The Newsletter of the Office of Human Resources and Payroll Services at Norwalk Community College

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HR MATTERS

Wellness Committee Launches Health Risk Assessment Questionnaire

Paul Gallo, Director of Exercise Science and Wellness

Data compiled from voluntary Health Risk Assessments will assist with future programming, screenings and wellness activities that will address the health-related needs of our employees.

The Wellness Committee has launched a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) for all faculty and staff. HRAs are commonly used as part of many workplace wellness programs in corporate, academic and medical settings. The primary purpose of this type of questionnaire is to identify risk factors of an individual or group of people that are associated with increased prevalence of chronic disease (*U.S. Center for Disease Control 2013*).

Here at NCC, the Wellness Committee plans to use data compiled from this voluntary questionnaire to assist with future programming, screenings and wellness activities that will address the health-related needs of our employees. Follow-up assessments can also be used to measure the effectiveness of our workplace wellness program and improvements in employee health.

The HRA was released on November 4, 2015 and is available on the Wellness Committee's webpage. Completion of this questionnaire will take less than five to six minutes. Our HRA is adapted from the University of Michigan Health Management Research Center's Health Risk Appraisal, which has been validated. When completing the HRA, we strongly recommend that all employees have their most recent lab reports from their last physical exam and blood test.

Since the HRA will be accessible through a URL link on the Wellness Committee's webpage, it will ensure complete anonymity and confidentiality of all information. The questionnaire will be completed voluntarily and will not require the entry of any personal identification such as name, employee number or Banner ID. If you wish to share your results, please print your HRA prior to submitting it and bring a copy to the Pitney Bowes Foundation Wellness Center to consult with a Health-Fitness Assessment Technician.

To access the HRA, please visit http://www.norwalk.edu/dept/healthwellnesscenter/WAB.asp, online until May 1, 2016.

Stand More, Sit Less: Science and Strategies for Desk Workers

Kimberly Bryant-Smith, Human Resources Assistant

Prolonged sitting is a health risk factor, regardless of how much exercise you get when you're not sitting down. It can increase your risk for developing health problems including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Imagine this scenario: You work sitting at a desk. Maybe you only have to take a look around you to picture it in detail, complete with an overflowing inbox. Maybe you go for a walk most days. Maybe you get the 30 minutes of activity a day, five days a week recommended by the U.S. government's *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.*

The big picture is more complicated than that, though. Research going back to the Apollo space program suggests that prolonged sitting is a health risk factor regardless of how much exercise you get when you're not sitting down.

According to former NASA Director of Life Sciences Joan Vernikos, even though astronauts exercise daily during their space missions, the health effects of experiencing microgravity in Earth orbit are similar to the health effects of prolonged sitting in an earthbound office chair. Astronauts lose cardiovascular fitness, muscle and bone when they're not exerting themselves against gravity as they would on the planet's surface. Back on Earth, when you sit still in your chair, without exerting yourself against gravity to stand up and move around, you trigger a cascade of physiological changes contributing to fat gain, muscle degeneration and insulin sensitivity. Prolonged sitting also shuts down production of lipoprotein lipase, an enzyme that transports fat from your blood to fuel your muscles. The longer you sit, the more time you spend with minimal levels of lipoprotein lipase.

These changes triggered by prolonged sitting increase your risk for health problems including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer, even if you exercise regularly.

Is an adjustable standing desk the answer? Probably not. Standing all day brings its own set of risks and disadvantages, ranging from dangerous circulatory problems to typos caused by reduced fine motor ability while standing. Many workers use the standing feature only for very short bursts adding up to less than 15 minutes in a day, or fail to use the standing feature at all after the novelty of the new desk wears off.

Fortunately, the best solution to this problem doesn't require an expensive new desk or a radical career shift. The best way to counteract prolonged sitting is to create a new habit of breaking up your sitting time by moving around during the workday. Simply standing up for a moment and sitting back down a few times each hour will restart your lipoprotein lipase production. Even better is to stand up and stretch or walk around for a minimum of two minutes every 30 or 40 minutes.

