

# Northwestern | HUMAN RESOURCES

May 2024

## Employee Matters

### Message from HR Vice President and CHRO Lorraine Goffe



Dear Faculty and Staff,

As you'll see in this issue, May is a significant month for awareness - it's both Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American (APIDA) Heritage Month and Mental Health Awareness Month. So it is an opportune time to become familiar (or to remind yourself) of the resources Northwestern offers.

Northwestern is home to [several affinity groups](#), which I encourage you to explore, join and/or take advantage of the activities that are available to the community. Now more than ever, we all need to learn about others' identities and the ways in which people who are different from us experience life, including at Northwestern.

We also highlight the many services and programs that address mental health -- both on a personal and professional level. These complicated times call for a variety of support for our community and again, I encourage you to take advantage of these benefits.

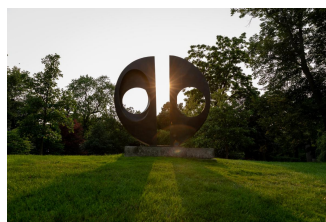
Lastly, it is performance review time. While I hope staff and managers are having feedback discussions all year round, it is critical to have a formalized process and to provide tools as noted below to facilitate this.

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### Benefits Spotlight

#### Prospective Retiree Information Session

Are you considering retirement? The Benefits Office invites you to attend a virtual information session on May 29, 2024, from Noon to 1 pm. A representative from UnitedHealthcare will discuss the Medicare Advantage plan. Additionally, we will discuss Via Benefits and the Legacy Retiree plans. To participate, please [register online](#).



#### May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Northwestern, in partnership with BCBSIL, offers a digital online mental health program *Learn to Live* for those enrolled in the medical plan. *Learn to Live* can help you and your family with life's mental health concerns, including stress and anxiety, depression, insomnia, and substance use.

See the informational [flyer](#) and overview [video](#) for more information. For additional resources and programs available through your medical plan, log in to your BCBSIL account and choose the Wellness tab.



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#### May is also Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American (APIDA) Heritage Month

Check out the [activities](#) happening on our campus and learn more about the Northwestern [APIDA Staff Affinity Group \(ASAG\)](#) and [events](#) offered by the group.

**6th Annual Center for Native American and Indigenous Research Spring Symposium**  
May 16-17, 2024, 8:30 am-4:30 pm. Free and open to staff, faculty, and students.  
[Registration is requested.](#)

**Northwestern Women's Center Annual Garden Party**  
Thursday, May 30, 2024, Noon- 2 pm. Open to all. To learn more, [visit this site.](#)

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## Your Well-Being

### Normalize Mental Health Conversations

Mental illness is a medical condition, just like heart disease or diabetes, and it is common and nothing to be ashamed of. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices -- and is sometimes accompanied by substance use. Let's normalize talking about mental health, associated challenges, and how to access care not only this month, but whenever it's needed.



Resources to help start these conversations:

- [Mental health myths and facts](#)
- [Reframing mental health language](#)
- [Tips for talking about your mental health](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)
- [EAP 1in5 campaign](#)
- [EAP addiction care navigator](#)
- [Find support for issues with mental health, drugs, or alcohol](#)

### New Workplace Mental Health Training for Managers Available in MyHRLearn

[Workplace Mental Health Training for Managers](#) is an evidence-based program that teaches leaders supportive strategies that protect and promote positive mental health. In this one-hour online training, managers learn tangible, work-appropriate skills to improve employee mental health and well-being.

### Socialize and Connect with Colleagues at Coffee & Connection

Join HR each month at [Coffee & Connection \(CC\)](#), an informal on-campus coffee hour. CC provides a space and opportunity to step away from your workspace to take a break and meet colleagues new and familiar. You're also welcome to simply stop by to pick up a beverage. Hope to see you there!

### Kai Chi Do Starts on June 11

Kai Chi Do (KCD) is based on the philosophy of the *Art of Connection* and integrates movement, music, breath work and meditation. The goal of KCD is to experience a connection to yourself, others, and life as it can help restore emotional balance and well-being, ease chronic pain, improve posture and quality of sleep, and reduce stress and fatigue. This new well-being program will be held on Tuesdays, Noon-1 p.m., June 11-August 20. [Learn more](#), including how to register (select the KCD tab).

### Participate in the Bike Commuter Challenge

The Challenge is a Chicagoland competition where organizations compete to see who can earn the most points by riding their bike to and from work/school and runs through June 9. Select the Northwestern University Team when registering, and if this is your first time participating, check the "first-timer" box to earn bonus points. You don't have to be a seasoned cyclist to participate. Use this as motivation to get on your bike this spring; biking to or from the train or bus counts as a ride.

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## Learn and Grow

We're now in our Performance Excellence year-end process for staff, and as you look ahead to [completing your self-review](#) and

receiving your manager's review and rating, take these steps to make your annual performance conversation more meaningful and effective through the **REAL (Reflect, Empathize, Ask Questions, and Look Ahead) Performance Conversations** framework.



The [REAL Conversations Planner](#) helps both managers and staff craft a conversation and keep things REAL. It helps you reflect on current needs and interests, look ahead to next year, and explore development opportunities. Check out these additional tools:

*Does giving feedback make you nervous? [Find out how to best structure your feedback here.](#)*

*Receiving feedback can also present its own challenges. [Learn how to receive feedback and maximize your learning here.](#)*

Find these and more resources in our [Performance Excellence Resources for Staff](#) website. For technical questions about myHR Learn, see the [myHR Learn help page](#). If you have questions about timeline for your unit, or need assistance with technical issues (e.g. submitted self-review too early, wrong review owner), first reach out to your unit [PEX admins](#) for assistance.

### PEX and Merit

What is the relationship between the PEX process and the merit? While the performance rating is an important component of the merit increase process, Northwestern does not tie each performance rating to a specific level of increase. Each unit/school manager uses their discretion for local decision making regarding the merit.



### Guidelines

#### Timekeeping Deadlines for Memorial Day Holiday

Employees should approve their timecards by 5 pm Friday, May 24. Employees scheduled to work on Saturday should approve their timecards at the completion of their scheduled work period. Supervisors should review and approve employee

timecards by **1 pm Sunday, May 26, 2024.**

### Updated Staff Handbook Now Available Online

Human Resources is pleased to announce the updated Staff Handbook. The Staff Handbook is reviewed annually to ensure we continually provide you with the most current information on our policies and programs. View the [Staff Handbook](#) to learn more about this year's updates.

### Manager's Tip

While organizations are increasingly allocating more resources toward employees' mental health, frontline managers can be taking on too much responsibility for their team members' well-being. This can negatively impact their own and ultimately their team's effectiveness and productivity. Read [this article](#) to learn the three

things organizations and leaders can do to prioritize managers' mental health. Learn more and interact with the NU manager community by joining our [MS Teams Manager's Corner Channel](#). Come to our next [Manager's Corner Live on Tuesday, May 21 from 12:30-1:30 PM CST](#) for a live discussion on manager resources for mental health.



### Inside HR

We are pleased to announce that Senior HR Business Partner Angela Zentefis will be serving as the Interim Director of Talent



*To promote an innovative and inclusive workplace where all individuals thrive and collaborate to advance our Northwestern Directions.*

## Northwestern University



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