Word from the Vice President: Working Together to Find Solutions

Problems are easier to solve when we work together to find solutions. Penn offers programs and resources to help you resolve issues and balance the many demands you have at work and home.

The Snow Day Child Care program gives faculty and staff options for backup care when local schools close due to inclement weather. When it comes to your wellness, the Be in the Know wellness campaign can help you stay healthy and active with Bonus Actions, which include certain visits to your health care provider.

Collaboration is also the key to success for Roger Lopez, Information Technology Support Specialist, who honed his problem-solving skills as a Marine. Now, he uses them as a member of Finance’s Information Technology and Support group, where teamwork is essential to effectively protecting Penn’s information technology infrastructure.

From developing problem-solving skills and furthering your career to balancing life and work, we hope you’ll remember that Human Resources’ programming and services are here to help you discover the solutions.

Sincerely,
JackHeuer, Ed.D.
Vice President for Human Resources

Adaptability Helps Veteran Roger Lopez Stay Ahead in IT

When you see Information Technology Support Specialist Roger Lopez in his business casual clothes, you might not guess that he’s a veteran unless you happen to notice a few of the photos at his desk. In one picture, he’s in uniform, standing in front of a huge helicopter. “When I was in the Marine Corps, I was an aircraft mechanic,” says Roger. As a Marine, he did his part for national security. Today, he applies his talents to information security in the Division of Finance at Penn.

In 1999, as Roger transitioned from the military to the nonprofit world, his background was seen as an asset. Employers recognized his proven ability to "hit the ground running" in difficult conditions. Those qualities still serve him well at the University.

Veterans are known for their discipline and respect for protocol, but Roger also points out a virtue that some might overlook—adaptability. “In the military, you have to learn to adapt to any situation,” says Roger, who served overseas with a variety of people, sometimes in close quarters. He lists adaptability as one of the most valuable traits he developed in the Marine Corps.

Adaptability has often come into play during his 11 years at Penn. When Roger started working at Penn’s Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CCEIB), Palm Pilots were still in use. Since that time, the number of mobile devices, users, and security issues has exploded. Roger also moved on, transferring from CCEIB to the Airlines, Trains, and Support (ITS) group. ITS stays ahead of the hackers thanks to their flexibility and the frequent professional development opportunities provided by their leadership. “Our department is very good about training,” says Roger. He’s also impressed with their innovative approach. As a former Marine mechanic, he understands the importance of protocol and documentation, but he also knows when it’s time for creative problem solving. That respect is extended in his department, and it makes for a better working atmosphere.

“I know a lot of people want to come work for Penn…. One thing that is attractive about Penn is the people, the culture and the diversity.” What’s his advice to any newcomer? “I’d say loosen the tie a bit.” ITS isn’t bound by formality. The most important thing is getting the job done correctly within the parameters of security. To that end, his group is willing to collaborate and share ideas. “We are all very approachable people. We have a good, tight-knit relationship.” Roger credits his supervisor for offering flexible scheduling so he can better manage his life outside work. And from time to time, his supervisor lets him know that he’s grateful for his service to his country.

Roger appreciates when his coworkers acknowledge his military service on Veterans Day, but most of the time, it’s not a focus for his team. Instead, he and his IT colleagues concentrate on supporting education and research while facing the ever-changing threats to information security.

“We’re here to help one another. That’s what this place is all about.”

Maximizing Your Retirement Savings in 2016

The IRS has issued the annual retirement plan contribution limits for 2016. The limit for combined pre-tax and Roth contributions remains unchanged at $18,000 per person. If you are over 50 years old or turn 50 at any time in 2016, you can make additional catch-up contributions up to $6,000.

Visit the Contributions web page at www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/benefits/retirement/trd/contributions for details or contact the Retirement Call Center at 1-877-PENN-RET (1-877-736-6738) for help determining the right weekly or monthly contribution amount to maximize your savings.

Penn@Work brings you all the latest news from the Division of Human Resources. Look for this publication to appear in the Penn Current. View recent and archived issues online, and sign up to receive the email version of Penn@Work when you visit www.hr.upenn.edu/newsletters/penn@work.

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Almanac: www.upenn.edu/almanac/
EVP Newsletter: www.evpp.upenn.edu/news/docs/newsletter.html

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November/December 2015

Penn@Work: Helping Penn faculty and staff make the most of Human Resources services and benefits

MY JOB

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Don’t be fooled by the recent weather: winter is just around the corner. That means freezing temperatures, snow and ice, and school closures. Prepare now and you won’t be caught off guard. That means freezing temperatures, snow and ice, and school closures. Prepare now and you won’t be caught off guard.

The Snow Day Child Care program is available when Philadelphia public schools are closed due to inclement weather. This year, Snow Day Child Care is available from November 30, 2015 to March 31, 2016. Children must be 12 weeks to 12 years old. The University covers most of the cost of the care. The reduced rate you pay is based on the child’s age and your salary.

Space is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Pre-registration is required, so complete the required forms now and be ready when winter weather finally arrives. Visit the Snow Day Child Care webpage at www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/worklife/family/snowday for more information.

For information about backup care for children and dependent adults, visit the Backup Care webpage at www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/worklife/family/backupcare.

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MY HEALTH & WELLBEING

Ways to Make the Most of Your Doctor’s Visit
You might only have a short time with your doctor, so it’s essential that you use the time wisely. Planning ahead and asking questions can help focus the appointment and get you the information you need. Start with these tips to make your appointment run smoothly. Your health depends on effective communication with your doctor.

