

Personnel Newsletter

I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestioned ability of a man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor.

~Henry David Thoreau~



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A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done.

~Dwight D. Eisenhower~

COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY

What Benjamin Franklin said in his *Poor Richard's Almanac*, that the only certain things are death and taxes, is as true today as it was 225 years ago. So, how does one deal with the unknown?

A key in times of change is to **maintain a balance** - focus on those aspects of your life which are manageable. Invest your time, energy, and emotions in family, hobbies, volunteering, a new project, your next vacation. This may sound as if you are just distracting yourself; but, realistically, some aspects of life are beyond immediate resolve. Deal with what you can deal with, and learn to let go rather than expending significant emotional energy on matters beyond your influence.

Another key is to **review past experiences** - by recalling other times and places when life left you in the lurch. Assess how frequently the outcome you feared did not seem as frightening once it was over. Remember the times

when things turned out quite differently, and perhaps better, than you originally anticipated. Ask yourself what did you learn from those experiences and what can you still apply to today's situation.

It is human nature to try and compensate, so **inventory your coping behaviors**. When people are stressed, anxious, or fearful they tend to increase or begin doing things which may actually be counterproductive. For example, eating more, sleeping more, spending more, drinking more, working more. These only provide short term relief, and typically open up doors to other types of problems. Try to compensate with positive, constructive, healthy behaviors, such as relaxation response, moderate exercise, creative outlets, rest, or the multitude of ideas presented in today's set of self-help books.

Try to **stay oriented to the here-and-now** - by keeping focused on the present.

Many of us engage in talk about the "what if's," and spend more than just idle moments forecasting. This tends to reinforce anxiety and fears. Have a plan, just for today. Have back-up ideas or activities in place should your original notion not play out. Try centering yourself, either through a spiritual exercise, communing with nature, or simply just writing down thoughts and reviewing these for credibility and believability.

In an organizational setting you may want to **become part of the solution**. You may want to volunteer your skills and abilities to your management, and offer these talents to help the organization move through its transition. This may allow you to take better ownership of your destiny, rather than leaving it to pure chance, or participating in unproductive anxiety-provoking behaviors.

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GRC's Administrative Support Staff Continues to "SOAR" to New Heights

The Organization Development and Training Office (OD&TO) is sponsoring a series of 1-day "Supporting Organizations and Relationship (SOAR)" follow-on workshops for all civil service and support service contractor support assistants at the Glenn Research Center (GRC). These workshops are designed to continue networking, teambuilding and communication from last year's 2-day workshop, in collaboration with the Center's Executive Assistants Leadership Team (EALT). The workshop includes the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) Assessment, to learn about your individual learning style, and a variety of teambuilding and networking activities.

The facilitators for these workshops will be from the Center for Creative Living which has effectively worked with several groups here at Glenn Research Center. The facilitators will use the feedback and recommendations from last year's workshops and focus on the area of communication and teamwork.

These 1-day workshops are scheduled at the Rocky River Nature Center on June 22, August 3, and August 24, 2004. For more information, contact Nola L. Bland of the Organization Development and Training Office at 433-9343.

"People With and Without Disabilities: Interacting and Communicating."

Michael J. Hartman, Disability Program Manager at Goddard Space Flight Center, is the author of the booklet "People With and Without Disabilities: Interacting and Communicating."

This publication was prepared for employees, especially those who have supervisors, managers, employees, or co-workers with disabilities. It is intended to provide general information and suggested behaviors that will increase the efficacy of interaction and communication.

This booklet is now available online at the Web Site of the Equal Opportunity Programs Office at Goddard. You can reach this publication at:

<http://eeo.gsfc.nasa.gov/disability/publications.html>.



Coaching is Now Available for NASA's Executives

NASA is implementing executive coaching Agencywide as part of its Strategic Human Capital Plan (SHCP) initiative in response to the President's Management Agenda (PMA). Developed by a coaching taskforce comprised of representatives from each Center and lead by Ms. Chris Williams at Headquarters, NASA's new Coaching Program was recently unveiled to the Agency's senior staff at Headquarters and at each of the Centers.



The coaching to be used by NASA is most often referred to as "business" or "professional" coaching. Business coaching focuses on aligning individual and organizational goals to improve performance and mission results. In addition, a business coach helps individuals enhance existing capabilities, set meaningful goals, and be accountable for results.

