New Committee Guides HR

By Jill Wagner

There's a new method on campus through which employees can air concerns or make suggestions to the human resources department. The recently convened Human Resources Advisory committee is designed to be a communication conduit between employees, HR managers and executives of the university.

"Communication is a constant issue for us," says Judith Muñoz, director of human resources, who explains committee members will get information out to departments and bring concerns or suggestions back to the committee.

The Human Resources Advisory Committee is an outgrowth of the more limited scope Benefits Advisory Committee, which periodically reviewed issues surrounding health, retirement and tuition benefits. Muñoz revamped the committee to include greater representation from across campus, including members of the three employee groups — faculty, staff and administrators — from each of the five divisions.

During its first meeting in October, the committee determined it will review the tuition remission policy, the staff compensation plan and the Performance Management Program (PMP).

The tuition remission discussion will center on providing summer tuition to employees who convincingly argue that summer is often the best time to take classes. In recent years, summer tuition remission has not always been available because the allocated funds were used during the regular semesters. The policy states that no more than 1 percent of the university's budget will be used for the tuition benefit.

"We will talk about what we can do to control costs and still provide summer tuition remission," Muñoz says.

The review of the compensation plan and PMP will be an overall evaluation of how the programs are going after the first year of implementation.

After the committee gathers suggestions, discusses the issues and agrees on its position, it will forward recommendations to the appropriate person or group, Muñoz says. For example, any recommendation for a policy change would move directly to the President's Advisory Council.

Employees with concerns or questions should talk to the proper representative or directly to Muñoz, who chairs the committee.

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Heart of a Gardener

Roberto Acuna first sunk his hands in the rich dirt surrounding The Immaculata Church in 1973, planting bunches of colorful impatiens and snatching out errant weeds.

A quarter century later, Acuna is still tending to annuals, nurturing roses and clipping tree limbs in his personal quest to make the heart of the USD campus one of the most beautiful spots in San Diego.

That dedication to perfection in his job was the basis for Acuna's nomination for the 1998 Manuel Hernandez Employee of the Year Award, according to his supervisor, Ernie Salazar.

"He's a very serious worker," says Salazar, grounds supervisor. "He wants to make it beautiful and he has a lot of pride in what he does."

In his award nomination letter, Salazar noted that Acuna keeps the areas surrounding The Immaculata, Maher Hall and Hahn University Center manicured despite their heavy and constant use.

"The roses in his care on the Maher patio are prolific and carefully chosen for their fragrance and the added beauty they bring to a lovely garden setting," Salazar wrote.

"His abilities are not just from years of experience, but he truly has the gentle heart of a gardener."

Acuna, a gardener II in facilities management, takes pride in keeping the grounds manicured not only for students, faculty and staff, but his wife, Mayola, who works in general services. Mayola rides into work each day with her husband, surveying the results of his green thumb.

The father of an 18-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son, Acuna says he "gardens sometimes" at home, but admits he puts most of his energy into improving the Alcalá Park campus.

And his co-workers know it. Salazar says when he first came to USD and discovered that Acuna was on his team, his reaction was: "He's been doing this for 25 years, what could I possibly teach this guy?"

"So I mainly direct his efforts, since he's very motivated to do a good job. Roberto's quiet, but he's very respected and well-liked by his colleagues," Salazar says.

The most notable difference in the USD campus since his first year, Acuna says, is the students: "There's a lot more of them, and they seem younger."

Despite gardening for 25 years, Acuna says he never tires of it, and plans to stay at USD until retirement.

"I like this place very much," he says. "I'm very happy here."

Advisory Committee

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The staff employee members and the areas they represent are: Pam Bourne, student affairs; Elaine Atencio, university relations; Diane West, academic affairs; Felix Leyva, finance and administration; and Becky Gilbert, Staff Employees Association.

The faculty representatives are: Sue Zgliczynski, School of Education; LeAnn Otto, College of Arts and Sciences; Janet Harrison, Philip Y. Hahn School of Nursing; Miriam Rothman, School of Business Administration; and Kevin Cole, faculty senate.

The administrative committee members are: Esther LaPorta, university relations; Monsignor Daniel Dillabough, mission and ministry; Scott Gill, finance and administration; Judy Lewis Logue, academic affairs; Greg Zackowski, student affairs; and Ruth Levor, School of Law.

Thom Barnett, Vicki Coscia, Calista Davis, Reuben Mitchell, Bob Brown and Judy Sanchez, the human resources managers, also attend the meetings. Representatives will serve three year terms. The committee meets within the first two weeks of each month during the academic year.
Thanks for Your Service, Lunch is on Us

Longtime employees celebrating anniversaries are invited to the sixth annual Service Awards Celebration, set for 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Nov. 20, in UC Forum B.

Ten-year honorees are: Mayola Acuna, custodial services; Mildred Brown, career services; Alicia Buenrostro, advancement services; Carter Edwards, general services; Carl Eging, law school financial aid; Sixto Gomez, grounds and maintenance; Jose Gonzalez, grounds and maintenance; Chris Hernandez, building maintenance; Martha Hernandez, main dining; Tom Iannacone, athletics; Carol Lawrence, financial aid; Rian Marsh, human resources; Teresa Martinez, custodial services; Don McGraw, provost; Charles Moeller, budget and treasury; Karen Molenda, Philip Y. Hahn School of Nursing; Josefin Monroy, custodial services; Marcia Rathfon, continuing education; Maureen Ruksitals, president's office; Kim Signoret, donor relations; Ed Starkey, Copley Library; Jose Tavares, dining services; Frank Weston, legal research center; Dorothy Wildman, registrar, and Marjorie Zhou, law school.

