

CHARGER CHAT



APRIL 2023



OFFICE OF
HUMAN RESOURCES

VOLUME 2

CHARGER CONNECTION

By Laurel C. Long

Associate Vice President, Human Resources



Never Say Never

You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore. – William Faulkner

A few years ago, I got caught up in one of those silly Facebook games. Someone tagged me in a post and it was my turn to list the Top Ten Things I Hate. Number 3 on that list was: "Hiking." Mind you, at that point, I had never been on a hike. I just convinced myself that it would be a dreadful experience (heat, bugs, snakes!). It was my intent at the time to stay off of all hiking trails, never venture into the woods, and become familiar with nature only through pictures and, maybe, National Geographic. Fast forward a few years, January 29, 2023. Where was I? Doing something I said I would never do – hiking on a beautiful trail on Wade Mountain! It was cold, rainy, muddy, and absolutely amazing. How had I missed out on all of this beauty? I had no idea there was so much to see here in the Tennessee Valley.

I've been on four hikes since then, with another one scheduled in just a few weeks on the Pinhoti Trail. It will be a tough hike, and I couldn't be more excited. So, what changed? How did I go from "I will never hike" to "I can't wait for my next hike?" One of my resolutions for this year was to challenge myself to do one new thing; something I hadn't done before. My fitness coach encouraged me to try hiking. At first, I said absolutely not, but then I remembered my resolution and grudgingly said yes. When I am out on the trail, I have an opportunity to breathe, re-group, recharge, and enjoy the stunning beauty that is all around me. I've met some really neat people and many new friends.

What's on your "never will do" list? Maybe you're missing out on an amazing experience.

Remember: Never say never.

Newsletter Highlights

Employee Recognition Ceremonies

Legislative Updates Impacting Employee Benefits

Learning Opportunities

Wellness Wednesday

Hiring the Best

New Supervisor Orientation

HRIS: Summer ePaf Deadline

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION CEREMONIES

By UAH Benefits Team



HR Procedures

University Excellence Awards

The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) will host the annual [University Awards for Excellence](#) ceremony to recognize the achievements of the university's faculty, staff members, and researchers. Award recipients will be recognized for their outstanding abilities. This ceremony is open for all employees to attend. The ceremony will be held on Friday, April 21st from 3:00-5:00 in the Student Services Building (SSB) Room 112.

Service Awards

All employees who reached a milestone anniversary in 2022 or 2023 are posted online. You can view the [UAH Awards website](#) to see a complete list of award recipients by year and department. Employees who reached their anniversary in 2022 have been mailed a certificate and service award information to their home mailing address. Employees who have a milestone anniversary in 2023 will receive their award at the end of the month when they reach their anniversary. Please extend your appreciation and congratulations to these employees for their commitment to UAH!

UAH held a ceremony and reception for employees who reached a monumental milestone anniversary of 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, and 45 years of service with UAH in 2022 or 2023. We honored their years of service, dedication, and commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service. Pictures from the awards ceremony will be posted soon.



Employee Offboarding

It is imperative that the HR Benefits team be notified of resignations as soon as possible. Early notification of a resignation will help facilitate offboarding activities with other departments and ensure the employee is cleared prior to their last day of employment. In efforts to streamline this process, we have developed a google notification form that we are asking all terminating employees to complete. Once a letter of resignation has been submitted and acknowledged by the manager/department, the google form should be submitted notifying HR Benefits of the last date of employment.

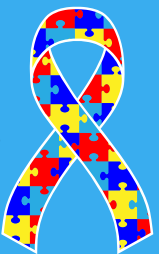
Following notification, HR Benefits will coordinate with the separating employee to provide all applicable information, required activities, and to schedule an HR out-processing meeting on or before their last day. All necessary steps regarding the offboarding process are outlined on the offboarding website.

Managers and administrators: We are relying on you to help us remind employees of this new requirement upon receipt of a letter of resignation. We appreciate your support in this effort. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.



April is National Autism Awareness Month

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex neurological and developmental disability that affects an individual's ability to communicate, interact with others, and behave appropriately in social situations. ASD can vary significantly from person to person. Still, it is estimated that 1 in 54 children in the United States is on the autism spectrum. It is essential to understand the basics of ASD to foster an understanding and supportive environment for those affected by this disorder. In honor of Autism Awareness Month, we share some history and 5 fast facts about autism spectrum disorder. To learn more about Autism, check out Uprise Health's [Exploring the Basics of Autism Spectrum Disorder](#).



LEGISLATIVE UPDATES IMPACTING EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

By UAH Benefits Team

Congress has passed the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) and the Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act). Both laws expand the protections for pregnant employees and applicants, those individuals with related conditions, and nursing mothers.

