

University of North Carolina
School of the Arts

The HR Hub

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From the HR Director

Beth Cox



This week, we continue with our series on Stress Management.....

Stress Management Strategy #2: *Alter the situation*

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem is avoided in the future. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

- ◆ **Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.** If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build and the situation will likely remain the same.
- ◆ **Be willing to compromise.** When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you'll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.
- ◆ **Be more assertive.** Don't take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. If you've got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.
- ◆ **Manage your time better.** Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused. But if you plan ahead, you can avoid these stress-inducing pitfalls.

Time Management Tips to Reduce Stress:

- ◆ **Create a balanced schedule.** All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities and solitary pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime.
- ◆ **Don't over-commit yourself.** Void scheduling things back-to-back or trying to fit too much into one day. All too often, we underestimate how long things will take.
- ◆ **Prioritize Tasks.** Make a list of tasks you have to do, and tackle them in order of importance. Do the high-priority items first. If you have something particularly unpleasant to do, get it over with early. The rest of your day will be more pleasant as a result.
- ◆ **Break projects into small steps.** If a large project seems overwhelming, make a step-by-step plan. Focus on one manageable step at a time, rather than taking on everything at once.
- ◆ **Delegate responsibility.** You don't have to do it all yourself, whether at home, school, or on the job. If other people can take care of the task, why not let them? Let go of the desire to control or oversee every little step. You'll be letting go of unnecessary stress in the process.

Announcements & Reminders

WHO'S NEW?

Kole Metz – Kole is our newest member of Student Life and will be working as a *Student Services Specialist*, more commonly known as a *College Life Housing Coordinator*. Kole received his degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College, where he also worked as a Community Assistant and Coordinator, managing residents and developing programming and community involvement activities.

Terri Renigar – Teri recently joined Advancement as a *University Programs Specialist* (Communications and Marketing associate). She'll be responsible for the coordination of marketing projects involving vendors (photography, advertising, design, printing) and media placement tracking and distribution. She received her BFA from East Carolina University. Terri most recently worked for Wake Forest as publication and information specialist and prior to that was a graphic designer for many years at R.J. Reynolds.

Please join us in welcoming these newcomers to our NCSA family.



2008 EAW Photos. Check out the photographs from UNCSA's 2008 *Employee Appreciation Week*! Go to the Human Resources webpage, on the left side menu, click on Employee Appreciation Week. On the next page, under "EAW 2008 Photos", click on the various events to see the photographs!

September Payroll Actions. Please submit any action for inclusion in the September check no later than Monday, September 8th.

NC State Football—State Employee Days. NC State Football is offering all State of North Carolina employees the ability to purchase discounted tickets for 3 of their upcoming home games at Carter-Finley Stadium: NCS vs. William & Mary on September 6th, NCS vs. Boston College on October 4th (Homecoming), and NCS vs. Miami on November 29th. For more information, go to: <http://www.gopack.com/pdf4/135185.pdf>

**Everyone in the HR Department wishes you all
a safe and happy Labor Day Weekend!**

Classification & Compensation

Susan Porter

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

We are enhancing our position descriptions in order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will be asking all supervisors and managers to complete an ADA checklist for physical activities and requirements, visual acuity, and working conditions for each position in their area. We will begin with the Arts schools, and coordinate the surveys with the Business Officers in each area. Details will be provided at a later date. If you would like more information on the ADA, please visit http://www.osp.state.nc.us/manuals/man1_2.html.

Competency Assessments for the latest Career-Banded positions are due in HR by September 15th. Training sessions were held on July 9th. In addition to the notifications emailed to supervisors and managers the week of July 19th we have included this important date in the two previous editions of the HR Hub. We want to be sure you have the tools necessary to complete a competency assessment for each employee career-banded in June, 2008. This must be completed by the September deadline in order to comply with OSP's requirement. Failure to do so will make the employee ineligible for consideration of the 2008 Salary Adjustment Fund. If you are a supervisor or manager of SPA employees and you were unable to attend one of the sessions, or if you need assistance with this process, please email me (porters@ncarts.edu) for details of this important state requirement!

Accruals & Timesheet News

Ginger Salmons

As the new school year begins, calendars will be full, days will be packed, and minutes will seem to fly by.....

Just to remind you.....all EPA employees, ERA-NT employees, SPA Subject employees, and SPA Exempt employees are required to report all hours worked or taken on the applicable month-end timesheet.

All month-end timesheets are due in Human Resources by the 5th of each month. Please begin now to make this procedure a priority, not only for state records, but for your own as well!



Recruitment News

Ashley Sanders

Job Offer Acceptance Session

A job offer acceptance session (JOA) is something that a new employee must attend to ensure all hiring paperwork is completed. I often get questions from hiring supervisor and managers about what takes place in a job offer acceptance session and whether or not we take care of parking, creating email accounts and the like.

The following is what is covered for all new employees in their JOA:

- ◆ W4 (withholding allowance certificate)
- ◆ NC4 (withholding allowance certificate)
- ◆ I-9 (employment eligibility verification)
- ◆ Set up email account
- ◆ Parking permit paperwork
- ◆ Criminal Background Check
- ◆ Credential Verification
- ◆ Direct Deposit
- ◆ One Card Authorization (permanent employees only)
- ◆ Benefits package is provided (if benefits eligible)
- ◆ Sign up for a New Employee Orientation Session (conducted monthly by Mary Ellen Haynes)



As a reminder, a new employee must have a JOA within three days of employment so that we've satisfied federal regulations associated with the I-9. If the new employee is available prior to his/her start date, I'd be happy to arrange a JOA in advance of their start date.