Employees celebrating 15 years of service are: Maria Briseno, custodial services; Vicki Coscia, human resources; Richard Danford, patient advocacy at the law school; Debbie Finocchio, chemistry; Brian Fogarty, athletics; Yvette Fontaine, student affairs; Ted Geddes, custodial services; Rosemary Getty, law school; Jeanne Heaphy, legal research center; Edward Helzer III, print shop; Ina Levy, law school; Grace McElhaney, housing; Warren Muller, undergraduate admissions; Carol Norman, dining services; Mary Robbins, registrar; Lois Scheer, legal research center; Lonnie Turner, public safety; Mary Vicknair, law school; Nancy Weber, public safety; and Kathy Whistler, legal research center.

Twenty-year honorees are: Gary Becker, athletics; Leo Briseno, custodial services; Carolyn Greer, athletics; Mary Ann Kennedy, health center; John Martin, athletics; Sister Virginia McMonagle, university relations special programs; Pat Quinn, law school records; and Linda Scales, career services.

Employees celebrating 25 years of service are: Roberto Acuna, grounds and maintenance; Tom Burke, student affairs; Dora Camacho, custodial services; Jim Pehl, budget and treasury; Thomas Rogers, building maintenance; and Mandy Wiedower, Copley Library.

Kay Norton, registrar, will be honored for 30 years of service, and John Cunningham, athletics, is celebrating 35 years at USD.

Congratulations to all!

Who Will Be the Next President?

New Staff Employees Association officers will be elected at a meeting scheduled for 2 p.m., Nov. 11, in UC107. Nominees for president, vice president, secretary and treasurer will be voted on by SEA representatives who are present at the meeting.

A ballot is being prepared by David Edgar, current SEA president, and Becky Gilbert, Copley Library representative. Any staff employee interested in running for office — previous service on the SEA board is not necessary — should submit their name to Edgar or Gilbert.

Scholarships on the Way

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Souper Deal

Campbell's Soup labels are as good as cash for the Manchester Family Child Development Center. To help the center in its Campbell's Labels for Education Collection Drive that starts Nov. 1, send peeled off labels through intracampus mail to the MFCDC.

University Ministry Events

Thanksgiving Mass, 5 p.m., Nov. 23, in Founders Chapel.

Bible Study, 12:10 to 12:50 p.m., Tuesdays, in WH201.

Sunday Masses at Founders Chapel, 7 and 9 p.m.

Daily Masses at Founders Chapel, 7 a.m., Monday through Saturday; 12:10 p.m., Monday through Friday; and 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

New Hires and Promotions

Welcome to the following employees who recently joined the USD community:

Christina Castro, counseling center; Erin Foley, development; Susan Herold, publications; Michael Keeler, athletics; Brandon Knaggs, academic computing; Suzanne Mathews, counseling center; Chris Nave, community service-learning; Gretchen Pons, graduate admissions; Stephen Taburiaux, administrative data processing; Leeva Chung, communication studies; Judith Hora, School of Business Administration; Eric Jiang, mathematics; Arthur Johnson, Philip Y. Hahn School of Nursing; David Lowe, School of Business Administration; David Nielson, foreign languages; Rahul Singh, School of Business Administration; Maggie Garcia, law school; Che Hill, public safety; Maureen Kane, law school; Holly Romo, Copley Library; Julian Vazquez, mail center; and Connie Wilson, School of Business Administration management programs.

Congratulations to the following employees who recently received promotions:

Kate Vargas, administrator of international business programs in the School of Business Administration;

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News You Can Use

Turkey Dinner Made to Order

Are you looking forward to Thanksgiving but not the hours it takes to prepare a traditional turkey dinner? The banquets and catering department has the answer!

Nona Janus, catering manager, and her staff of expert chefs invite USD employees to order a complete holiday dinner or individual items from an extensive menu. The dinner includes a whole roasted turkey, stuffing, whipped potatoes, cranberries, sweet potato souffle, gravy, rolls and pumpkin pie. Individual menu items include anything from the dinner, soups, side dishes and desserts.

Orders must be received by 3 p.m., Nov. 19. Food will be available for pick-up between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Nov. 25. Watch campus mail for a flyer with a complete menu, prices and order form. For more information, call Nona at ext. 4560.

Founders Day Celebration

The USD community is invited to attend the university’s Founders Day vespers service, 5 p.m., Nov. 12, in Founders Chapel. Celebrated on the feast of San Diego de Alcalá, our patron saint, the service is in honor of the university’s contemporary founders, Bishop Charles Francis Buddy and Mother Rosalie Hill, R.S.C.J.

Vespers, or evening prayer, is the liturgy of the church celebrated as daylight ends. A reception in the French Parlor immediately follows the service.

Latino Identity Honored

The second of a three-part program on Latino identity at USD is scheduled for noon to 1 p.m., Nov. 20, in UC Forum A.