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DEPARTMENT
OF HUMAN
RESOURCES

www.tufts.edu/hr/index

HNRCA aims to improve customer service



Members of the HNRCA Core Service/Support group: Joann Thelusma, Susan Ulbrich, John Lomartire, Jessie Davis, Ally Gotsell, Kathleen Benoit, Nia DeYounge, MaryBeth Keith, and Adam Weikel

LOCATED ON THE TUFTS HEALTH SCIENCE campus in Boston, the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA) is the largest research institution in the world devoted to investigating the relationship between nutrition and aging. With 270 researchers, trainees and staff involved in a wide range of research activities in 19 different labs, and 8 scientific core units, the HNRCA has dozens and dozens of projects in the works at any one time.

Heading up a 20-person administrative and technical support staff that services this scientific group is **David E. Clark**, Administrative Director of the HNRCA. Reporting to him are two administrative managers, **Adam Weikel** and **Susan Ulbrich**, along with **Bonnie Myers**, Information Technology Manager, Scientific Computing. **Thomas Carlier** manages the facilities.

This past year, after getting the go-ahead from HNRCA Director **Simin Nikbin Meydani** and consulting with Human Resources, David and his group embarked on what is called the Customer Service Initiative.

Stemming in part from the HNRCA's Strategic Plan developed in 2010, the initiative has three sections: (1) centralization of administra-

tive services; (2) revamped job descriptions to match current expectations, and (3) emphasizing a culture of professionalism that includes enhanced training and development opportunities linked to the HNRCA's goals and mission, as well as the assistants' job requirements.

Centralization. Until recently, administrative assistants (AAs) were assigned to specific researchers and labs that were spread across the center. While this might work for some," in general it is not a very efficient model," David said. If someone was out sick or on vacation, that unit would have little support. In addition, he said, "Researchers may be good in science but don't necessarily get the training they need to manage staff. With their specialized skill sets, you want them to do science, because it's expensive for them to do other things."

With the support of Center Director Meydani, David developed an administrative Core/Service model to centralize the AAs in one professionally managed location, and he incentivized lab directors to sign up for the service. It required a paradigm shift in how those assistants were used, he explained. "We're working with individuals as to

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“The outcome was extremely positive. We submitted 15 grant applications in one day and research administration found zero errors.”

—Adam Weikel

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the difference between ‘want’ and ‘need,’ which allows for the most efficient and productive use of these important human resources,” he said.

The centralized administrative core has key advantages, Adam pointed out, including sharing knowledge and pitching in to help each other when necessary. “Here, we can all share the wealth and the person overworked can get assistance easily from a colleague who sits right next to him or her.” They can also take advantage of the group’s accumulated knowledge and experience. “As a manager, I don’t know everything about Tufts operations, but if I walk outside my office, chances are one of the people has experienced it before, and as a group we can all hear the answer at one time.”

Proof is in the pudding, as they say. The administrative team recently worked on grant applications to the USDA involving 15 principal investigators (PIs) and a complex process. “If they had been spread across the building and tried to apply on their own, it would have been very difficult,” Adam said. “But as a group we did one section at a time, and did it all together. It was very efficient, and the outcome was extremely positive. We submitted 15 grant applications in one day and research administration found zero errors.”

Professional development. In addition to the clear advantages of centralization have been the benefits of increasing the professionalism of the staff, David said. A key step was the revamping of all job descriptions. Assistants were learning their positions and then moving on to positions outside Tufts. “Churn is not a good thing at Tufts and elsewhere. It’s an expensive model. We need a continuity and consistency of people staying in the position. Part of it is doing justice to the individual and also to the unit. We need to have the job descriptions reflect what we’re asking of them,” David said.

Scientists were asking the staff to perform sophisticated tasks that weren’t reflected in the job descriptions. So David and his direct reports worked extensively with Human Resources on compensation analysis to devise a stratified career progression within the unit. After the analysis, they changed titles for staff assistants to “budget and administrative assistant” and then created a higher level, “budget and administrative coordinator.” The group also converted the administrative supervisor position into administrative manager—“again more commensurate with the actual tasks we’re asking of the person,” David said.