Make lists and take notes
When speaking with your doctor, take notes to reference later. Come prepared with information such as:
- Prescription names and dosages
- Changes to your health since your last visit
- Medical record or family history

Be honest
Some questions your doctor poses might be uncomfortable, but remember that the most accurate information helps to establish the right diagnosis or treatment. Be truthful about your habits and family history.

Clear up confusion
Don’t be afraid to let your doctor know you don’t understand something or to ask for more explanation. It’s better to clear up any confusion while you’re in the room, rather than wishing you’d asked more questions after the appointment. Try repeating things back to your care provider to be sure that you fully understand. Here are some clarifying questions to ask:

- What is my diagnosis? How and when will I get my results?
- What are my treatment options? What are the benefits of each? What are the side effects?
- What happens next? When should I come to see you again? Do I call if symptoms worsen?

Plan forward
Remember to schedule any necessary follow-up appointments or get contact information for specialists before leaving your doctor’s office. If you have any new prescriptions, ask questions about side effects or other things to watch out for, and clarify any next steps that you should take.

Annual health screenings are the key to maintaining your wellbeing. Even if you feel perfectly healthy, regular checkups help catch any new developments in your health and result in better outcomes.

With the Be in the Know campaign, benefits-eligible faculty and staff can earn Bonus Action points toward cash incentives by having your annual health screenings, including dental, vision, and men’s or women’s annual exams.

To learn more about Be in the Know and how to start earning up to $180* visit www.hr.upenn.edu/beintheknow.

*Note: All Be in the Know incentives are less applicable payroll taxes. Incentives will be included in February 2016, June 2016 and/or September 2016 paychecks, depending on when you complete the Core Actions and qualifying Bonus Actions.

Steer Clear of Conflict
When a special project or unexpected deadline suddenly has you putting in more hours at work, you adjust. The temporary changes you make, however, can have impact beyond the office. More hours at work may mean less time for family and friends, which can stress the relationships that mean the most to you.

There’s a simple solution to keep a short-term situation from becoming a permanent problem in your relationships: dialogue. According to Stewart D. Friedman, Practice Professor of Management at the Wharton School, having an open, honest conversation with those affected can help you, and them, clarify expectations and create solutions together.

Friedman, author of Leading the Life You Want: Skills for Integrating Work and Life, uses these talk “stakeholder dialogues” and offers these five tips as a guide:

- Provide context. Explain why work is demanding more of your attention right now and how it will impact your time. This is the beginning of a dialogue with the other person, so keep it short.
- Explain the purpose. Explain the purpose of the work and why it’s important to you and the impact it can have on others, including the person you’re talking to. For example, if you take a work trip this month, it may mean that you will have more time at home during the winter holidays.

- Ask about the consequences. Ask what they believe will result from your giving more time and focus to work. Try to learn what impact the changes will have on them and what adjustments they may have to make. Don’t minimize difficulties; instead, compassionately inquire.
- Express genuine remorse. Let them know you’re sorry for the challenges, disappointments, or hurt the change may cause.
- Explore possible alternatives. Work together to find solutions and minimize the negative effects of the change.

Steer Clear of Conflict

Steer Clear of Conflict

Wellness Program Highlights
From expert nutrition and weight loss advice to exercise and disease prevention strategies, we can help you embrace a healthy lifestyle.

November Wellness Walk; 11/20, 12pm-1pm; free. Meet at 12pm in front of College Hall by the Ben Franklin statue and walk a one-mile or two-mile route around Penn’s campus, returning to College Hall. Bring your water bottle, and don’t forget your sneakers! In the spirit of Thanksgiving, the walk is dedicated to helping stock the cupboards of those in our community who are in need. If you are able, bring a healthy, non-perishable food item to donate, such as canned vegetables or fruits, whole grain pasta, rice, or peanut butter. The Penn Wellness Partnership will donate these items to a local shelter.

For a complete list of programs and to register, visit www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/registration or contact Human Resources at 215-573-2471 or qowl@hr.upenn.edu.

Quality of Work Life Workshop Highlights
These free workshops offer information and support for your personal and professional life challenges. For a complete list of workshops and to register, visit www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/registration or contact Human Resources at 215-573-2471 or qowl@hr.upenn.edu.

Using Mindfulness Skills to Relax into the Holiday Season; 12/15; 9am-3pm; free. When you are being mindful, you are compassionately paying attention to the present moment. How might you use mindfulness to navigate the holiday season? Through discussion and fun-filled exercises, this interactive workshop will allow you to become more conscious of how you spend the precious hours in your day so that you can become more effective and more relaxed. You will also experience how meditation can help increase your wellbeing and reduce stress.

HR CALENDAR
Programs and Events
Visit www.hr.upenn.edu/events for details

NOVEMBER
19 Webinar: Senior Caregiving and the Holidays
20 Gentle Yoga
November Wellness Walk
Caregiver Support Guide - New Bolton Center
24 Guided Meditation - Take a Breath and Relax
26-27 Thanksgiving break
30 Snow Day Child Care program starts

DECEMBER
2 Chair Yoga
Decision Making Strategies
4 Gentle Yoga
7 Breast Feeding Support Group
8 Root Cause Analysis
11 Gentle Yoga
December Wellness Walk
Guided Meditation - Take a Breath and Relax
15 Using Mindfulness Skills to Relax into the Holiday Season
Tips for Effective Meetings
16 Chair Yoga
Admissions Brown Bag: Navigating the High School Curriculum Waters
28-31 Special Winter Vacation