Taking frequent microbreaks to rest your hands, change your posture and focus your vision on something further away than your computer screen is exactly what ergonomics experts have been recommending for years to improve work performance and reduce the risk of injury for computer workers. You may also have opportunities to stand up while continuing to work. You could stand while using the phone, stand to help a visitor or even have a standing meeting—which has a good chance of being both healthier and shorter than a regular sitting meeting.

The hardest part of changing our sedentary habits may be *remembering to stand up*. A recent review of research on reducing prolonged sitting in adults found that one of the most promising techniques is self-monitoring. Try setting up a separate Outlook calendar with recurring reminders to stand up every half hour, or download a phone reminder app like "Stand Up!" If you prefer a bit of retro clockwork on your desk, there's a kitchen timer out there for almost every aesthetic preference.

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The best way to counteract prolonged sitting is to create a new habit of breaking up your sitting time by moving around during the workday.

Changing your physical environment is another promising technique for changing sedentary habits. The key is to find ways to arrange your environment so you need to stand up now and then, without forcing yourself into ergonomically problematic behaviors that could result in injury. For example, *don't k*eep your pen and paper at the far side of the desk so you have to stand up and bend awkwardly to write, but *do* try getting rid of the recycling bin under your desk and getting up to use the one across the room. Try moving your printer across the room, so you have to stand up. If you like to drink water while you're working, try putting your water bottle where you have to stand up to get it. (If you need the water bottle in easy reach so you remember to drink your water, that's fine, too. You'll still be standing up and walking down the hall a few extra times as a result of being well-hydrated.)

Take a look at the sources below to learn more, give it a try and let us know what techniques work for you to kick the habit of prolonged sitting.

Gardner, Benjamin, Lee Smith, Fabiana Lorencatto, Mark Hamer, and Stuart J.H. Biddle. "How to Reduce Sitting Time? A Review of Behaviour Change Strategies Used in Sedentary Behaviour Reduction Interventions among Adults." *Health Psychology Review* (2015): n. pag. Taylor & Francis. Web. 16 Oct. 2015.

Hamilton, Marc T., Genevieve N. Healy, David W. Dunstan, Theodore W. Zderic, and Neville Owen. "Too Little Exercise and Too Much Sitting: Inactivity Physiology and the Need for New Recommendations on Sedentary Behavior." *Current Cardiovascular Risk Reports 2.4* (2008): 292-98. *Current Cardiovascular Risk Reports.* U.S. National Library of Medicine, 15 Aug. 2012. Web. 16 Oct. 2015.

Hedge, Alan. "CUergo: Sitting and Standing." *CUergo: Sitting and Standing.* Cornell University, n.d. Web. 16 Oct. 2015.

"Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans." *Physical Activity Guidelines.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008. Web. 20 Oct. 2015. <http://health.gov/paguidelines/>.

Vernikos, Joan. *Sitting Kills, Moving Heals: How Everyday Movement Will Prevent Pain, Illness, and Early Death--and Exercise Alone Won't.* Fresno, CA: Linden, 2011. Print.

Ten Reasons to Review Your Paystub

Jill Russo Foster, Financial Coach, Office of Adult Learning

Back in the day, paystubs used to come with your paycheck. But now, you are probably getting your paycheck directly deposited—no more check. That's a great thing. But with that, more employers are not giving you a paper copy of your paystub. While you may not think it's important, here are some reasons why you want to review your paystub often:

1. To ensure your pay rate is correct.
2. For keeping track of your hours worked (especially if your hours fluctuate).
3. To track your accrual and usage of sick, vacation, and personal time. You wouldn't want to lose your unused vacation time because you didn't know you had more time to take.
4. For comparison of your year-end paystub to your W-2 for accuracy and income tax purposes.
5. To keep track that your wages are reported correctly for your Social Security. This is how your Social Security benefits are calculated from your wages, so inaccurate wages could mean less of a benefit or an overpayment (that you would be required to pay back).
6. If you have to pay alimony and/or child support, you will need your paystubs if you need to have the amount adjusted.
7. For verification to get an employee discount (such as cell phone service and other employee discounts).