Knowing the customer. Core/Service wanted

to make sure that training was in line with their customers’ real needs. So the team informally surveyed scientists and made a long list of what staff needed to know. They then went on the administrative side—research administrators, funding, and central finance—and looked at the forms they would need and the most frequent problems they would have. Finally, they asked the staff assistants what elements of their job and the environment made it difficult to provide a high level of customer service. “Looking at this from all three angles helped us put together a much more comprehensive training program, and we’re providing much greater service to the customers,” Adam said.

Training and Performance Planning. Core/Service worked with finance trainers, University Information Technology trainers and HR/Organization and Development Training staff to customize new training and orientation for the “budget and administrative assistants.” Now, Adam says, “When people start, the process of on-boarding is much faster, because we have it all organized and ready to go.” He says that when he started at the HNRCA in 2010, it took him six months to be exposed to everything he needed to know in the job because of the cyclical nature of the grants process. “Now they are exposed to almost everything in the first three weeks.”

David wants to take regularized training and professional development a step further and make it part of the culture of HNRCA administration. “What I’m looking for is minimally once a quarter a significant in-house professional development opportunity. We are working on the concept of taking the high road...of how you conduct yourself. Customer service is an empowering moment of understanding what it means to be a professional who is supportive, constructive, understands boundaries and is able to conduct yourself in a responsible way to bring about the best in terms of our common goals and mission—in our case, research, publication and dollars.”

David says that in the end, the attention goes to the scientists who successfully secure grants, publish articles, and do innovative science, but his staff and the support services in general at HNRCA are key. “They may not be sitting down writing the grant but they are an important part of making sure that it gets done efficiently and that we have a high success rate,” he says. “My job is to make sure they have all the resources, training and organization to do that.”

Office of Educational Measurement

This article is one in an occasional series profiling “hidden jewels”—offices or departments whose important work for the university many employees may not be aware of.

The two-person Office of Educational Measurement (OEM) is located in the Academic Affairs Suite on the 15th floor of the Tufts School of Dental Medicine. There, Director **Jennifer Littke** and Administrative and Technical Coordinator **Jessie Guy-Ryan** help measure the outcomes of the dental school’s curriculum and students’ didactic and clinical progress.

Exam scores. The school has about 700 pre-doctoral students and from their point of view, Jennifer explains, one of OEM’s major responsibilities is the scoring of examinations. All exams are multiple choice; the OEM scans the students’ answer sheets into a computer, sends a report to course directors, and then posts the scores on TUSK (the Tufts University Sciences Knowledge Base), where the students eagerly check their scores.

Points for Clinical Work. The OEM monitors all aspects of student clinical progress including total points. Students treat patients in their third and fourth years and receive points for each procedure completed. To graduate, the students must accumulate 1,000 points, so it is important to measure progress to ensure they are on pace to graduate. If a student falls behind, he or she

can work with their dental practice coordinator to get back on track to achieve the 1,000 points, Jennifer says.

Evaluations. Courses are evaluated each year by students and every three years by academic peers. The OEM manages the process, including selecting peer evaluators (one basic science faculty member and one clinical faculty member), who will evaluate the course and write a short report that gets distributed to the Department Chair and course director. These evaluations are used to help instructors identify ways to improve the content and delivery of their courses, Jennifer says.

Surveys. The OEM coordinates most internal and external survey requests from outside institutions. “For example, I recently received a survey on implants from Columbia University,” Jennifer said. “A single survey can sometimes mean contacting 8-10 faculty members, distilling their responses to specific questions, and tabulating and summarizing the information before submitting the school’s response.” The OEM also administers in-house surveys on many issues, such as a recent faculty survey asking what course offerings they would like.

Summing up, Jennifer says, “Although we are a small team, we help measure the school’s educational outcomes effectively.” Clearly, the OEM measures up in the big task of measuring progress and identifying areas for improvement at the dental school!



Jennifer Littke and Jessie Guy-Ryan

ELECTRONIC PERSONNEL ACTION FORMS (EPAFS) ARE COMING TO TUFTS!

A recurring theme in response to the school and division Excellence at Work survey was to use technology to streamline processes. One concrete way to accomplish this is to implement electronic Personnel Action Forms (ePAFs). We are moving in this direction and we’d like all employees to be aware of this significant upcoming change.