The **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act PWFA** is designed to close the gap between the protections afforded to workers affected by pregnancy through the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) and accommodations available through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). PWFA will extend reasonable accommodations to pregnant workers and applicants with known limitations arising from pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition.

Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act) expands federal workplace protections for lactating employees by requiring employers to provide all employees who are nursing with a private location that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, along with reasonable break time for one year following the birth of a child.

If you are in need of a workplace accommodation or private lactation space, please contact benefits@uah.edu.

SECURE Act 2.0

The Securing a Strong Retirement Act (SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022), an important piece of retirement legislation, was signed into law on December 29, 2022. This legislation includes provisions intended to make retirement plans more widely accessible; reinforces the importance of saving; and offers many American workers the opportunity for greater financial security in retirement. Some of the most impactful provisions are listed below. Stay posted for more information to come on this topic.

Effective January 2023, the age for Required Minimum Distributions RMD's was increased from 72 to 73.

Effective January 2024:

- **Catch-up contributions made to a retirement plan must be designated as Roth contributions for participants earning \$145,000 or more.**
- The 10% early withdrawal penalty is waived for withdrawals from a retirement plan for personal or family emergency expenses.
- 403(b) plan participants may now request a hardship distribution from certain employer contributions as well as salary deferrals. Also, 403(b) plan participants are no longer required to take a plan loan prior to requesting a hardship distribution.

Reduce Your Risk of Hospitalization With 20 Minutes of Daily Exercise

A new study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open found that physical activity not only decreases people's risk of developing health problems but may also help prevent them from being hospitalized. Researchers found that the magic number was just 20 minutes of daily exercise. It's well known that exercise is linked to a lower risk of cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Still, the JAMA study explored the association for conditions not typically linked with exercise. The conditions significantly impacted by exercise were urinary tract infections, gallbladder disease, and pneumonia. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about incorporating exercise into your daily routine.



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

By UAH Benefits Team

Savi:

Are you still paying for student loan debt?

It's time to learn about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF). This valuable program offers borrowers a way to reduce monthly loan bills, with total loan forgiveness after making 120 months of eligible payments. UAH wants to help eligible employees with student debt take advantage of this money-saving program. You may qualify for the loan forgiveness program as a UAH employee. Savi is offering a webinar on Wednesday, April 19th at 12 pm ET to help you to learn how you can get on track for student loan forgiveness and get up to speed on any recent PSLF policy changes. Register [here](#) today!

TIAA Webinars:

Wednesday, April 19, 2023 - 2 p.m. (CT)

Women 2 Women: Start to Finish: When women are starting their careers, there's a lot to consider - career goals, job satisfaction, and achieving a work/life balance. But it's important to also consider retirement. Discover how establishing a plan now can help build your financial future. To register, click [here](#).

Uprise Health

We hope you stepped into the new year on the right foot and enjoy all the New Year, New You, New Us materials from our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Plus partner, Uprise Health. This quarter, we're focusing on mental health and pride. Mental health is more than the absence of a mental illness - it's essential to your overall health and quality of life. It includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Uprise Health EAP is here to connect you and your family with supportive health and well-being tools to help you become the best version of yourselves. Sign up for monthly newsletters here. To learn more about Uprise Health EAP and discover a comprehensive list of services that support you and your family's well-being, visit our Uprise Health Member Resources Center.



We Value Your Feedback

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the Employee Benefits Survey and/or the Best Places to Work Survey. It is the mission of UAH Human Resources to develop talent, foster inclusion, lead innovation, and nurture the well-being of faculty and staff at The University of Alabama in Huntsville. The survey results will provide meaningful data to help us continually improve and align efforts toward our mission. Your open and honest feedback is extremely valuable and will highlight overall employee satisfaction, help identify areas that need improvement, aid in future decisions impacting employee benefits, and will serve as a powerful tool for senior leaders to develop meaningful strategies that drive positive change.



ALTERNATIVE WORK OPTIONS

By UAH Benefits Team

Alternative Work Options

UAH Alternate Work Options are now in effect. The University offers two alternative work options: telecommuting and flexible work schedules, which may be approved under certain circumstances.

Employees interested in either of these options should contact their supervisor to determine if they are eligible. All applicable information pertaining to Alternative Work Options can be found here:

<https://www.uah.edu/hr/benefits/work-life/alternative-work-options>

The steps below must be completed for any employee wishing to utilize either of the Alternate Work Options.

1. Business Unit Eligibility: each participating college/center/department must receive pre-approval of an Alternative Work Options Business Plan from the appropriate Vice President

2. Supervisor and Employee Training: Participating supervisors and employees should take the Best Practices for [Alternative Work Options Training Program](#) as part of the approval process.

