the bottom-left and click on Cost Estimator.
3. The Provider Finder and Cost Estimator tool will open.
4. From the Browse drop-down menu, select Cost Estimates.
5. Select the service category you are interested in reviewing.
6. Review estimated costs of providers in the area offering those services.

Please keep in mind that costs are estimates. Make sure you are logged in so your search displays in-network providers on your health plan.



2nd.MD Webinar for Caregivers

2nd.MD is offering a free webinar, "Support for Caregivers," on November 12th. Join Dr. Marcia Levetown to hear about advanced care planning, limitations of public health, and how to decide between hospice and nursing. [Register for the webinar.](#)



Upcoming TAMUC Wellness Events

[November Gratitude Challenge](#)

November is a time of year for us to really focus on all things we are grateful for. This year Employee Wellness is hosting a [30-Day Gratitude Challenge](#), please join us in being grateful for all things. The first 50 employees to complete the 30-Day Challenge will receive a pocket journal to continue their Grateful journey. The journal is to inspire you to keep moving down a grateful path in journaling each day the wonderful things you have encountered or your positive thoughts on the day. The challenge will be honor based; each employee will sign each day after completing the item.

Tuesday, November 3 | 11 A.M.
[Airrosti Headaches Webinar](#)

Tuesday, November 3

[Airrosti Free Virtual Injury Assessments](#)

Airrosti Providers are experts at accurately diagnosing and resolving musculoskeletal pain and injuries. Now, they are able to bring that expertise to you through a convenient virtual environment. If you are suffering from chronic pain or acute injuries, sign up for a free, no obligation virtual assessment to discover the source of your pain and your treatment options.

Wednesday, November 4 | Noon
[Lunch & Learn: Physical Activity](#)

Monday, November 16 | 1:15 P.M.

[The Keys to Being a Good Remote Worker](#)

Learn the skills you need to practice and hone to work from home successfully, why communication plays such a huge role in remote work and how to do it well, how to set up a dedicated and comfortable workspace, and more.

Get the latest on Employee Wellness by joining the distribution list. To sign up, please contact Crystle.McIlveene@tamuc.edu.

Employee Wellness Quick Links

The quick links below will take employees to resources on a variety of wellness topics:

- November is [National Diabetes Awareness Month](#)
- Airrosti presents: [spotlight on neck pain](#)
- podcast: [Preparing for Winter Weather](#)
- [How to Get Through Pandemic Winter](#)
- more [winter safety tips](#)



Hinge Health for Musculoskeletal Pain

If you experience chronic pain in your back, hip, or knee, Hinge Health may be able to help. This 12-week, coach-led digital musculoskeletal (MSK) program is delivered remotely using wearable technology and is based on proven nonsurgical care guidelines. Hinge Health is designed to focus on three core pillars:

- exercise therapy — wearable sensors and tablet provided for real-time movements feedback
- behavioral health — cognitive behavioral therapy and unlimited 1:1 coaching
- education — personalized and interactive education curriculum

Participation is based on eligibility. Take the [Hinge Health screening questionnaire](#) if you are interested in the program. If you are accepted, your eligible Blue Cross and Blue Shield insurance plan will cover the program cost.

Benefits Spotlight: Omada and Livongo for Diabetes

The A&M health plan has numerous resources help eligible employees. Omada and Livongo are two programs designed to help with diabetes and hypertension management.

Omada is a digital program to help reduce the risks of Type II diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension through lifestyle changes. Omada combines individualized attention of professional health coaches with a researched curriculum and manageable goals. It helps connect the dots between knowing how to get healthy and actually doing it. You get the support and tools you need, including an interactive program, wireless scale, health coach, and more.

Omada eligibility is determined by an application process. Visit [Omada Health](#) to take the one-minute risk screener. If the screener results indicate a risk, you are eligible to apply via the online application. If you are accepted into the program, the program and shipping are free to you.



Livongo is a program for individuals diagnosed with Type I or Type II Diabetes or hypertension. If you are determined to be eligible for the program, you will be contacted by Livongo; you cannot apply to the program without being contacted.

The Livongo diabetes program includes an advanced meter, unlimited strips and lancets, and 24/7 support from Livongo expert coaches. The Livongo hypertension program includes a free connected blood pressure monitor, blood pressure management, and personalized support.