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8. If you are involved in an accident and need to verify your income for loss of wage payments.
9. To verify your wages, both W-2s and one to two months of paystubs are needed when applying for a loan (car, mortgage, etc.).
10. To determine if your withholdings are correct for your situation. Having too little withheld means you could owe money on April 15. Paying too much means you are giving the government your money on loan and not collecting any interest.

It's your choice whether or not to print them. The most important thing is to review your online paystub.

Questions About Using ePay

It's easy to view your ePay paycheck information and your W-2 tax forms on the State of Connecticut Core-CT portal at http://www.core-ct.state.ct.us. If you have any problems, please don't give up! Most common questions have a simple solution, and you can always call the Office of Human Resources and Payroll Services if you need help.

W-2 tax forms are now available on the Core-CT ePay portal. To view or print your W-2, go to http://www.core-ct.state.ct.us.

I've worked for NCC for fewer than 90 days and I've never logged into ePay.
If you've received your first paycheck, your ePay account is ready to use. You will need your employee number and your temporary password.

Your employee number is located in the box to the right of your name and address on the pay stub you received with your first paycheck. This is a six-digit number assigned by the State of Connecticut for employment purposes. It is different from your eight-digit Banner ID which is assigned by the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system for academic purposes. If you can't find your employee number, please use your NCC email to contact any HR/Payroll staff member for help.

Your temporary password is the first four letters of your last name (UPPER CASE) and the last four numbers of your Social Security number. If your last name is shorter than four letters, use your entire last name only.

Open a browser, go to http://www.core-ct.state.ct.us, click on Login, and enter your employee ID and temporary password. Change your password. You will then be logged in to the Core-CT Portal home page.

Click on My System Profile to set up your forgotten password help. Setting up this function will enable you to answer a security question to have your forgotten password emailed to the address you provide. Choose a security question with a single answer that you will be able to remember in the future! Avoid using a question that could have multiple answers. For example, if you would like to use the question about your favorite author, consider whether your answer to this question will be the same tomorrow, or several years in the future. We recommend that you use your NCC email address as your primary email address for the Core-CT system.

To view your paycheck information, click on View Paycheck Information and then click on the pay period end date for the individual paycheck you wish to view. If nothing happens when you click on the individual paycheck link, look around your computer screen to see if there is a message asking you whether to allow pop-ups from this site. You will need to answer yes, to give your permission for the individual paycheck window to open. You may also wish to check your pop-up blocker settings and change the settings so that pop-ups from Core-CT are always allowed.

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Don't forget to set up your "Forgot My Password" function!

If you would like more detailed information on how to use ePay, go to http://www.core-ct.state.ct.us, click on Training, and click on ePay User – Introduction to Core-CT. For assistance with browser compatibility issues, go to http://www.core-ct.state.ct.us, click on Help, and scroll down to Browser Information. If this information doesn't help you resolve your browser compatibility issue, please contact the IT Helpdesk at (203) 857-6800.

I've worked for NCC for more than 90 days and I've never logged into ePay.
All Core-CT passwords expire after 90 days, so your temporary password has expired. Use your NCC email to contact corepasswordreset@norwalk.edu to request a password reset. After receiving your new password, follow the instructions for new users. Remember to set up your forgotten password help!

I've used ePay before, but I haven't logged in for more than 90 days.
All Core-CT passwords expire after 90 days. If your password has expired, use the Forgot My Password function to reset your password. Your password reset email will be sent within a few hours. If you never set up your security question or never provided a system email address, the Forgot My Password function will not work. Use your NCC email to contact corepasswordreset@norwalk.edu to request a password reset. After that, remember to set up your security question and provide a system email address the next time you log in.

I forgot my password.
Use the Forgot My Password function to answer your security question and have your password emailed to the address you provided. Your password reset email will be sent within a few hours.

I forgot my password, but I never set up the Forgot My Password function.
Use your NCC email to contact corepasswordreset@norwalk.edu to manually reset your password. After that, remember to set up the Forgot My Password function.

I tried to sign in more than 5 times with the wrong password and locked myself out.
Your ePay account has been locked as a security precaution. Use the Forgot My Password function to reset your password. Your password reset email will be sent within a few hours. If you are still unable to unlock your account, use your NCC email to contact corepasswordreset@norwalk.edu to request a password reset.