NASA's Coaching Program has three components and is being rolled out in phases:

Phase I is *available now* and consists of having *external executive coaches on contract* for our middle to senior-level executives.

Phase II consists of *coaching skills development training* for supervisors, managers, and executives. We expect to pilot two offerings of this training at Glenn *this summer*.

Phase III is to *build in-house coaching capability* to provide business coaching for any level supervisory employee *by the end of this year*. Each NASA Center currently has at least two human resources professionals in training to become coaches, certified by the International Coaching Federation.

For more information about coaching or to request an executive coach, contact Center Program Coaching Coordinators, Ms. Kim Mordaunt at 3-8621 or Ms. Judy Budd at 3-5580.

NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC)

There has been a great deal of activity surrounding the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) in the past several months. The MEO (Most Efficient Organization) team, also known as QUEST (Quality Efficient Services Team), came and met with functional employees.

The director of the NSSC, Rick Arbuthnot, came to the center to discuss the proposed site here in the Cleveland area, and a draft PWS was circulated for comments and revisions, etc. In light of all of this activity, the Agency Change Integration Team has begun publishing

a newsletter with updates and information as it became available. Please keep an eye on Today @ Glenn for this great source of information to keep abreast of the events surrounding the NSSC that might affect you.



FEHB and Your Eligible Family Members

Family members eligible for coverage under your self and family enrollment are your spouse and unmarried dependent children under age 22, including legally adopted children and recognized natural (born out of wedlock) children who meet certain dependency requirements. Children who are still enrolled in school, whether or not they are full time students, are only covered until age 22.

Your stepchildren and foster children are included if they live with you in a regular parent-child relationship. An unmarried dependent child age 22 or over, who is incapable of self-support because of a mental or physical disability that existed before age 22, is also an eligible family member. In determining whether the child is a covered family member, the Office of Human Resources and Workforce Planning will look at the child's relationship to you as the enrollee. A grandchild is not an eligible family member, unless the child qualifies as your foster child.

FEHB Temporary Continuation of Coverage: If you lose your FEHB coverage because you separate from Federal service, you may enroll under the Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) provision of the FEHB law to continue your coverage for up to 18 months.

Exception: you are not eligible for TCC if your separation is due to gross misconduct.

Your family members who lose coverage because of a divorce from a former spouse, or dependent children who marry before the age of 22 or upon reaching age 22, may enroll under TCC to continue FEHB coverage for up to 36 months. Contact the Office of Human Resources and Workforce Planning Benefits Office for information.



NASA has partnered with the Department of the Interior's (DOI) National Business Center (NBC) to provide the Agency with an integrated personnel/payroll system, and has initiated an Agency-wide e-Payroll Project to work with NBC to transition from NASA's current personnel and payroll system to the DOI system in early August 2004. While transition to the DOI system will be largely transparent to most NASA employees, there will be some aspects that will affect you.

Some of those aspects will include the mandatory use of Employee Express for transactions pertaining to FEHB and TSP, changes to your address, Federal and state tax withholdings, direct deposit, financial allotments, savings bonds, and to view your earnings and leave statement. Staff members from the Office of Human Resources and Workforce Planning as well as the Payroll Office will sponsor a second open house on Wednesday, June 9, 2004, in the Learning Center, Building 21, from 1 to 3:30 pm to assist you in logging on to Employee Express.

NASA Leadership Development Programs and Fellowships

As many of you are aware, the call for the NASA Leadership Development Program (LDP) and Fellowships is out. These highly prestigious programs are key for the development of the NASA workforce.

For more information on the LDP visit the following website: <http://ldp.nasa.gov/>.

For more information on the numerous Fellowship program offerings visit: <http://fellowship.nasa.gov/>.

The GRC call can be found on the OD & T website at: <http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/ODT/devprog.htm>.

This document contains a great deal of information about the programs, how to apply, and upcoming informational events related to the programs.

Here are some of the events that are planned:

June 4, 2004 - Open House with representatives from LDP and Fellowship Programs on hand to provide information and answer questions

June 10, 2004 - Brown Bag informational session on how to apply, what to expect from the programs, and how to set your goals. This session will also include a question and answer session with past participants and the program manager at GRC.