The current project to build electronic Personnel Action Forms (ePAFs) will soon enable us to eliminate paper forms used to process the following transactions:

- Hire an employee
- Change an employee’s job (such as hours change, pay change, labor/dept ID changes, etc.)
- Pay supplemental/additional pay
- Change an employee’s status, including termination and leave

Employees who currently complete a paper PAF for any of the above transactions or who use the current ePAF for student or temporary employees will be able to complete the process online in the PeopleSoft Human Resources system. Similarly, an employee who signs a paper PAF as an approver will do that via the online system.

Human Resources staff are working closely with colleagues in the schools and central divisions to gather the information needed to build the security and workflow that will support these transactions.

In addition to ePAF activity, in the future we will use the ePAF product to improve the process of merit pay increases: ePAF/eForms technology will replace spreadsheets to collect and process annual merit pay increases.

Timeframe: We anticipate that online ePAFs will be rolled out in the first quarter of calendar 2012.

Changes to the merit pay process will be implemented for the 2012 cycle.

To gather employee feedback and build requirements for ePAFs, Human Resources held “Discovery” sessions on each of our campuses. We are using the feedback you gave us to design the new online forms and workflow processes. We will continue to solicit employee feedback at key points during this project.

For more information, please contact **Anne DeBenedictis** at anne.debenedictis@tufts.edu, extension 7-3386.

Planning for the inauguration of a president



President Anthony P. Monaco celebrates with guests at his inaugural reception at the Agnes Varis Campus Center in Grafton

IT WAS THE AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 21; the inauguration of Tufts' 13th president had just concluded with the singing of *Tuftonia's Day*, and 1,400 university faculty, staff, and guests from across the country were filing out of the big tent on the Residential Quadrangle.

"See what my watch says?" Secretary of the Tufts Corporation **Paul Tringale** asked Special Events Coordinator **Tamar Kanarian**. It was 3:30—the exact time Paul and his team had planned weeks earlier for the ceremony to end.

President **Anthony P. Monaco's** inauguration went off without a hitch, and its success demonstrates the excellent planning and execution of a week of celebratory events on all three campuses that began the previous Monday with an Arts Showcase and reception and ended on the following Sunday with an Alumni Council meeting and luncheon featuring President Monaco as speaker. The festivities included receptions, concerts, academic discussions, and dinners and luncheons for trustees, selected VIPs and other guests throughout the week.

Paul led the planning team, along with **Celeste Mahoney**, director of Special Events. The two have worked together on major Tufts events for close to three decades, including the inaugurations of **Lawrence S. Bacow** and **John DiBiaggio**. "I wouldn't say we finish each other's sentences, but we get along well, and institutional memory pays off when you're dealing with inaugurations that come up every ten years or so," Paul said.

Planning actually began in May 2010, before

President Monaco was even nominated. The pair formed a small planning committee that included **Michael Baenan**, chief of staff in the President's Office, and **Suzanne Kahl**, who also serves as the university's Commencement Coordinator.

Over the following months the team created the framework for Inauguration Week and determined who else should join the team. Celeste said, "We definitely wanted something on each of the campuses and to have student and faculty involvement." Eventually the committee would number 20-30 members. They modeled the committee after Commencement committees, with representatives from all schools and major departments. By January 2011, the team had a draft of the week's programs outlined, preliminary lists of invitees drawn up, and rough areas of responsibility assigned.

The number of details became enormous. "There were myriad details, and too much was in my head," Paul said. "But we had a master calendar and received updates from everybody as their events were getting fine-tuned." Some of the individuals and groups handling those details were the following:

- Celeste and her **Special Events** team were responsible for sending and tracking the invitations (See Box, page 5), developing and overseeing the Arts Showcase under Events Coordinator **Meghan Mongeau's** lead, organizing the pre-inauguration brunch, post-inauguration reception, and other receptions and social events on the Boston and Medford/Somerville campuses.