What browsers can I use to log in to Core-CT? How do I know what browser I am using?
Some users have problems because they are using a browser that is incompatible with Core-CT. Your browser is the software you use to visit webpages. If you don't know how to identify what browser you are using, go to www.whatbrowser.org. This site will tell you which browser you are using and whether it is up to date. For assistance with browser compatibility issues, go to http://www.core-ct.state.ct.us, click on Help, and scroll down to Browser Information. If this information doesn't help you resolve your browser compatibility issue, contact the IT Helpdesk at (203) 857-6800.

Is ePay available 24 hours a day?
The hours of system operation are listed at http://www.core-ct.state.ct.us. The ePay system is usually available from 4 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Sunday, except for every other Thursday (the Thursday between paychecks) when the system is available from 4 a.m. to 2 p.m. The system closes down each night and on the afternoon of confirm Thursdays for processing of new data. You will not be able to view your pay information while the system is closed for processing. Please plan ahead for your late-night pay information needs.

Two dollars per day—the cost of our morning coffee—can grow to more than $60,000 in 30 years!

Start Small, Save Big: Saving for Retirement through the State's Defined Contribution Plans

Are you confused about your state employee retirement saving options? Prudential Retirement has been selected through a competitive bidding process to manage the state's three defined contribution plans from 2015 to 2020, with a mandate to provide streamlined online account management and educational resources. Visit Prudential's dedicated State of Connecticut Defined Contribution Plans website at www.ctcdp.com to learn more, or to schedule an appointment with the Lead Retirement Counselor for Fairfield County, Davelva Perez. Ms. Perez may be contacted directly at (860) 837-4214 or davelva.perez@prudential.com.

In a press release announcing the new agreement with Prudential, the Office of the State Comptroller explains that "the state's defined contribution plans are retirement plans offered to employees. Two of the plans, the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and the 403(b) plan, are voluntary supplemental plans. Another plan, the Alternate Retirement Plan, is a core retirement plan offered to certain higher education employees as an alternative to the State Employee Retirement System (SERS) plan. All three plans share the same investment menu, and participants benefit from that consolidation through lower fees."

Full-time or part-time NCC employees who participate in the Alternate Retirement Plan as their core retirement plan may elect to increase their contributions above the mandatory 5%, and may also open a supplemental 457 and/or 403b account if that choice is right for them.

Full-time or part-time NCC employees who participate in the State Employee Retirement System traditional or hybrid defined benefit pension plan as their core retirement plan may also open a 457 and/or 403b defined contribution account to supplement their future pension income with additional savings.

During this year's National Retirement Security Week, State Comptroller Kevin Lembo encouraged state residents to establish a retirement savings plan as soon early as possible. "The message of the week is 'start small, save big,'" Lembo said. "Most people believe they can't save for the future because there are bills due today. However, even $2 per day—the cost of our morning coffee—can grow to more than $60,000 in 30 years (assuming 7% average return). This kind of perspective will hopefully prompt people to think about saving, and help them realize that, at $2 per day, it's actually achievable."

Planning to Retire?

Therese Marrocco, Director of Human Resources & Louisa Jones, Human Resources Associate

You've had a long successful career at NCC, and now you're thinking about the next stage in your life. The process can be multi-faceted and it is important to plan ahead.

Step 1: Decide your retirement date and notify your department.
It's helpful for planning purposes to start a year in advance of the date you wish to retire. Here are the steps to follow:

1. Notify HR for an audit of your file at least 1 year to 6 months in advance.
2. When your audit is ready, set up an appointment to meet with a retirement counselor. If you are enrolled in the SERS (State Employee Retirement System)

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It's helpful for planning purposes to start a year in advance of the date you wish to retire.

traditional or hybrid pension plan, contact the Retirement Services Division of the Office of the State Comptroller for a counseling appointment. If you are enrolled in the Alternate Retirement Plan, contact Prudential Retirement Counselor Davelva Perez for a counseling appointment.

3. Notify your supervisor 3 to 6 months in advance.
4. Send a formal letter to the President advising him of the date you intend to retire. Remember it is always on the first day of the month.