For further information or for assistance in determining if one of these programs might be right for you, please contact Jennifer Forde at 3-8021.

Everything You Wanted to Know About Unauthorized Use of Computers But Were Afraid To Ask

The NASA Glenn Research Center (GRC) community has become increasingly dependent upon Information Technology (IT) resources to accomplish the NASA mission. Because of this, the appropriate use of government computer equipment is a continual concern for all. This article will address the discovery of a significant level of inappropriate computer activity and will provide an overview of appropriate and inappropriate use of IT resources.

Beginning in December 2002, a report was received by IT security that email messages containing inappropriate material were being circulated within Glenn Research Center using NASA Glenn IT resources. An investigation verified that more than 100 employees (both SSC and civil servant) used GRC computers to view, save and send such material. This was considered unauthorized use of Government Resources.

Involvement in this activity ranged from the receipt of inappropriate material including images or cartoons containing nudity, partial nudity or sexually explicit content, to the storage and sending out of the same. Civil servants who participated in this activity were counseled or disciplined for their involvement. The number of actions issued to Glenn Civil Service personnel to date for receiving, possessing, and/or sending inappropriate material has been 17 letters of counseling, 10 letters of reprimand, and 5 suspensions from work without pay. Still to be decided upon are 11 letters of proposed suspension. Activity involving contractor personnel was managed by their respective organizations.

Glenn Research Center Personnel

Policy OHRWP-9a - Appropriate Use of Government Resources - Appendix A identifies the Center's policy on the appropriate and inappropriate use of Government resources including Government office equipment and information technology (IT). Categories of misuse or inappropriate use of Government office equipment are:

- **Illegal Use of IT Resources** - Includes, but is not limited to, the creation or transmission of sexually explicit material pertaining to minors or material related to terrorist activity.
- **Unauthorized or Inappropriate Use of Systems** - Includes, but is not limited to, creation or transmission of sexually explicit or sexually oriented materials such as images, messages or cartoons.
- **Impact on availability of resources** - Includes, but is not limited to, any personal use that could cause congestion or delay of service
- **Use of resources for personal, commercial, or other gain** - Includes but is not limited to using Government equipment to support a personal private business.

NASA has provided Glenn Research Center's IT systems for the purpose of transacting official business which broadly includes any IT processing required as part of the user's job¹. Although the policy provides examples it is not meant to be all inclusive.

The GRC policy allows the limited personal use of government

owned office equipment. This type of use includes contacting physicians, dentists, spouses, dependents, or persons handling vehicle repairs, or childcare, when communications cannot reasonably be made during non-business hours or when an urgent need exists.

Employees who have questions or concerns about prohibited and permitted use of government owned equipment, particularly computing equipment and electronic mail, should contact their supervisor, another management official, the IT Security Manager, Pam Kotlenz, or the Employee Relations Officer, Lori Pietravoia.

Should you receive unsolicited or unwelcome electronic mail you should take the following steps:

1. Delete the material from your system. It is important to understand that attachments are not deleted from the computer completely until the email trash basket is emptied. The "options" menu located in the "Tools" menu of the Eudora program has a parameter that should be selected regarding deleting attachments. Contact the help desk if you have questions concerning this process. The desktop also has a Recycle basket that should be checked and emptied periodically.
2. Notify the sender that you do not want to receive such material in the future.
3. Do not forward the material to others, either on the Center or outside the Center.
4. Notify your supervisor or

other official as stated above.

NASA policy guidance is not meant to provide an explanation of every identifiable item that could be considered inappropriate. Like any form of misconduct, misuse of GRC IT resources may be grounds for withdrawal of IT privileges or/and disciplinary action.

Users should be aware that their activities are subject to audit at any time and that they should have no expectation of privacy. The Internet is also a useful tool in accomplishing many GRC tasks, but users must remember that they leave an electronic fingerprint in the form of a NASA identification everywhere they go².

Questions an employee may want to consider are:

Is this activity consistent with NASA values, policies and guidelines?

Could this activity harm NASA's reputation?

How would this look in the newspaper or in the news?

Should I question this activity?

Common sense and good judgment must be used at all times.