- The **Tufts Conference Bureau** helped with ceremony coordination and logistics. "They managed important details like ushering and getting the VIPS to and from the airport and hotels. It's a skilled group of people," Paul said. Additionally, Conference Board Director **Adam Cotton** and his team partnered with the office of Provost and Senior Vice President Interim **Peggy Newell** to implement the Academic Symposium. The offices worked closely in overseeing program design and content, logistics, promotion and registration.

- **University Relations** and its **Publications, Photography** and **Web Communications** offices developed communications, designed invitations and other materials, and broadcast the ceremony around the world to alumni, parents, and friends. Web Communications also posted on the Tufts

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Presidential Inauguration

Continued from previous page

website videos of some of the week's events such, as the Academic Symposium.

The two things event planners worry about, Paul says, is weather and the health of participants. Rain was forecast early in the week, so **Bob Reppucci**, director of Medford/Somerville Facilities Services, and his crew put up the ceremonial tent ahead of schedule to keep the ground dry and even built walkways for the comfort of the guests.

Paul and Celeste emphasized that Inauguration Week was a team effort. At one of the opening planning meetings Paul had pointed out that the inauguration would not only announce the president and bring the community together but would also “show what we can do as a team, as a university, and demonstrate the standards and quality that we care about.”



Tufts African music and dance ensemble KINIWE performs at the Inauguration 2011 Arts Showcase and reception at Cohen Auditorium

THE INVITATIONS: LOGISTICS

One of the complicated inauguration tasks was handling invitations. This meant creating lists of invitees to this very special event, working with Publications to create and design invitations, developing a tracking system for RSVPs, and much more.

“It’s a complex rubric when you think of 10, 20 or 30 categories of people and who gets invited to this affair but not this one,” explained Tufts Corporation Secretary **Paul Tringale**, who co-led the inauguration planning effort. “Once you get the invitations out, you start getting back RSVPs, and you have to keep up with that, and making sure everyone has a meal, or two or three, and has a chair with a label and name tag, and they know where to go to pick it up.”

Special Events Coordinator **Tamar Kanarian** and Assistant Director of Special Events **Mari Anne Paraskevas** took the lead on these tasks. Tamar and Mari Anne divvied up tasks, consulting with a host of officials for up-to-date lists of Tufts faculty, administrators, alumni, parents, and people outside the university, such as university presidents, politicians, community leaders, and heads of academic societies. Tamar also worked with **Lisa Gregory** and her team in Tufts Publications, who oversaw the design of the invitations, programs and other related materials, to determine production timelines and invitation counts.

Ultimately 14 different pieces of paper in various combinations were mailed to about 7,000 invitees, including 500 university presidents, politicians, neighbors, faculty, key constituencies, and all alumni living within the Route 495 beltway. Email invitations were sent to students, staff, parents of current students and about 80,000 alumni living beyond Route 495.

To keep track of all the RSVPs, Mari Anne and Tamar built the database with help from UIT where they tracked the names of responding invitees into the database and key information. “We had asked things like what school people came from, whether they were coming to the brunch, were they marching and if so, their robe and cap size. “It was pretty intense,” Tamar said. “When it came to the ceremony, we knew how many marchers, how many non-marchers, what kind of marchers, and so forth.” She said people were still responding the morning of the ceremony.

Meeting the compliance challenge

Periscope recently interviewed executive vice President **Patricia Campbell**, Senior Legal Counsel **Martin Oppenheimer**, and Director of Internal Audit **Seth Kornetsky** about a new, university committee: the Institutional Compliance Executive Committee (“Committee”).

Like other institutions of higher education, Tufts is governed by a wide variety of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies covering everything from information privacy to scientific research to fiduciary responsibilities. Last year, following a university-wide assessment of risks, the Tufts Administrative Council identified compliance monitoring with regulatory requirements as a key area requiring a more structured approach.

“Not that we are not compliant,” explained Patricia. “The view at Tufts is that everybody is responsible for compliance in their functional areas, and we have many ways to manage compliance risk, but we didn’t have one place where we could better coordinate our oversight and review our policies and procedures for compliance.”

As a result, the university formally created the Committee, whose charter became effective this past November. According to the charter, the Committee will provide “senior level guidance” on “significant regulatory compliance matters,” particularly when functional areas overlap or “it is unclear which unit is responsible for managing a particular compliance requirement.” The Committee plays an important role in ensuring that effective management is in place to maintain compliance with the university’s significant regulatory requirements.

