Looking Toward Retirement?

Do you have enough saved to enjoy the lifestyle you want after you stop working? Experts estimate you will need 85% of your annual pre-retirement income to meet expenses each year of retirement. Prairie View A&M University offers both mandatory and voluntary retirement plans to help you reach your retirement goals. Below you find your voluntary options:

**Tax- Deferred Account Program (TDA)**
A voluntary program in which you make pre-tax or after-tax (Roth) contributions. This is a defined contribution plan under Internal Revenue Code 403(b). Upon retirement, you decide how to utilize your account balance.

*How to Enroll in TDA:*
To enroll, you need to complete a TDA Salary Reduction Agreement and turn it in along with a copy of your vendor account opening statement to the Office of Human Resources.

**Texa$aver Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP)**
A voluntary program to which you make pre-tax or after-tax (Roth) contributions. This is a defined contribution plan under Internal Revenue Code 457(b). Upon retirement, you decide how to utilize your account balance. The Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) administers this plan through Great West.

*How to Enroll in Texa$aver DCP*
To enroll, you need to go to www.Texasaver.com and select the 457 plan. The website contains instructions on how to enroll and details the investment options available to participants of the plan. You may also contact a representative directly at (800) 634-5091.

*Remember it’s never too late to start saving for your future!*

Tips for Employee Clearance

Employees (including graduate students) terminating employment, retiring or transferring to another department within the University are required to complete the clearance process before exiting the University. Please ensure the proper steps are taken by the department when clearing an employee:

1. Notify the exiting employee of the clearance procedure for clearing the University and ensure an exit interview is scheduled.
2. Create and submit an Employee Payroll Action (EPA) document separating the employee from the position dated effective the last day of employment. The retirement or resignation letter as well as the acceptance letter should be attached to the EPA.
3. Respond to the departmental clearance within the time period stated in the “clearance email” from the Office of Human Resources.
4. Please give advanced notice to the Office of Human Resources of employees expected to exit your department.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**
Desherria Campbell, Leave Administrator
Extension 1728 | ddcampbell@pvamu.edu
or clearanceteam@pvamu.edu

Kitchen Cupboard Corner

Vinegar is getting a lot of attention, and not just for its use as a salad dressing. These days, environmentally conscious consumers use it in place of chemical cleaners. It also has a handy use for skin conditions like psoriasis and eczema. You can take vinegar by the spoonful, or fill a clean squirt bottle with one part vinegar to three parts water, spray it onto affected area and let dry. [www.healthcentral.com](http://www.healthcentral.com)
Save $10 a week, easy.

Even if you think you are living paycheck to paycheck, it is possible for you to save money. You can save as little as $10 each week just by making simple changes. That's almost $500 a year!

Here are five ways to save $10 or more:

1. Eliminate your land line phone. If you only use your cell phone, consider turning off your landline or at least reducing your services.

2. Have coffee at home. Skipping your morning coffee out can add up quickly.

3. Bring your lunch and snacks. Limit lunch out to once or twice a week.

4. Set up an automatic deposit of $10 per week into a savings account. Many of us can afford to put away $10 but never do it. Having that money automatically withdrawn from your checking account and put into a savings account ensures that it gets put away. You’ll probably never miss it.

5. Avoid unnecessary trips and carpool when possible. Gas prices are on the rise, and sharing commuting costs can add up to big savings.

Annual Enrollment is July 1-31.

This is the only time during the plan year, unless you have a qualified life event, that you can make changes to your benefit elections. If you do not make any changes your current elections will roll over to next plan year with the exception of flexible spending accounts. You MUST reenroll in spending accounts each plan year. To make changes, log on through Single Sign On (https://sso.tamus.edu) and click on iBenefits. If you make a change you must SUBMIT your change for it to become effective. iBenefits will open July 1 to accept benefit changes. If you require assistance with the Annual Enrollment process please contact benefitsteam@pvamu.edu or 936-261-1730. Stay tuned for additional Annual Enrollment information to include FY14 premiums, plan changes and informational meetings.

Benefits Corner

Compensation

Tips for Writing Position Descriptions

Why are position descriptions important?