A modified JOA is also required for those employees who have previously worked at UNCSA and may be returning after having been gone for a couple of months or for those employees who have been hired in to a new position at the school.

Benefits News

Mary Ellen Haynes

Designating Beneficiaries.

Many of the benefits that you receive as a UNCSA employee require the designation of a *beneficiary*. These include products offered through the NCFlex Benefits Program: Group Term Life and Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance. A beneficiary must also be designated for any type of retirement account that you have, whether it be the Teachers and State Employees Retirement System, the Optional Retirement Program, the NC401k Program, the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, or a 403(b) Plan. [It is very important to review your beneficiary designations periodically to ensure they are up to date.](#) Many times there are life-style changes or changes in relationships that may affect your intent, however, if the appropriate documentation is not completed and properly recorded, the beneficiary on record will receive the benefit. There have been numerous cases where a divorce occurred, and the beneficiary was never changed to reflect the new spouse. We can only imagine how unpleasant this can be.

Benefits News, cont'd.

Mary Ellen Haynes

It is also important to know that selecting beneficiaries for retirement accounts is different from choosing beneficiaries for other assets such as life insurance. With retirement benefits, you need to know the impact of income tax and estate tax laws in order to select the right beneficiaries. Since children and spouses are the typical beneficiaries, it is important to understand exactly what you may (or may not) be giving to them. Although taxes shouldn't be the sole determining factor in naming your beneficiaries, ignoring the impact of taxes could lead you to make an inappropriate choice. Consult with your CPA financial planner to help make the right beneficiary choice.

In most cases involving the designation of beneficiaries, you will be asked to name a primary beneficiary and a secondary or contingent beneficiary. Your primary beneficiary is your first choice to receive the benefits. If your primary beneficiary doesn't survive you or decides to decline the benefits, then your secondary beneficiary will receive the benefits. You can name more than one primary or secondary beneficiary; you just need to specify the percentage each beneficiary will receive (the shares do not have to be equal). Some retirement plans have specific rules associated with the designation of beneficiaries.

As an example, let's take a look at the Teachers' and State Employees Retirement System (TSERS). When naming beneficiaries for the return of TSERS retirement contributions upon your death, the following apply:

- ◆ You must provide the name, address, Social Security number, date of birth of each beneficiary and indicate whether the beneficiary is a spouse.
- ◆ Your beneficiary(ies) cannot be an unborn child, a pet, a church, or any institution.
- ◆ You do not need permission from the beneficiary(ies) to make or change the designation.
- ◆ You do not have to make your beneficiary(ies) aware of this designation.
- ◆ You do not have to name relatives as beneficiary(ies).
- ◆ You have the option to designate as a beneficiary:
 - * **A living person.** If you choose one person as your primary beneficiary, you may name a secondary/contingent beneficiary(ies) in the event the primary beneficiary predeceases you.
 - * **More than one living person to share in the benefit equally.** If you name more than one primary beneficiary, you cannot name a secondary/contingent beneficiary(ies), and other consequences may be applicable.
 - * **Your estate.** Write ESTATE in the box asking for a beneficiary's LAST name.
 - * **A trustee for a living person.** If you name a trustee for a living person, submit a copy of the trust agreement.

So how is the TSERS retirement benefit paid to your beneficiary(ies)? Upon receiving a certified copy of the final death certificate, TSERS will determine what benefits are payable. Any benefit will be paid to the designated primary beneficiary(ies), but if you designated only one primary beneficiary who is deceased at the time of your death, the benefit will be paid to any secondary beneficiary(ies). If you designated multiple co-beneficiaries and one is deceased at the time of your death, the benefit will be paid to the surviving co-beneficiary(ies).

Benefit News, cont'd.

Mary Ellen Haynes

If a beneficiary is a minor, payment will be made to one of the following:

- ◆ The qualified guardian of the minor,
- ◆ The Clerk of the Court of the County in which the minor resides
- ◆ The minor after he/she attains the age of majority (generally, the age of majority in North Carolina is 18).

If you named your estate as your beneficiary, or if no named primary or secondary beneficiary is alive at your death:

- ◆ Payment will be made to your estate after an administrator or executor has qualified.
- ◆ If there is no qualification, payment could be made to the Clerk of Court to handle according to the laws of the state.

TSERS also has a *Survivor's Alternate Benefit* option. Provided you have not retired, if you have named one primary beneficiary for the refund of your contributions and die while in active service, as long as you have met certain participation requirements, the named primary beneficiary may choose to receive a monthly benefit for life instead of a lump sum refund of contributions. The Survivor's Alternate Benefit does not apply if you have named two or more persons as primary beneficiaries, or if you have already retired.

And lastly, you should be aware that TSERS provides a **death benefit, i.e., life insurance**. If you have contributed to TSERS for one full year, and die while still in active service, your beneficiary will receive a single lump sum payment. The payment is generally equal to the amount of your annual salary, but no less than \$25,000 and not more than \$50,000.

When you complete your beneficiary designation form for TSERS, you name beneficiaries for both your retirement contributions as well as your death benefit. You can name different beneficiaries for each of these benefits.

If you are unsure who you have named as your beneficiaries for your retirement benefits and your death benefit, you can call TSERS at 877-627-3287. You can change your beneficiaries at any time; contact me if you need the form to do this. Most beneficiary changes require notarization, and since I am a Notary Public, I can assist you with that as well.