3. Employee Request: Once the business unit has been approved to participate, the Dean/Director/ Department Head may review employee requests for alternative work options.

Managers: Please remember that any previous teleworking agreements in place prior to this new program expired on February 22, 2023. Any existing employees working from home (full remote or hybrid), or outside the state of Alabama, should have a teleworking agreement on record. Due to the complexities of out-of-state employment, such as differences in taxation, employment & labor laws, state benefits, and other compliance concerns; out-of-state employment requests will be escalated to HR for heightened review prior to approval.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Office of Human Resources at 256.824.6545 or hrrecords@uah.edu.



New Employee Spotlight

Please join us in welcoming the following new regular part-time and full-time employees who joined UAH from January through March of 2023. We are proud they made the choice to join UAH and wish them a long and rewarding career. Welcome aboard!

Abigail Barre - ESSC
Jacob Bell - Custodial Services
Howard Chen - I & S Engineering
Tammy Eskridge - Development
Charles Everette - Custodial Services
Sean Freeman - Atmospheric Science
Kelvin Frizzell - OIT
John Fuller - Maintenance
Vishal Gaur - ESSC
Asmita Gyawali Ghimire - Chemical Engineering
Travis Hagadorn - Stock Room
Kristy Hawkins - Budgets & Management
Kristina Hendrix - Strategic Communications
Caden Helbling - ESSC
Payton Ireland - ITSC
Kendrick, Kip - Optics
Sheyenne Kirkland - ESSC
Lacy Laster - Business Administration
Molly, Latham - Institute of Science Education
Sydney Lybrand - ESSC
Modhuparna Manna - Computer Science
Grace Machado - Admissions and Recruitment
Ann Marie Martin - Strategic Communications
Hope Martin - Admissions and Recruitment
Kayla McLaughlin - Strategic Communications
Tanner Mickey - Athletics
Laura Millot - Title IX Office
Elizabeth Moore - Financial Aid
Steven Myrick - SMAP
Elizabeth Olive - Custodial Services
Jamie Owens - Career Services
Christopher Phillips - ESSC
Ashley Riddle - ESSC
Nadia Suero Sanchez De Rijo - Custodial Services
Darby Smith - Development
Joshua Stewart - SMAP
Robert Taylor - OSP
Kevin Turner - Custodial Services
Celia Venable - Student Activity Fees
Marilyn West - Charger Union
Yunping Zhang - Propulsion
Lauren Zimmermann - SMAP



UAH RETIREES



Let's all extend our congratulations and warm wishes to our recent retirees! We appreciate all of the contributions these employees made to UAH over their careers, and hope they have a long, happy, and healthy retirement!

Lonnie Ables - SMAP

Wanda Baker - SMAP

Linda Clugstone - Enrollment Services

Jatinder Gupta - Information Systems

Sherri Messimer - Information Systems & Engineering

Eric Nobles - SMAP

Mark Pekker - Mathematical Sciences

Robert Preece - Space Science

David Quarles - SMAP

Eric Seemann - Psychology

James Swain - Information & Systems Engineering

Allen Tedrow - SMAP

Seong-Moo Yoo - Electrical & Computer Engineering



WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

By UAH Charger Fit

This month's Wellness Wednesday will be held on April 19, 2023, @ 10:00 am. Blake Cruttenden, a Territory Manager from Bradford Health Services will be presenting on **Addiction: Identify, Act, Support**. This presentation will cover what the addiction world looked like during and after the big hit of COVID, plus how it impacted our nation. Secondly, how to identify the signs and symptoms of someone struggling with alcohol and substance abuse. What it looks like, the changes in thought processing and attitudes as well as everyday signs that we may not think much of. Then we will figure out how to "Act". Not to sweep the abuse under the rug but to safely discuss, share love, and concern and understand what the steps are to help someone we care about. Lastly, we want to properly know how to show support, set healthy boundaries, and let the one we care about know that we are all in it together. To register click [here](#).

The Mediterranean Diet is 2023's Best Diet

U.S. News & World Report released its annual diet ranking, and the Mediterranean diet topped the list for the sixth consecutive year. This meal plan was named best overall for 2023 as the publication's health experts also voted it the best diet for healthy eating, the best plant-based diet, the best family-friendly diet, and the best diet for bone and joint health.

The Mediterranean diet is a meal plan that emulates how people in the Mediterranean region have traditionally eaten, focusing on consuming whole grains and heart-healthy fats. This diet may help support brain function, promote heart health, and regulate blood sugar levels. Research further suggests that this well-balanced eating pattern can help prevent some chronic diseases and increase longevity.

A nonrestrictive, healthy meal plan such as the Mediterranean diet may be easier to follow and stay committed to. If you have any questions about your diet, talk to your doctor.

