



Fall 2003

HR NEWS

This Newsletter also available on the HR Lotus Notes Site

Workplace Safety

The tragedy of workplace violence is an unfortunate reality today. The College's HR Policies (#5503) are very clear on this topic. The policy states, in part:

The College will not tolerate any act of workplace violence committed by or against faculty, staff, students or visitors. Threats, threatening behavior, acts of violence, or any related conduct which disrupts another's work performance or the College's ability to execute its mission will not be tolerated. Faculty and staff are strictly prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent acts.

No person, with the exception of duly authorized College Public Safety Officers and duly authorized federal, state and local law enforcement officers, shall possess any weapon on property owned or leased by Charles Stewart Mott Community College.

This policy encompasses activity which occurs on College property or off College property when the employee is conducting College business as well as threats made via the telephone, fax, electronic or conventional mail, or any other communication medium.

Although most College employees would never think of violating these common sense rules, we have experienced a few violations of this policy. In one case, an employee brought his new rifle to work to show it to a friend, removing it from the trunk of his car in the parking ramp. Although the employee had no intent to hurt anyone, this act was a clear violation of the policy and is the type of action that will be met with formal discipline, including discharge.

The full text of Policy 5503 can be found on the HR Lotus Notes site under "Policies & Procedures".

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An Important Reminder . . .

Don't forget to notify HR when the following events occur: address change; birth or adoption of a child; marriage (yourself or a dependent); death of a spouse or dependent; divorce.

You can notify us by completing the *New Hire & Personal Information Change Form* (available on the Lotus Notes site or in HR), or by calling or e-mailing either Susan Praski or Sylvia Green. Separate change forms for individual health insurance carriers may also be required and will be forwarded to you when you notify us of the change. Please note that some changes (such as marriage, divorce, birth or death of a spouse or dependent) require additional documentation. Most health insurance carriers require that these types of changes be reported within thirty (30) days of the event. Failure to provide notification within that time period could result in lack of insurance coverage until the next open enrollment period or out-of-pocket costs to employees for health coverage on an ineligible spouse or dependent.

College Holiday Closings

2003
September 1 Labor Day
November 27 & 28 Thanksgiving Holiday
December 23 Last day of work before break

2004
January 5 Return to work
January 19 Martin Luther King Day
May 31 Memorial Day
July 5 Independence Day observed
September 6 Labor Day
November 25 & 26 Thanksgiving Holiday
December 22 Last day of work before break



New Hiring Procedure Implemented

Due to the access and ease of using the internet and Mott’s reputation, we have seen an increase in the number of applicants responding to our job postings. In order to process the high volume of applications, several new procedures have been implemented.

Upon receipt of a resume, an acknowledgement letter is sent to applicants that explains the following:

- We are not able to respond to inquiries pertaining to an applicant’s documentation or status.
- Once review of applicants’ qualifications is complete and the process moves closer to the interview stage, only those who appear to best meet the position requirements will be contacted.
- Applicants will only receive one piece of correspondence from us unless they are invited to interview. If the applicant does not hear from us again, he/she is not being actively considered for the position.
- To be considered for future job openings, applicants must re-apply. Previously submitted materials cannot be returned, copied or retrieved.
- Applicants may be rejected due to failure to submit required documents. Qualifications will be evaluated based on the items possessed at the time of review. The required documentation is listed on the official posting, which can be viewed by accessing Mott’s website.

These procedures have helped to streamline the process and improved the productivity of those involved in the hiring process. We have received positive feedback from several applicants who appreciated being informed of the process.

You have probably noticed that HR is now sending out an “Everyone” e-mail when a vacancy is posted. Several applicants have been notified of openings through their contacts at Mott. We appreciate your help in referring qualified applicants to us.

Since continuous improvement is always our goal, more changes will occur in the future. We expect the changes to streamline the process even further, while still allowing us to attract and hire the best applicants.

Diversity Recruitment

Diversity recruitment is, and will continue to be, a priority at Mott. As a part of HR’s ongoing process of tracking statistics related to hiring, data on hiring activity was assembled for the past year. This data shows that diversity candidates constituted 31% of our applicant flow and 32% of our new full-time hires.

A variety of recruitment sources are used to ensure a diverse applicant pool. We are currently working with several community leaders and organizations that are willing to assist us in our efforts to attract applicants. We have also included new websites and journals to continuously expand our outreach. As a result of these efforts, we have seen an increase in minority applicants, especially from the Native American and Asian populations.

While our diversity recruiting numbers are impressive, long term success in the diversity arena requires the help of everyone.

Effective October 1, 2003, the employer contribution to retirement plans will be as follows:

MPSERS	12.99%
ORP (employees hired on or before 12/31/02)	16.53%
ORP (employees hired on or after 01/01/03)	10.00%

Planning to Retire Soon?

If you are planning to retire within the next year and participate in MPSERS, you should contact them to verify that the information they have on file for you regarding years of service and reported salary is correct. You should also request a retirement packet. In any event, you should begin the process with MPSERS at least three months in advance of your actual retirement date.

If TIAA is your retirement provider, you should contact them to request a Final Retirement Packet.

Once you have decided to retire, you must submit a letter of resignation to your supervisor, including your anticipated retirement date, and provide a copy to Human Resources. You will also need to schedule an appointment for an exit interview with Susan Praski a few weeks prior to your last work day.



Employees Honored at Spring Reception

Congratulations to the following employees & retirees who were recognized at the Spring Reception held in the Prahl Center Ballroom on April 17, 2003:

Retirees

James Campbell
Margaret Causey
Nancy Dash
Judy Long
Claudia Schmidt
Joe Sullivan
Sue Wisenberg

25 Years of Service

Linda Bolter
Gerri Brotherton
Tena Marsh

Golden Apple

Joe Bommarito
Tom Fonger
Joe King
Lou Miller
Gail Robinson
Claudia Schmidt
Keith Yarbrough

Attention Participants of the College's Health Care or Dependent Care Reimbursement Accounts

You may have received requests from FlexSave (our third-party administrator) for receipts to verify that payments made with your debit card are eligible expenses under the IRS regulations. If you haven't yet experienced this review process, you most likely will in the future.