How to Stay Inspired in An Online Course

A wide range of students enjoy taking online courses. Working adults are able to balance their coursework with family and career commitments through online career training programs. Furthermore, students with different learning styles are able to create their own routines and have more control over the courses they take. The convenience of online learning has continued to pave career paths for many adults leading busy lives, but sometimes the flexibility can make it difficult for students who lack time management skills. Finding ways to stay inspired is key to success. Hopefully these ideas will keep you motivated for the long haul!

Review Your Goals

Write down your personal goals before starting the course and visit them regularly. This will help you remember why you are taking the course in the first place, whether that's because you are passionate about the subject, want to be a great role model for your family, are interested in learning a new skill, or are trying to advance in your career.



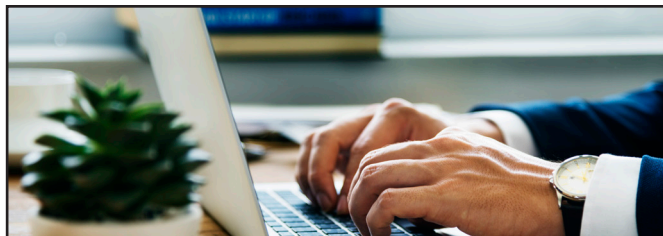
Discuss What You Learn

Talk about your course with an interested relative or friend. Having a conversation about your goals for the course and the material you are learning will motivate you to stay on track. This will also help you understand the material better!

Bridge the Distance

Studying online can be isolating at times. You can bridge the distance gap by interacting with your classmates and instructor in other ways. For example, some of our students have created

private Facebook group pages and have kept in contact with each other even after their courses ended! This is especially great for students taking any of our writing courses, looking for an online space to workshop! You can also participate in online forums and get inspiration from one another by talking about ideas and offering study tips.



Take Breaks

Give yourself a breather every now and then so that you can be energized and focused when it comes time to do coursework. Make sure to schedule time for activities so that you can have something to look forward to in your schedule.

Reward Yourself

Don't forget to reward yourself every now and then to keep up the motivation! These rewards don't have to be expensive or huge, but just something for you to look forward to after accomplishing your personal goals!

Article by ed2go, our partner in online courses.

The Center for Professional Development offers a wide range of short, affordable non-credit online courses for individuals looking to build critical job skills, provide employee training, or pursue a new hobby. Our programs include [Basic Peace Officer Academy](#), [Career Training Courses](#), [Professional Skill Development](#), [Real Estate](#), [SHRM Essentials](#), and [SHRM Learning System](#). For more information, email Kenny Agbaje at CPD@tamuc.edu or visit our website for the [Center for Professional Development](#).

Conflict Resolution in the Workplace

By Dr. David Giles, Employee Relations Administrator and Data Analyst

Resolving Conflict

Workplace conflicts happen everywhere, and ignoring them often produces an enormous drain on the organization. Experts tell us that unaddressed conflict wastes 8 to 10 hours of corporate productivity with water cooler chatter and related gossip.

Understanding the reasons behind workplace conflicts can help managers tackle problems before “issues” turn into “problems.” This proactive attitude occurs well before a conflict erupts into screaming confrontations between departments replete with colleagues that refuse to work together.

Before we dive into conflict resolution, examine where organizational conflicts typically occur:

- **Instrumental conflicts** involve conflicts between competing goals, structures, and procedures. An example of an instrumental conflict would be if you are a real optimist, always looking on the bright side, while your co-worker who sits next to you is constantly complaining and is a real pessimist. Their negative attitude might be bringing you down, while your positive attitude drives him crazy too.
- **Conflicts of interest** involve the divergent ways for achieving goals. These disputes can involve time, money, space and personnel. A conflict of interest in the workplace could emerge if a manager hired someone unqualified for a position simply because they are friends with him or her.
- **Personal or relational conflicts** typically involve interpersonal relationships and involve rank, promotion and/or privilege. Lack of respect, breaches of loyalty, and betrays of confidence generally result in this type of conflict. This type of conflict would be common in romantic relationships, where one (or both) of the partners does not feel as though they are given the respect that they deserve and that their opinion is heard.

Dealing with conflicts that involve “issues” are always simpler than dealing with conflict when it has become “a problem.” The primary reason for this is when issues have become problems typically the parties-in-conflict have become entrenched and fellow employees have started to take sides. This makes conflicts so much harder to resolve.