- Well written and accurate job descriptions drive compensation, performance management and recruitment and staffing.
- Well written job descriptions provide employees with an understanding of job expectations and set the performance standard by which their performance will be reviewed.
- Accurate job descriptions allow the Compensation team to benchmark positions to ensure the University is maintaining an equitable and competitive compensation program.
- Job descriptions are necessary in the staffing process and provide the foundation for job advertisements and assist the University in complying with applicable legal requirements.

Do’s and Don’ts

Do……

- Base the job description on the department’s needs.
- Ensure the job description is complete and accurate.
- Focus on the critical activities of the job. Disregard minor occasional tasks, which are not unique or specific to the job.
- Write in complete sentences. Keep sentence structure as simple as possible, omitting unnecessary words.
- Be precise. Vague descriptions can lead to misclassification of the job’s title, pay grade. In addition, candidates and the incumbent may have an inaccurate interpretation of the job duties and what is expected of them.
- Begin each duty with a descriptive action verb (i.e. facilitate, advise, reconcile, etc.).
- Be consistent when using terms like “occasionally” or “may.” These should be used to describe tasks that are performed once in a while.
- Use logical sequence in describing job duties and responsibilities. Include explanatory phrases which tell why, how, where, or how often the tasks and duties are performed.

Don’t……

- Artificially inflate levels of education and/or experience required to perform the essential functions of the job. Determine the minimum qualifications; you can state preferences for higher levels of education and experience, and hire someone with those qualifications if it’s a defensible choice.
- Use acronyms or jargon.
- Use brand (proprietary) names (i.e. Xerox machine, Canopy, BPP).
- Use words subject to varying interpretations (i.e., “some”, “many”, “great”, “heavy”). Instead use quantitative or measurable amounts (i.e., 25% or 5 to 10, etc.).
- Don’t lock yourself into strict requirements that may prevent you from considering qualified candidates. Consider

FOR MORE INFORMATION
compensationteam@pvamu.edu
The Office of Human Resources Immigration Services provides services to International Faculty, Staff and Students at PVAMU.

The Immigration Services Associate provides assistance to departments who would like to hire international faculty and staff and also assists departments with inviting J-1 exchange visitors and scholars. The Immigration Services Associate also serves as the Principal Designated School Official (International Student Advisor) to advise and assist international students. We are dedicated to increasing our cultural diversity through facilitating the enrollment of international students and the hiring of multinational faculty and staff.

FOR MORE INFORMATION Evelyn J. McGinty, (936) 261-1725 ejmcginty@pvamu.edu

New Training for PVAMU Managers and Supervisors

Looking for training for new supervisors? What about a refresher course for an existing Supervisor? Take a look at what's coming up for you beginning in August:

Successful Hiring Practices for Supervisors Time is a scarce resource for most employers. For this reason, effective hiring strategies are essential to all employers – small and large, urban and rural. Finding the best candidate for the job is a challenge. This training will explore the following areas: the hiring process which includes: Access/Log-in to PV PAWS, updating and filling a position, the hiring of a new employee, EEOC hiring steps/conducting effective interviews, on-boarding for your new or returning Employees.

Awesome Customer Service This customer service training will bring about the elements in which good customer service cannot be underestimated. In the competitive world in which businesses operate, good customer service can have a large impact. Employees will give bad service to customers if they themselves receive bad service and little feedback from their managers and supervisors. Remember: external customer service starts with internal customer service.

Effective Communication Effective communication is important to insure that a project or task is done right and accurately. Communication helps departments understand each other and what needs to be done. Without communication you would have no team, and without a team you would have no organization. This training will explore the following areas: communication styles, characteristics of open communication, guidelines to team communication, responsibilities of team members and getting your message across.

Handling Employee Conflict Employee conflict can be detrimental to your department’s morale and business results. Having the skills to resolve conflict effectively at work is one of the biggest challenges in today’s business world and is vital to success. The ability to deal with people is even more important today with the pressures of our fast-paced environments. This training will provide you with practical strategies in resolving interpersonal conflicts at the workplace.

The Successful Exiting of your Employees Employees leave your organization for good reasons and bad reasons. In this module you will gain the road map to guide you on employment termination to help the employee exit process go smoothly.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on their trainings, please check the Business Affairs Training calendar for dates and register with: LaDonna Harris - Training Specialist at laharris@pvamu.edu or (936) 261-1724.

Student Employment Office

The Student Employment Office (SEO) is intended to be a learning experience which complements a student’s academic experience, career goals and provides valuable work experience. By working part-time, students are able to earn money to help defray the cost of attending college. Additionally, student employees are a valuable asset to help meet the staffing needs of the University.