The IRS recently passed a new ruling that defines auditing requirements for flexible spending account plans utilizing a debit card. To avoid any unnecessary problems, be sure to save all receipts for expenses paid with money in your flexible spending accounts.

Dental, Vision, Medical Show Savings

Between July 1, 2002 and December 31, 2002, both the Vision Reimbursement Program (VRP) and the SET-SEG dental program have shown savings. During this six-month period, a total savings of \$11,877 was recognized for the vision program, and \$4,757 for dental.

The recently implemented medical program changes have also generated significant savings—a total of \$101,794 for the first six months of the program.

As you know, these savings are shared between the participating employee groups and the College.

Your Union is Your Exclusive Representative

On occasion, employees represented by a union here at Mott try to bargain for themselves, attempting to go around their elected union leadership. This typically involves attempting to bargain directly with their supervisor on a matter already covered by the collective bargaining agreement. You should be aware that College or Management representatives are prohibited by law from engaging in such direct, individual negotiations. It is a well-established fact of labor law that, by organizing and choosing a union to represent them, employees vest in the union the exclusive right to contract for their terms and conditions of employment. The employees' selection of union representation "extinguishes the individual employee's power to order his own relations with his employer and creates a power vested in the chosen representative to act in the interests of all employees." *Steel vs Louisville & N.R. Co, 323 U.S. 192, 202 (1944).*

This principle is recognized in our labor agreements by language such as:

- "The Board hereby recognizes the Union as the exclusive bargaining representative for all employees in the bargaining unit..."
- "The Board shall not enter into any other agreements with employees in the bargaining unit, individually or collectively, which in any way conflicts with the provisions hereof unless mutually agreed to by the Union and the College."
- "The individual may present a grievance but the adjustment must be consistent with the terms of this agreement and the Union must be given the opportunity to be present."

In short, if you are in a group represented by a union here at Mott, you cannot negotiate directly (thereby excluding your union representative) with College or Management representatives on matters covered by your labor agreement.

If you have any questions about this topic, feel free to contact Human Resources or your union leadership.



Labor Relations 101

A recent labor arbitration decision involving the College and one of its unions provides a number of reminders about some very basic labor relations concepts that are frequently misunderstood by employees and managers alike. The facts of the case are briefly as follows:

An employee walked off the job one day, placing a request for time off form in her supervisor's mailbox. At some point, a doctor's slip (which provided almost no useful information) was provided to the supervisor as evidence of her inability to be at work. For a variety of reasons, the supervisor questioned the need for time off and never approved the employee's request. To determine whether the employee was medically unable to work, the College asked the employee to sign some papers authorizing an independent doctor to examine her situation (medical releases). The employee was told that if she did not want to sign the releases, she should return to work by a certain day and, if she did not return, she would be deemed to have voluntarily quit. The employee neither completed the forms nor returned to work, so the College ended her employment by confirming her voluntary quit.

The employee's union grieved and took the case to arbitration. The actions of the College were upheld by the arbitrator.

This case reinforces a number of points:

- The employee argued that the College didn't have the right to verify the validity of her medical claim. She was not supported in this argument by either her union or the arbitrator. In fact, her union representative counseled her to fill out the forms. Although the College clearly has the right to obtain validation that an employee is so ill they cannot work, it only infrequently exercises this options.
- As part of the employee's defense, it was argued that, because the supervisor had informed her of the need for the medical releases and the labor agreement did not give the supervisor the right to ask for the forms, she didn't have to fill out the forms. While challenging the supervisor's right to take the routine types of actions supervisors are expected to perform, the argument was more fundamental; an argument that management can only take those actions explicitly permitted it under the labor agreement. This argument displays a fundamental misconception about the nature of the labor/management relationship as defined in our labor agreements. The exact opposite is the case. Management has the right to take necessary and appropriate action unless explicitly limited or prohibited in the agreement.

- Employees who walk off the job or take time off without approval can be deemed AWOL and their employment can be terminated. (In this case, the arbitrator complimented management for not taking this action although acknowledging that it could have.)
- The employee was under the mistaken notion that her doctor put her on sick leave. Approval of time off is not granted by an employee's doctor; it is granted by the employee's supervisor. Your doctor provides information to the supervisor, and it is this information that is reviewed by the supervisor when determining whether to grant time off. Again, most of the time, doctor's slips are accepted routinely by supervisors and sick leave is routinely approved, but there are times when the College will investigate requests for time off to ensure that the request is valid—that the medical condition renders you unable to perform your duties.
- The Union argued that the College couldn't cause the employee's termination in the form of a voluntary quit—that only the employee could voluntarily quit. Needless to say, the arbitrator validated the College's action. In this case, the arbitrator called it a "self-executing non-disciplinary termination."

Overall, the College's leave policies and programs and the actions taken by management in administering leaves are very liberal and supportive of employees who struggle with balancing the needs of work and family. In addition, we strive to administer these programs with the least amount of paperwork and steps possible and practical. However, on rare occasions, particularly when management has reason to suspect that an employee is taking advantage of our system, we will take necessary and appropriate additional steps such as those described above.

Employment Verification:

The Human Resources Office will not release information from an employee's personnel file unless required to do so by law, or with the written permission of the employee. For example, with your written permission, we will verify salary information when you apply for a loan.

Under no circumstances will the College or its representatives provide any statement regarding eligibility for rehire.