Employees Will Benefit from New Advisory Committee

To give employees a stronger say about the university's benefits, the human resources department recently formed an advisory committee to help shape decisions about medical coverage and other aspects of employee benefits.

The Benefits Advisory Committee, created in January, consists of nine employee members—three representatives each for faculty, administration and staff—as well as associates from human resources. The group will meet monthly to discuss and help make decisions about issues such as sick days, vision care, improved dental coverage, the feasibility of a tuition exchange program and transit reimbursement for employees who commute by bus or train.

“When I arrived in September, I kept hearing complaints that human resources was operating in a vacuum, and that there wasn’t enough employee participation when it came to issues such as benefits,” says Gwendolyn Lytle, associate vice president for human resources. “I felt the employees needed to have more direct involvement and could assist us in meeting their needs.”

Lytle envisions the committee hosting quarterly benefits forums for the campus community and a series of noon-hour health information sessions. The sessions will feature news and materials about topics such as medication costs, pharmacy benefits and long-term disability coverage.

Employees also are invited to attend meetings of the already existing human resources advisory committee, which will remain active in conjunction with the new benefits advisory committee.

(Continued on page 2)

Weaving Spirituality into Your Everyday Life

When Sister Barbara Quinn came to USD earlier this year and transformed the Institute for Christian Ministries into what is now known as the Center for Christian Spirituality, she changed the philosophy of the program along with the name.

The Institute for Christian Ministries was established in 1985 to provide low-cost religious programs to the San Diego community. In recent years, however, it became apparent that local churches were filling that need. So Quinn, the director of CCS, now focuses her efforts on building a bridge between people’s professional lives and their Christian spirituality.

“In the United States, we are comfortable enough and we have achieved a level of development that has left us asking ourselves ‘Is there more to life?’ ” Quinn says. “It’s a privilege to be here now, helping people answer that question. The time is right, the need is there and God is leading us.”

Quinn defines spirituality as a response to a longing in the human person to find the deepest meaning of one’s own life and of all of life. For Christians, she says, the deepest meaning is found in God, who reveals what is most authentic about the person and constantly calls each person to live in relationship with others, with creation and with God.

“It requires the courage and the generosity to live all of one’s life in harmony with what He knows and loves most deeply,” Quinn says. “It’s not a venture for the faint of heart.”

Quinn has found that even though people hunger for spirituality in their lives, they often (Continued on page 3)
TIAA-CREF: Individual counseling sessions are scheduled for April 17 and May 8. Please contact TIAA-CREF at (877) 209-3140, ext. 2626, to schedule a 30-minute counseling session with a representative.

CALIFORNIA COBRA RIGHTS REMINDER: In 2000, California enacted the California COBRA extension program, which allows employees retiring at age 60 or older, with five years of service, to participate in USD’s group health plan until age 65. Like COBRA, premiums are payable by the retiree. The COBRA premium is the monthly group rate plus a 2 percent administrative fee.

SUMMER DEPENDENT CARE: Only a selected group of summer camps are eligible for reimbursement through your dependent care reimbursement account. The sponsor must be a licensed day-care provider such as the YMCA, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America or the Jewish Community Center. USD sports camps and overnight camps are not eligible for reimbursement. Please check with camp directors to see if their programs qualify under the IRS guidelines.

HEALTH CARE REIMBURSEMENT AND ORTHODONTIC SERVICES: Orthodontic service agreement forms must be submitted before orthodontic claims can be processed.

SOCIAL SECURITY DEADLINE: Employees should contact the Social Security Administration several months prior to their 65th birthdays, even if they plan to continue working. It is important to activate Medicare Part A (hospitalization) at age 65. There is no cost to participate in Medicare Part A, and enrollment at age 65 prevents penalties or disqualification of benefits when the employee retires. For information, contact Social Security at (800) 772-1213.