Three reasons to become a student worker:

1. For students new to the University, working on campus helps develop a sense of community and belonging. Students who feel they are a part of their university tend to do better scholastically.

2. Students with little or no employment history may establish a work record and learn the fundamental skills of employment such as punctuality, communication, cooperation, and time management.

3. Students gain preparation for the world of work through processes of interviewing, hiring, training, supervision, relating to coworkers and the public, meeting several career choices through varied work experiences.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Student Employment Office
Harrington Science Building – Room 111
(936) 261-1793
Employment

Tips for Staying on Track with a Planned Hire Date

As the University moves forward with developing a culture of compliance, it is important to observe the University’s Administrative Procedure for Employment Practices. This procedure includes a number of steps and processing deadlines that are important to staying in compliance with federal, state and TAMUS laws, policies and regulations. Here are some of the common pitfalls in the hiring process and how to avoid delays in the hiring process with each step:

Not submitting a complete hiring selection file to the Office of Equal Opportunity. Follow-up with the Office of Equal Opportunity to ensure review of submitted materials and prompt notification is sent to HR. While the department may have turned documents in to the Office of Equal Opportunity, this does not necessarily constitute a completed file. Take a moment to discuss the content of the file with the designated Office of Equal Opportunity staff. This will make sure that your department can promptly provide any additional documentation that may be required to complete the file.

Incorrect applicant flow. This one the most common mistakes made in the hiring process. Information on the candidates “Not Hired” is provided by changing applicant statuses in PV PAWS. However, applicants that went through the interview process must be changed to an “Interviewed” status before being moved to the “Not Hired” status.

Email Account Requests are not received timely. Many departments do not submit an email request for a new employee until they are asked to so by HR. The email request should be sent prior to submitting the Hiring Proposal and EPA. This will help ensure that a new employee can complete all required trainings during New Employee Orientation.

The Hiring Proposal is completed after the EPA. Submit the Hiring Proposal prior to completing the EPA document. Many departments complete the EPA prior to the Hiring Proposal. This delays approval of the EPA as HR cannot approve an EPA until prior approval has been completed on the Hiring Proposal.

Timing of the EPA. While the EPA is usually always complete, it does not reach HR prior to the hire date. Allow enough time for the EPA to route and be received in HR three working days prior to the effective hire date.

Communication with the hire. Communicate with the new hire about what he/she can expect on the first day of work. Often times HR notifies the hiring department when the hire is approved to begin working. However, the hiring department does not pass on the key new employee orientation details to the new employee.

Below are some additional planning steps to alleviate hiring stresses.

Plan ahead. Allow adequate time for hiring approval process.

Review and check the HR website often. Review the Manager’s/Supervisor’s Guides on the HR website often to review changes that may impact the processing of your hire.

Set up calendar reminders. Set up calendar reminders for hiring process deadlines. Hiring Proposals are due in HR five working days prior to the effective hire. EPAs are due in HR three working days prior to the effective hire date.

Use a checklist. Use the steps listed in the Manager’s/Supervisor’s Guide as a checklist and check off the items as you complete them so that steps are not missed.

Do not commit hastily. Do not commit to a hire date verbally or with a written offer of employment until all pre-employment steps have been completed (i.e. completed file in the Office of Equal Opportunity, Confidential Release form has been sent to HR for processing, etc.).

When in doubt, ask questions. Communication is the key to any successful business relationship. The Office of Human Resources is committed to providing impeccable service through advisement and the application of best practices when it comes to the hiring process. If you find that your department is having a problem with a particular hiring matter, do not hesitate to ask for assistance.

Your department’s hires are important to you and deserve the proper handling and care. Additionally, timely processing of hiring documents is essential to an employee’s New Employee Orientation experience. New Employee Orientation has a first impression impact and sets the tone for what he/she can expect from the organization.

Details related to the hiring process are on the HR website in our Manager’s/Supervisor’s Guide at: www.pvamu.edu/pages/3942.asp. If you are a departmental Creator, Hiring Supervisor, Hiring Manager, Department Head, Dean/Director, etc. and you have not been receiving hiring process deadline email reminders from our office, please email: employmentteam@pvamu.edu to have your name added to the email distribution list.