Step 2: Know your retirement benefit options.
Read all the important information on the State Comptroller's website. A helpful "How to Retire" guide is available at http://www.osc.ct.gov/rbsd/howtoretire.html.

Step 3: Begin the application process.
Contact Louisa Jones in Human Resources & Payroll Services to begin completing the required forms. She will provide you with the list of required documents and make sure your file audit is in order.

Step 4: Review your finances to understand what other income you can depend on in retirement.
Check your eligibility for Social Security and Medicare benefits. The Social Security Administration provides an online personal statement. Visit www.ssa.gov to create an account and review your annual statement. If you have additional 403(b) or 457(b) accounts, talk to your financial advisor to learn how to receive the distribution.

Step 5: Finalize your retirement election.
Complete and sign your forms. Be sure your spouse or domestic partner signs as well, if necessary. HR will forward the completed paperwork to the State Comptroller's Retirement Services Division.

Step 6: Stay involved.
Just because you are retiring doesn't mean you have to lose touch with NCC. There are many things that you can contribute to NCC: you can enroll in a Lifetime Learners course, teach a class, or get involved with helping students.

All About Records Management

Gunnar Sahlin, Reference Librarian

Don't discard your **papers** or delete those **files** or **emails** just yet!

As employees of NCC we are also employees of the State of Connecticut. Each one of us is required by law to comply with the State's requirements regarding documents as well as emails and computer files.

For hard copies, it is not as hard as you may think. When you need to clear your office:

1. Order empty boxes from Maintenance.
2. Know what **type of documents** you put in the box! Gunnar can help you figure out the categories from the various Retention Schedules, which are available online at http://ctstatelibrary.org/publicrecords/general-schedules-state.
3. Know the **date range** of your items!
4. Different types of documents can be in the same box as long as the **required retention period** is met for all. Some departments want to keep certain items longer than what is required by the state, which is fine!

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5. Mark the box: 1. Department. 2. Type of Item (with its series number). 3. Date Range. 4. Destruction date. Complete and sign a RC-108 form. Gunnar will help with all this.
6. Ask to have the box(es) brought to the locked cages in the basement.

When the time comes for destruction, your Records Management Liaison Officer Gunnar will take care of it. That's it for paper.

Do not delete agency related e-mails. Many people believe that it is the IT department's job to retain electronic data according to the appropriate retention schedule. It is YOUR job! Should you get a message saying that your mailbox is full, please contact the NCC IT Helpdesk at helpdesk@norwalk.edu.

Data Storage and Retention Policy: http://www.commnet.edu/it/policy/PLCY-4-2.asp
Data Management Policy: http://www.commnet.edu/it/policy/PLCY-4-1.asp
Both of these relate to the ownership, protection, storage, and retention of data.
Electronic Communications Policy: http://www.commnet.edu/it/policy/electronic-communications.asp

For questions, please don't hesitate contact RMLO Gunnar Sahlin at gsahlin@norwalk.edu or (203) 857-7209, or Assistant IT Director Wyatt Bissell at wbissell@norwalk.edu or (203) 857-3304.

College Senate Personnel Q&A

The College Senate invited Therese Marrocco to attend the May 2015 meeting for a question-and-answer session about personnel procedures. Among the topics of discussion were hiring procedures for permanent, interim, temporary, and part-time positions; reassignments; employee departures; and the arrival of new employees.

Permanent Appointments
Permanent appointments have a dedicated budget line. Occasionally the state provides funding for a new staff or faculty budget line for a specific purpose. In that case, the budget line is simply assigned to the appropriate department. If a faculty budget line becomes available due to the departure of an employee, the Academic Dean determines which department will be assigned the newly available budget line, based on academic needs. If a staff budget line becomes available due to a departure, the Executive Council may reassign the budget line to a different department, based on administrative needs.

Job postings for permanent faculty and staff positions are listed on the college's public website at http://norwalk.edu/dept/hr/employment_opportunities. College job openings are posted to this page before they appear anywhere else, and where required, unions are then informed of new postings. Applications are submitted online through the public website.