— Vicki Coscia

Advisory Committee
(Continued from page 1)

“The significant difference is that the new committee will be a working committee,” Lytle says. “The members themselves will conduct surveys and form recommendations. They will meet regularly with the service providers to express concerns, review the utilization of our plan and make reports to the community. It will be a very hands-on approach to decision-making.”

Employees are encouraged to share concerns, ideas or recommendations with members of the committee. In addition to Lytle and Vicki Coscia, human resources’ benefits manager, other members are: Professors Laura Berend and Paul Horton of the School of Law; John Glick, associate professor of mathematics; Ruth Levor, associate director of the Legal Research Center; Carol Lawrence, associate director of financial aid; Pam Bourne, special assistant to the vice president of student affairs; Julia Starkey, executive assistant in the mathematics department; Ted Geddes of facilities management and Pauline Thonnard, executive assistant in athletics.

The Benefits Advisory Committee will hold its first community forum in April. Information will be sent to employees via campus mail.

“This is a more proactive approach,” says Geddes, who has been at USD for 19 years. “It’s set up so that employees can actually be involved in the decisions that are made, rather than being told about them after the fact. Also, there will be more awareness of how decisions are made.”

Bourne says the committee members have a big responsibility that, if taken seriously, will be a great advantage to all employees.

“It behooves the committee members to get out there and talk to people on campus about their concerns, and also to go off campus and do as much research as they can,” Bourne says. “We need to do the work and hopefully all serve our constituents well.”

The Park Ranger is always roaming Alcalá Park, taking a behind-the-scenes peek at the on-the-job responsibilities, tasks and accomplishments of employees, whether they drive the tram, landscape the grounds, deliver the mail or keep campus computers virus free. If you would like the Park Ranger to visit you or your department, send an e-mail to Krystn Shrieve at kshrieve@sandiego.edu or call her at ext. 4934.

Five-Star Supervisor
Caitlin Vayva To, financial and technology administrator in the controller’s office, was nominated by Renee Johnson, a grants and restricted funds accountant. Johnson says To is the department’s “unsung hero” because she always focuses on providing great customer service and customer education about USD’s grant accounting processes.

“Vayva carries a heavy load, yet with no reflection of burden,” Johnson says. “Vayva has been a wonderful trainer and a wealth of information to her co-workers and customers. If she could be rated with the star system, she most definitely would be a five-star employee. She is a dynamic asset to the USD community.”

If you or someone you know deserves to be put in the Spotlight, send an e-mail to Krystn Shrieve at kshrieve@sandiego.edu or call her at ext. 4934.
Step Right Up and Win a Prize at This Year’s Employee Picnic!

The biggest draws to the annual staff employee picnic are the camaraderie, the great food and, of course, the prizes.

Each year, employees crowd around the picnic prize booth, craning their necks to see if they are the lucky winners of movie passes, free ice cream cones, a complimentary car wash or a romantic dinner for two at a local Italian restaurant.

“The picnic prize list has grown larger every year,” says Josie Vella, co-president of the Staff Employees Association. “People expect the prizes to be there and enjoy going home with a little something.”

For the past two years, Vella has taken on the daunting task of soliciting for, picking up and organizing the more than 200 prizes given away. This year, however, Vella will be on vacation in the weeks leading up to the June 21 picnic, and she hopes that other staff members, administrators and faculty will step up and lend a hand so the tradition of prizes can continue.

Spirituality

(Continued from page 1)

feel they don’t have the time or the energy to seek it out. Her role, she says, is to help people weave spirituality into the fiber of their lives.

“Spirituality is not just for churches and it’s not just for Sundays,” says Quinn, who for 36 years has been a member of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, the order that helped found USO. “It has to do with every aspect of life.”

With that in mind, the Center for Christian Spirituality fosters spirituality and other religious traditions in all facets of existence, including personal commitment, professional life, academic life and social action.

In the area of personal commitment, Quinn created a series of lectures on topics such as contemplative prayer in troubled times, faith in times of terror and keeping the head and heart together in a technological age. To enhance spirituality in professional life, she’s planned a series of breakfast and brown-bag lunch discussions on topics ranging from “Can I be Holy as a Professional?” to “How Do My Deepest Values Call Me to Live Out My Profession?”

