

December 6, 2023

Coffee Chat Nuggets - Human Resources

Speakers: Amy English, Lisa Temple, Rita Foley (wellness specialist, benefits strategist)

Attendance: 45

- 1. *Do you get paid for your accumulated sick leave and vacation when you retire?***
If retiring and benefits eligible. If hired after 2010-get paid for 17 days of sick leave, get paid for all vacation time for maximum of 240 hours. Not paid out for personal holiday or campus closure time. See HR 34, HR 50, HR 54.
- 2. *What was the main objective of compensation modernization?***
Essentially it is a job classification system. Moving toward more job specific profiles with objective to match to market data. Trying to recruit and maintain top talent. Moving from 190 profiles to over 500. Provide more clarity in career ladders and advancement opportunities. Still a work in progress to advance in your position without having to move
- 3. *Will the process to access EAP be the same in January once the provider is changed?***
Changing to Support Link in January as new vendor. Still free sessions for 5 sessions for employee or any family member if they are enrolled in with Penn State Insurance. New system offers better access with more rapid scheduling (email, phone, app for live chat, text, and real time scheduling). 3 categories with much faster access. The care coordinator will work with you, can provide access to online coaching or text therapy, support groups are also available. Self-guided digital therapy is now available. Business cards will be given to all employees with access instructions. Health care navigation is not part of the new services use Highmark concierge to help with health care navigation. Use the number on the back of the insurance card. Critical incident (robbery, fire, death of co-worker, behavioral threat) support will be available immediately and will be specific to Penn State. Can provide in person counselor for the office. New website coming January 1. There will be information sessions offered every week in January, every other week in February and some sessions scheduled in March.
- 4. *Any new employee benefits or discounts we should be aware of?***
Go to www.blue365deals.com, discounts thru Highmark.
- 5. *Can you explain what the equivalence is for x amount of experience when looking at job postings? Example: High School diploma OR higher plus 3 years of related experience or an equivalent combination of education and experience. How many years of working at Penn State is equivalent to an associate degree and do departments go by that example or do they want to just have the associate degree?***
For most jobs 2 years of experience is equal to 1 year of education. Most jobs use equivalency.
- 6. *How can you get supervisory experience to apply for higher level positions if one of the requirements for a higher-level state you need supervisory experience. So, you can never get that job because you do not have supervisory experience.***
Work with current supervisor to get supervisory experience. Also check LRN for coursework on supervising employees or projects. Also look into the Administrative Professional series.
- 7. *Why is it that when applying for jobs that we have some of the skills they are looking for, but you are told you were passed by because you did not have the skills needed. Isn't that why we***

go for higher job classifications to improve and learn new skills? Again, how can we move forward when all you hear is you don't have enough of the skills. But yet I see people getting jobs that have none of the skills and get the job. It does not make sense to me and can be frustrating.

In the future the experience requirement will be stronger and required. It is the job of the hiring manager and committee to make the best hiring decisions.

- 8. *One of the things currently lacking is a comprehensive list of contacts for each office in Central Development. Would it be possible for someone in HR to create this list so it could be shared within DDAR and/or posted on the Launchpad? I realize it could be a challenge keeping the list current with the many staff changes that occur, but having this list would be extremely helpful in our roles.***

Yes, we can look at creating a comprehensive list of DDAR employees. Lisa or Amy can pull list of those in job profiles, i.e. MGO's, financial, difficult to pull list of administrative support positions especially for those paid by the colleges. These positions are currently paid by DDAR but supervised by colleges which is why they do not show up on DDAR employee lists.

- 9. *Does Penn State have any HR staff who specialize in retirement counseling? Are there HR staff you can recommend who have expertise in this area to answer the many questions that come with planning for retirement (eligibility, medical benefits, Medicare, etc.) and will they meet 1:1 with staff requesting assistance?***

In the process of hiring someone to work with soon to retire folks. Right now, webinars, and guide found on website. See financial literacy for module on retirement planning. The best way to access is to place a request on the work lion portal.

<https://hr.psu.edu/preparing-retirement>

<https://hr.psu.edu/current-employee/benefits/retirement/guide>

https://hr.psu.edu/sites/hr/files/2023%20Preparing%20for%20Retirement_withAudio.pptx

- 10. *Can you explain the difference in roles between you and Lisa Temple. What type of question should be directed to you, and vice versa for Lisa? Should we always go to Lisa before directing questions to you?*** yes

Structure of HR

Now have Unit HR (Amy English), Lisa Temple HR consultant for DDAR,

Central Functions for some functions that are similar for all units

HR Questions: Start with knowledge base to start a ticket with shared services, phone call to

Lisa Temple

- 11. *There seems to be a lot of ambiguity in some of the HR policies that we receive, which allows individual supervisors to interpret them one way and another (for example, remote work). This can lead to inequities throughout the division. Do you have suggestions on how to handle these situations?***

A good example is the flexible work arrangements policy and the differences among units. Dean or VP makes decisions for their unit

- 12. *If you are taking on more responsibilities in your role, what course of action should you take to be sure to be equally compensated for these new responsibilities?***

In these situations, extra compensation is considered case by case. Talk to supervisor and then talk to Lisa. Backfilling due to not filling a position or taking too long to fill an open position are examples.

- 13. *More of an observation than a question – I feel like the Human part of Human Resources no longer exists at Penn State. I feel like Penn State does not care how hard I work, because everyone cannot be “exceeds expectations.” I feel like we are just looked at like robots who all do the same job. That is so far from the truth.***

Jennifer Wilkes is making a conscious effort to provide more warmth while keeping consistency and balance in providing services across various units.