A volunteer search committee is convened for each permanent position to review the applications, interview selected candidates, and present finalists to the President for second interviews and the final hiring decision. Employees interested in participating in this important service to the college may contact Therese Marrocco to be added to the database of search committee volunteers. Employees may volunteer to serve wherever needed, or, if they prefer, may volunteer to participate only in either faculty or staff searches. Regardless of the position being searched, search committees usually mix faculty and staff, and include both members with specific subject area expertise, and members representing the wider campus community. In accordance with the college's diversity goals, members of

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underutilized groups for the position being searched are intentionally included on the committee, as well.

Interim Appointments

College management makes interim appointments. Interim appointments can cover immediate staffing needs during a search, or when a budget freeze prevents the hire of a new employee. Interim appointments are typically limited to two years and are usually shorter, but some have lasted longer due to repeated hiring freezes. Interim appointments are made based on the qualifications the person currently has. The Senate discussed the possibility that other employees might have similar qualifications and not be considered for an interim appointment. Due to this concern, the college will make an effort to announce openings for interim appointments, whenever possible.

Temporary Appointments

Full-time educational assistant positions are funded from monies intended to cover the college's operating expenses, and do not have a dedicated budget line. Due to the funding source, these jobs are non-permanent and there is no guarantee that the employment contract will be renewed. Many of these positions, which were originally intended to be short-term, have been in place for several years as a result of budget cuts eliminating permanent positions.

Cheryl Devonish, the Chief Diversity Officer, will be looking at the current EA process due to inequities between employees on permanent appointments and employees on long-term special appointments. For example, full-time educational assistants are not eligible for promotion and tenure. Although it was not the practice in the past to hold a formal search for non-permanent positions due to the understanding that they would be short-term, the college is moving towards a formal search for most full-time EA positions, as a preliminary step towards addressing inequities. These job postings are listed on the college's public website at http://norwalk.edu/dept/hr/employment_opportunities. However, truly temporary short-term, full-time positions will not go through a formal search.

Part-Time Appointments

Department chairs are responsible for hiring adjunct faculty. Supervisors responsible for managing the work are responsible for hiring part-time educational assistants. These part-time positions do not go through a formal search. The hiring decision is at the supervisor's discretion within the bounds of policies governing state employees, such as the ethics policy forbidding state employees from engaging in any action bringing financial gain to a family member. However, we recommend that chairs and supervisors advertise part-time positions on the college's jobs webpage in order to reach a wider audience and take advantage of the convenient online application management system used by our formal search committees.

Once the hiring decision has been made, the prospective employee should be given a part-time hiring package and instructed to make an appointment with HR no later than two weeks before the proposed first day of work. Part-time job offers made by the hiring supervisor are contingent on receipt of the completed hiring package, an acceptable background check, and an employment contract signed by the employee before work can begin. These part-time positions are non-permanent and there is no guarantee that future contracts will be offered, with certain limited exceptions for adjuncts on the seniority list.

Reassignments

Reassignments are made at the discretion of college management and can happen for many reasons, including reallocation of a budget line to another area, or a person's request

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for a change. Although other reasons may be relevant, reassignments are ultimately made based on the academic or administrative needs of the college. When a permanent employee is reassigned, the budget line moves with the employee and is no longer available to the previous department, so a replacement is not hired unless another budget line becomes available. In the same way, the reassignment of a temporary employee may also reallocate resources from one area to another in an effort to make the best use of limited operating funds, so a replacement is not hired.

Departing Employees
Terminations and resignations are not formally announced. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to instruct the employee on what needs to be collected before leaving, such as keys, IDs, archived files, etc. Although it is not a formal institutional process, Therese Marrocco conducts exit interviews in some cases.

New Employees
New full-time hires are announced at monthly All-College meetings. As a result of discussion in the Senate meeting, these announcements will also be included in *This Week @ NCC.* Full-time hires get individual new employee orientation sessions. Adjunct faculty and other part-time employees are oriented by the department chair or hiring supervisor. The college will move towards providing orientation materials online in the future.

Send Us Your Ideas

Is there a topic you'd like us to cover in future newsletter, or is there a topic you'd like to write about? Contact *HR Matters* content editor Kimberly Bryant-Smith at kbryant-smith@norwalk.edu.