“For example”, explained Seth, “the Committee invited the director of Environmental Health & Safety to discuss compliance matters pertaining to lab safety, handling of chemicals, and hazardous waste removal. As part of this discussion, the Committee focused on the employee training programs being developed to reduce the risk of non-compliance and offered suggestions and support.”

Patricia provided an example of when a compliance issue warrants the Committee’s attention: “The Financial Accounting Standards Board might change a regulation governing how a certain category of transactions must be accounted for. Finance Division

staff would normally raise the new compliance requirement with their supervisor, they’d discuss it, and could take care of it there,” Patricia said. “On the other hand, let’s say there is a new regulation that means that everyone in the university who touches personal identifying information must change the way they manage it to comply with the new rule. That would probably require elevating this requirement to a higher level where a university-wide compliance policy would be discussed, adopted, and promulgated. What is brought before the Committee typically depends on the breadth, complexity, and importance of the particular issue.”

In addition to top-down guidance, the Committee, which meets quarterly, also can serve as an educational and communication tool, enabling senior level managers to discuss ideas and stay abreast of compliance issues that could affect different areas of the university, Marty said. “It’s a place where all the heads of the functioning units of the university are represented and can raise compliance issues within their particular areas as well as brainstorm how to address them.”

The university offices represented on the Institutional Compliance Executive Committee:

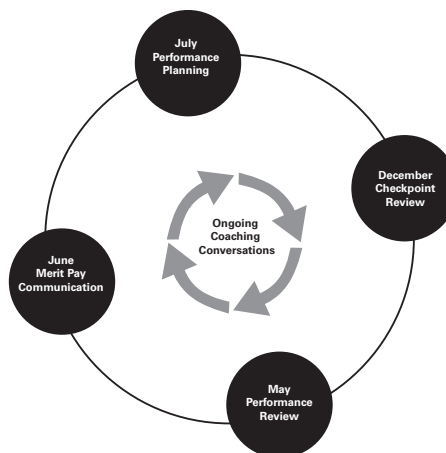
- Provost
- Senior Vice President
- Vice Provost
- Executive Vice President
- Vice President for University Relations
- Vice President for Finance and Treasurer
- Vice President for Human Resources
- Vice President for Operations
- Vice President for University Advancement
- Vice President and Chief Information Officer
- Senior Legal Counsel
- Executive Director, Planning and Administration
- Director, Audit and Management Advisory Services

REMINDER: CHECKPOINT REVIEW

Did you participate in a Checkpoint Review conversation with your manager in December? If not, be sure to request one as soon as possible. This is an important conversation to ensure that you’re on track in meeting your performance goals and that you’re getting helpful feedback. Feedback is an essential tool for professional development.

Take the time to check in now and position yourself for a positive Performance Review this spring.

For further information, refer to the HR website, <http://hr.tufts.edu/>, or talk to your HR rep.



HR Calendar—Learning and Development Programs

REGISTRATION, CONTACT, AND LOCATION INFORMATION

To register for the programs, log into Employee Self Service: <https://hrss.hr.tufts.edu>. Click on “Learning and Development” then “Request Training Enrollment.” Select one of the options and search for the session you would like to attend.

CONTACTS:

FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS—All campuses, contact:
Lauren Hubbard at lauren.hubbard@tufts.edu or ext. 7-3122

WORK /LIFE BALANCE PROGRAMS—Each campus, contact:

Boston: mccall.allen@tufts.edu or ext. 6-6600.

Grafton: patty.boucher@tufts.edu or ext. 8-7975.

Medford/Somerville: lauren.hubbard@tufts.edu or ext. 7-3122.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Creating a Respectful Workplace: Meeting Halfway

Fostering respect in the workplace is a major task for all organizations. We are working harder and faster than ever. How we communicate with colleagues can sometimes put a strain on work relationships. Attend this workshop and learn how to identify challenges that contribute to a breakdown of effective relationships and strategies to successfully manage challenges and promote teamwork.