The best way to address a conflict in its early stages is to follow these proven conflict resolution strategies:

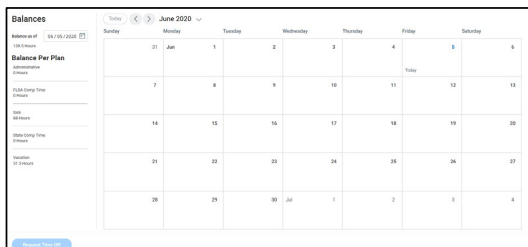
- (1) Identify the most common causes (and responses) to conflict within your organization,
- (2) Define the different communication styles and active listening skills commonly embraced by your employees, especially those used to resolve previous conflicts,
- (3) Coach employees on how to develop alternative responses to workplace anger while cultivating options for managing your own anger, and
- (4) Pinpoint the negative effects of unresolved conflict so employees understand the importance of immediately resolving their problems with co-workers and management.

Waiting for the water to “boil over” seldom improves employee relations and usually jeopardizes team morale and performances. Human Resources at Texas A&M University-Commerce offers alternative dispute resolution to assist employees in dealing with issues before they turn into problems. Read more about [dispute resolution at A&M-Commerce](#) or email Dr. David Giles at HR.EmployeeRelations@tamuc.edu for more information.

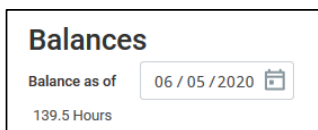
Tips for Managing Your Time Off in Workday

When requesting time off, be cognitive of how many hours you are requesting for each day. Make sure to only change the default 8 hours when requesting partial paid off days. The daily quantity should never exceed 8 hours or your scheduled shift hours. To enter time off, go to the Workday home page and click on the Time Off worklet. Under Request, click Time Off:

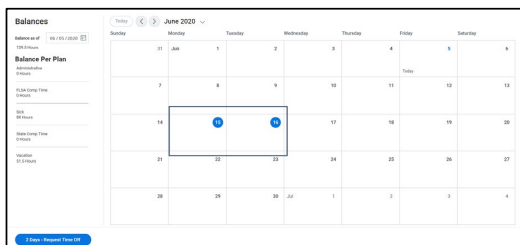
The **Time Off Calendar** page will display



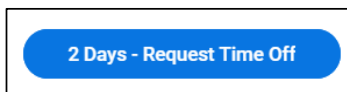
3. Select a date in the left column to see your **Time Off Balance** as of that date (Optional)



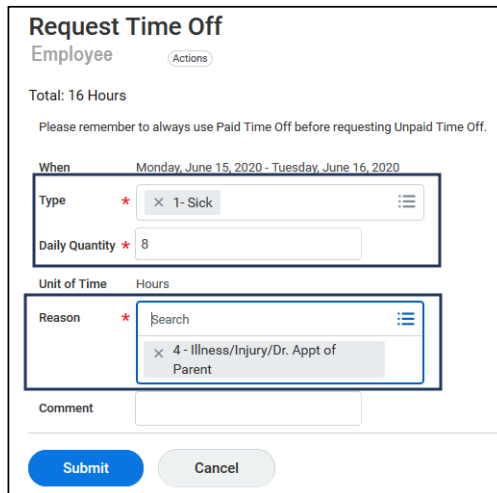
4. Click the day(s) you will be out. If the time you will be out on each day varies, you will need to do separate requests for the different time frames



5. Click the **Request Time Off** button



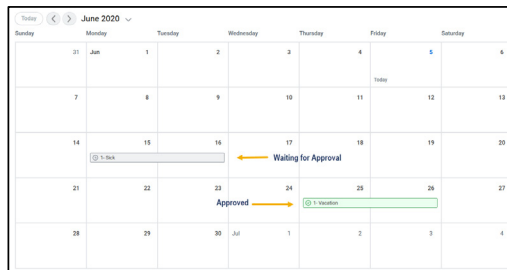
6. In the pop-up window that displays, complete the following fields:
 - **Time Off Type.** Only Types for which you are eligible will appear (e.g. Sick)
 - **Daily Quantity.** This will automatically populate with the number of hours according to your assigned work schedule but can be updated. **IMPORTANT: This is not the total hours but the hours per day you will be out**
 - **Reason** (Required for certain Time Off Types)



Notes:

- **Daily Quantity** allows you to enter in a partial day off if necessary
 - **Reason** options will appear based on the **Type** selected
7. Enter comments for your Manager as needed. Remember *not* to include private information in the comments section
 8. Click **Submit**

You will see the calendar updated to show what you requested



Note: Requests waiting for approval are marked in grey. Approved requests will be marked in green and display a green check mark

You have completed the **Request Time Off** business process