Source: Lockton



HealthComp's Stretch It Out Challenge

The Stretch It Out Challenge aims to increase the number of minutes you stretch each day. People often remember to exercise but forget to stand up during the day and take a stretch break. Stretching throughout the day improves the range of motion, decreases muscle stiffness, and aids in reducing high-stress levels. Registration begins April 6th - April 19th. You can enroll by logging into your wellness portal at hchealthbenefits.com via the Wellness Challenges tile. The challenge will begin on April 20, 2023, and end on May 19, 2023. The goal of this challenge is to participate in each daily task and learn new stretches to earn points. Earn 30 points towards your wellness incentive for completing the challenge.





Supervisor Recognition Matters!

According to a recent survey*, 79% of employees will quit a job due to lack of appreciation, and 69% say they would work harder if their efforts were recognized. The challenge is that recognition is very subjective and leaders are often too entrenched in the day-to-day business of work to do it effectively. Great leaders ask employees how they like to be recognized, keep the process simple, and ensure a customized approach that makes employees feel appreciated. Remember, it does not need to be complicated. You can even build a recognition inquiry into the orientation process or performance evaluation. For example, you may ask questions such as, "Do you like public recognition or thank you notes for a job well done?", "What's your favorite candy bar or treat that you'd appreciate for recognition?", and/or "What experiences do you value as recognition for your contributions, such as the opportunity to attend conferences or participate in important projects with high visibility?" The key is for supervisors to take the time to understand the importance of recognition and seek employee feedback on their interests. Want more information? A classic resource is a book, "One-Minute Manager" by Kenneth Blanchard. Check out this resource and others that promote recognition, and let your employees know you appreciate them!

*36 Powerful Leadership Statistics 2023, Kristin Kizer, Zippia



HIRING THE BEST

By UAH Talent Management

Behavior-based questions were developed based on research findings that past performance is the best predictor of future performance. So, if you want to know how someone may handle working in your fast-paced environment, contributing to the diversity of your team, or effectively assisting difficult customers, then ask about a time when they have done those things in the past! Also, remember that the Human Resources [Talent Management Webpage](#) has a 300+ [Interview Questions Library](#) that is full of behavior-based questions, segmented by competency, and ready for your use. Hiring supervisors simply consider the key skills and behaviors needed to be successful in the vacant position, then may choose the questions of their choice based upon competencies. Remember to limit your questions to not more than 8-10 for a 45-minute interview, to ensure you have time to listen to each candidate and promote fairness by asking each candidate the same interview questions. Happy interviewing!

SMART Goals Still Work

Did you know that according to Gallup, the #1 indicator of employee engagement is the presence of clear expectations? Make sure performance expectations are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Based. Employees need to know exactly what is expected of them, and they need to receive on-going feedback regarding how their performance meets expectations. Goals should consider the team's available resource and constraints, and should be time-based to ensure progress. Develop goals and action plans with employees to ensure understanding and a basis from which to confirm and celebrate success.



New Supervisor's Orientation

Are you a supervisor who is new to UAH or recently promoted? Well, this resource is just for you! Get tips for success in your first 90 days, best practices for how to build your team and management performance, and review the key policies and procedures you will need to lead successfully! New Supervisor Orientation is held quarterly and individuals may sign up any time via this link <https://forms.gle/W4ZpdJJtsk5wJJSPA>. The first session is Thursday, July 27, from 8:30 AM to Noon. Sign up today and we hope to see you there! (Existing supervisors who would like refresher training are also welcome to join.)



Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Disability Expo

The Talent Management team participated in the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Disability Hiring Expo, on Thursday, April 13, 2023. This event was sponsored by several disability-related organizations, agencies, and community partners. The University of Alabama in Huntsville is committed and dedicated to serve as a partner, advocate, and resource for individuals with disabilities seeking employment opportunities.



SUMMER EPAF DEADLINE

By UAH HRIS Team

The deadline for submitting summer 2023 ePAFs and the accompanying documentation was Tuesday, April 11. Late ePAFs and those without an offer letter or other supporting documentation may be returned to be processed for the next pay period.

Visit our [website](#) here to review key factors, tips, reminders, and the memorandum of the payroll dates and schedules for the summer teaching sessions



Valerie Green to Serve As President of the Alabama Chapter of CUPA-HR

Congratulations to Valerie Green, Senior Human Resources Assistant, who was selected President of the Alabama Chapter of the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR). Valerie currently serves as President-Elect and will begin her term as President effective July 1, 2023.

The CUPA-HR Alabama Chapter brings together HR professionals in higher education to exchange best practices, connect with others in our field, and provide meaningful educational opportunities on topics important and relevant to our field.