On the academic side, Quinn runs a two-year, four-course spiritual direction certificate program for the community. At some point, she hopes also to offer a graduate course in business and spirituality.

To bring spiritual values into public debate, Quinn wants to make sure those values are key components in discussions about affordable housing, the growing gap between rich and poor, and learning to live in a multicultural world. It’s a daunting task, but Quinn has no doubt can be accomplished.

“If we can bring spirituality into everything we do in our lives,” she says, “we will all be a little more humble, a little more grateful, a little more compassionate and a lot happier.”

You can be part of the Alcalá View!
If you have story ideas, classified ads or events to publicize, don’t be shy. Get them to us by the 10th of the month.

The Alcalá View wants to hear from directors, managers or department heads with news to share. To participate, send an e-mail to Krystn Shrieve at kshrieve@sandiego.edu or call her at ext. 4934.
It's A Date!

A Festival and Indian Marketplace

USD's first American Indian Celebration will be held from April 18 to 21 at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice and other on-campus locations. The four-day festival—two days of cultural and educational programming and a two-day Indian marketplace—will feature more than 100 Native American artists, an arts judging competition, a workshop on American Indian legal issues, a discussion of Native American images in commerce and a lecture by Wynona LaDuke, a spokeswoman for the rights of indigenous people. For a complete schedule of festival events, log on to the festival Web page at www.sandiego.edu/indianfestival or call Joyce Antorietto at ext. 4238.

Chinese New Year Dinner Celebration

The USD campus diversity office invites the community to gallop into the year of the horse at the eighth annual Chinese New Year dinner celebration, April 2, at Jasmine Restaurant, 4609 Convoy St., in Kearny Mesa. The no-host bar opens at 6 p.m., and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. The 10-course banquet includes: Peking duck, seafood and tofu soup, shrimp with cashew nuts, lobster with ginger and scallion sauce, Chinese mushrooms with vegetables, sweet-and-sour pork ribs, fish in chili sauce, fried rice and fruit. Tickets are $25 for employees and $30 for guests. For information, contact Angela Yeung at ext. 4106 or ayeung@sandiego.edu.

Faculty and Staff Retreat

University Ministry will lead the annual USD faculty and staff retreat from 8 p.m., April 5, to 1 p.m., April 7, at the Vina de Lestonnac Retreat Center in Temecula, Calif. This year's theme is "Finding God in Daily Life." Retreat coordinators are Father J.J. O'Leary and Sister Virginia Rodee. Registration fee is $30. For information, visit O'Leary in Founders Hall, Room 100, or call him at ext. 6850.

Linda Vista Multicultural Fair and Parade

Employees are encouraged to support the children of the Manchester Family Child Development Center and their family members, who will participate in the Linda Vista Multicultural Fair and Parade, at 10:30 a.m., April 27. The child development center participants will decorate bicycles, tricycles, scooters and skates in the staging area at the intersection of Linda Vista Road and Fulton Street before heading down the parade route, which goes south on Linda Vista Road from Ulric Street to Comstock Street.

Milestones

Gene Magana, brother of Lou Magana, general services manager, passed away on March 15.

Rose Cecilia Shaffer, mother of Sister Pat Shaffer, professor emerita in the chemistry department, passed away on March 14.

Griffith Conrad Evan III, brother of communications Professor Carole Huston, passed away on March 9.


Note of Gratitude

I want to express my deepest appreciation for your prayers, cards, e-mails and phone calls over the past few weeks with respect to the transition of my mother-in-law, June Powers. It is at a time like this that we realize what a special place USD truly is. Thank you one and all. You are very special.

— Jo and Bob Powers and family

Classifieds

FOR SALE: 1986 Toyota Cresida. Loaded with features and like new. 125,000 miles. $2,500. Call Ben Arian at ext. 4890 or (858) 531-3772.