Medford/Somerville: Wednesday, February 8; 12pm-2pm, 200 Boston Avenue, HR Center for Learning and Development

Boston: Wednesday February 15; 12pm-2pm, 711 Washington Street, HNRCA Mezzanine Conference Room

Grafton: Thursday, February 16; 12pm-2pm, Administration Building, Kohnstamm Conference Room

Time Management: The Training I Don't Have Time For

What words come to mind when thinking of Time? Never enough! We cannot stretch the amount of time in a day, but we can learn to utilize it effectively. Attend this seminar to gain an understanding of your time management style, and begin to work with time as an ally, not as an enemy—reducing stress in the workplace and at home.

Medford/Somerville: Wednesday, April 4; 12pm-2pm, 200 Boston Avenue, HR Center for Learning and Development

Boston: Thursday April 5; 12pm-2pm, 711 Washington Street, HNRCA Mezzanine Conference Room

Grafton: Monday, April 23; 12pm-2pm, Administration Building, Kohnstamm Conference Room

WORK/LIFE BALANCE PROGRAMS

Money Management: What Everyone Should Know About Managing Money

This program will focus on basic money management; specifically: saving and investing, cash reserves, insurance programs, and investment techniques. Attend to learn: Where does your money go? How much cash reserves should you have and where should they be? How do inflation and taxes affect your investments? What are the advantages and disadvantages of different asset classes?

Medford/Somerville: Thursday, February 23; 12pm-1pm, 200 Boston Ave., HR Center for Learning and Development

Boston: Monday, February 27; 12pm-1pm, 711 Washington Street, HNRCA Mezzanine Conference Room

Grafton: Tuesday, February 28; 12pm-1pm, Kohnstamm Conference Room

Don't Get Burned: Extinguishing Job Burnout Before it Extinguishes You

Burnout is the number one complaint of workers today—too much to do and too little time to do it in. Why are some people able to withstand the increased pressure and others are not? This program will answer this question and give participants strategies to prevent and/or treat symptoms of burnout.

Medford/Somerville: Wednesday, March 7; 12pm-1pm, 200 Boston Ave., HR Center for Learning and Development

Boston: Wednesday, March 14; 12pm-1pm, 711 Washington Street, HNRCA Mezzanine Conference Room

Grafton: Wednesday, March 21; 12pm-1pm, Administration Building, Kohnstamm Conference Room

Helping Children Cope with Stress in Today's World

This workshop is designed to help parents identify the sources and effects of stress on their children. Through role-plays and discussion, participants will discover ways to help their children become resilient and develop effective coping strategies.

Grafton: Thursday, April 5; 12pm-1pm, Administration Building, Kohnstamm Conference Room

Medford/Somerville: Friday, April 13; 12pm-1pm, 200 Boston Ave., HR Center for Learning and Development

Boston: Friday, April 27; 12pm-1pm, 711 Washington Street, HNRCA Mezzanine Conference Room



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Periscope? Do you have
ideas for future topics?
How to make it better?
We want to know!Contact Regina Corrao at
regina.corrao@tufts.edu.www.tufts.edu/hr/index

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**NOMINATIONS OPEN JANUARY 17!****Do you know someone who always does a great job—but doesn't get the spotlight?****Now is the time to recognize your colleagues for their great work by making a Distinction Awards nomination. The program honors the excellence of Tufts staff and faculty outside of teaching and research.**

2012 marks the Distinction Awards' fifth year. Help recognize this milestone by nominating an outstanding individual or team between **January 17** and **February 29**. Forms will be available online and in your local HR office. All members of the Tufts community are welcome to participate: <http://distinctionawards.tufts.edu>.

To learn how to write a great nomination, attend a brown bag **Lunch & Learn** session with Selection Committee co-conveners **Michael Baenen** and **Kathe Cronin**, noon–1:00 p.m. and 1–2:00 p.m. on each campus: **Boston**, February 2, Dental School, Room 1521; **Grafton**, February 3, Administration Building, Kohnstamm Conference Room; **Medford**, February 9, 200 Boston Avenue, Suite 1600. Space is limited, so please contact distinctionawards@tufts.edu or **617.627.3271** to reserve a spot now!