¹Glenn Procedures and Guidelines (GLPG) 2810.1 October 12, 1999, Chapter 9 - General Information and Guidelines, Paragraph 9.1.1

²GLPG 2810.1, Chapter 6 - Information Technology Security Awareness and Training, Paragraph 6.1

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

Questions and Answers About Loan Program Changes

Effective July 1, 2004, the TSP will make three changes to the loan program:

- A \$50 fee will be deducted from the amount of each new loan.
- You will no longer be able to have two general purpose loans at the same time. (You will still be able to have one general purpose loan and one residential loan.)

When you pay off a TSP loan, you will not be eligible to apply for another loan of the same type for 60 days.

Below are answers to many of the questions participants have about these changes.

1. Why is the TSP making these changes to the loan program?

The TSP has made these changes to the loan program to remind participants that borrowing from the TSP should be a last resort.

In the last few years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of TSP loans, and some participants constantly have two loans outstanding, taking another loan immediately after one is paid in full.

The administrative burden and cost of processing loans were significant. In addition, administrative expenses for the loan program were charged to all TSP participants, whether or not they ever used the loan program. The one-time \$50 fee will cover the cost of processing and servicing the loan and will ensure that these costs are paid by the 500,000 participants who use the TSP loan program, and not by the 2.7 million participants who do not.

2. How will the TSP use the money from the fees?

The loan fees will be used to pay the administrative expenses of processing and servicing your loan.

3. How did you decide on the amount of the loan fee?

The \$50 loan fee was determined by considering the cost of administering the loan program relative to the total TSP administrative expenses. We considered costs such as those for the maintenance of the record keeping system, the processing of loan requests and payments, loan-associated Web and ThriftLine transactions and inquiries, and calls to the TSP Service Office.

4. How will the \$50 loan fee be collected?

The one-time loan fee will be deducted from the proceeds of your loan. For example, if your loan is for \$2,000, we will deduct \$50 and you will receive \$1,950. As you make your scheduled loan payments, you will be restoring the amount of the fee to your account.

5. How will the \$50 loan fee be taken out of my account?

The fee will be taken directly out of the loan proceeds. It will not be deducted from your account as a separate transaction or included as an item on your TSP participant statement.

6. After my loan is repaid, how soon can I apply for a new loan?

You must wait 60 days from the time your loan is paid in full until you are eligible to apply for another loan of the same type.

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THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

Questions and Answers About Loan Program Changes

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7. What happens to my loan request if I apply for a new loan before the 60-day waiting period expires?

The TSP Web site will not accept the request for the same type of loan. Paper loan applications will be rejected. The TSP will not hold loan applications

8. When does the 60-day waiting period begin?

The 60-day waiting period begins when the TSP posts the final payment of your previous loan. For example, if we receive a prepayment on July 10, and post it to your account on July 23, the 60-day waiting period will begin on July 24. The 60-day period is based on calendar days.

9. Does the 60-day waiting period apply to both residential and general purpose loans?

Yes. There is a 60-day waiting period for each type of loan. However, if you have only a general purpose loan, there is no waiting period for a residential loan, and vice versa.

10. Do these new rules apply to both uniformed service members and civilian participants?

Yes.

11. What if I have an emergency and cannot wait the 60 days to apply for another loan?

There are no exceptions to the 60-day waiting period.

12. In an emergency, can I get a second general purpose loan?

There are no exceptions to the rule that you can have only one general purpose loan at a time.

13. Does the 60-day waiting period also apply to loans that are closed as a result of a taxable distribution?

No, a different rule applies. If your loan has been declared a taxable distribution for reasons other than separation from service, you are not eligible for a new loan for a period of 12 months from the date of the loan taxable distribution. This rule is not being changed.

14. If my loan application or loan agreement is received before July 1, 2004, but not processed by July 1 (the date the new rules go into effect), will it be processed under the old or new rules?

The new rules apply for any loan issued on or after July 1, 2004.

15. TSP rules state that the smallest amount I can borrow is \$1,000. If \$1,000 is the most that I am eligible to borrow and the loan fee of \$50 is deducted from that amount, am I still eligible for a loan?

Yes. The minimum loan amount remains \$1,000. However, because the loan fee is deducted from the loan proceeds, you will receive \$950.

