And so it begins - the harried time we call the holiday season. It’s not yet October 31st, but the stores have wasted no time in getting their Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas displays adorned, marking the beginning of the busiest shopping season of the year. Amongst the chaos and commercialization, we look for meaning and something to “center” us as we prepare to enjoy the time with our families and special friends.

Traditions are important for that and vary as widely as the personalities of those that created them. What are your traditions? Do they make you smile? I can’t “taste” my Mother’s cornbread dressing and lemon pie even now, and won’t ever forget the Christmas traditions of driving to see the Christmas lights and a live manger scene each Christmas Eve. That reminds me of the unnerving morning several years ago when I awoke to find that someone had stolen my baby Jesus and two of the three Wiseman from my plastic, but life-size and lighted manger scene! Thus, the end of a tradition. But, reading *The Night Before Christmas* to my daughters each Christmas Eve was especially memorable and lasting. I still do that, and Lynnae will be 34 this year!

While we don’t often make the connection, our traditions can positively impact our workplace. For example, several years ago I kept a 30 day “thankfulness” journal, making one entry each day up to Thanksgiving Day of something or someone for whom or for what I was thankful. The specifics of that journal escape me, but I’ll always recall the positive and motivating impact of taking time a few minutes each day to write down areas of thankfulness. There were several benefits: it was a daily attitude adjustment as I focused on the positive each morning; it was a daily reminder of how truly blessed I was, even amidst great disappointment and hurt; it was excellent mental preparation for the seemingly endless holiday season; and it was a frequent reminder of what was most important in this life.

On Thanksgiving Day I read aloud all 30 entries; it made for a memorable day. I was in a small group of single friends at the time and we shared our entries with each other. I’ve recalled the journal many times over the years, but have never repeated it, for reasons quite unexplainable. Too busy I guess. But starting this Tuesday, October 27, I will begin a new Thanksgiving tradition with my 2009 Thankfulness Journal, and look forward to sharing all 30 entries with Brenda on Thanksgiving morning. After reading a draft of this Korner (as she most always does at my request), she’s decided to do the same. Voila, we have the makings of a new tradition.

With the busyness of the season, one of the most important things I can do for myself and others this season is to rekindle a spirit of thankfulness for the many blessings of this life. I hope you’ll join me in this brief but enriching journey. Perhaps we can share portions of our lists with each other sometime. By the way, I’ll have an entry for YOU – the many friends and colleagues that make UTSA and Business Affairs a very special place to work.

*Kerry*
You can be confident in your contributions, knowing that all organizations are vetted and must meet strict eligibility criteria.

This year’s SECC is led by co-chairs Kelly Kam-Watson, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Research; Barbara Millis, Director of the Teaching and Learning Center; and Joe Rubio, Director of Facilities at the Downtown Campus.

“The world has been good to me, and it’s time to return all the goodness that has been given to me by being a part of the UTSA family that gives so much back to the people of Texas,” said Rubio. “It is not only fun, but heartwarming to be part of an organization that touches thousands of people in need.”

The UTSA SECC begins with ice cream socials the week of October 5 and concludes with the third annual “UTSA’s Got Talent” performance on October 23.

Learn more at the UTSA SECC Web site and watch for more stories on UTSA Today.
Kudos to Business Affairs Staff

Jane (Wilcox),
WOW! I am writing today to thank you for your extremely helpful and prompt response. You are right...KUDOS are in order for your Facility Services crew. I am also very impressed with the manner in which you personally acted to solve the problem so quickly. I am sincerely grateful.

I am not sure what the ideal number of reserved parking spaces should be. Last year, there were often unused green spaces. Earlier this week, I counted many cars with green passes parking in faculty/staff "A" spaces. Hopefully, the recent adjustment will preserve parking access for the reserved permit holders without unnecessarily limiting the faculty/staff "A" spaces. I am confident that you are monitoring the situation and will reach a good solution.

Thanks again for your efforts.
All the best, Kevin (Grant),
Information System Department

Jerry (Juhnke), COEHD

I’m a professor at the downtown campus. This morning instead of going to the Radisson like I typically do for breakfast, I swung by the downtown campus cafe. I was very impressed with the improvements since my return to campus from sabbatical, BUT EVEN BETTER, was your staff. Maria always used to prepare my subway orders and as usually she was working this morning and very friendly to all coming in as was Kristy who was prepping pizza for lunch. However, I was astonished by another woman who was running the cash register and helped me navigate the coffee stand. As I was trying to figure out how to operate the coffee machine, she asked, “May I help you or can I get something for you?” I believe she said her name was “Ashley”, but I am not certain. This server was doing everything from helping with the coffee machine to getting juice was doing an EXCEPTIONAL job. I have not encountered service like that since I stayed at the Hyatt. Hats off to your folks for an excellent staff of servers. I was very impressed and likely will be visiting the Radisson much less often.

Sincerely,
Bryan (Hilburn), Student Financial Aid

Bryan (Hilburn), Student Financial Aid

Thank you all for striving for excellence every day!

Thanks Robert (Dickens) for being our business advocate, consultant, contract specialist, liaison, etc. everything it takes to get it through correctly.

Student Affairs performs better because of your support. Thank you very much.

-Edna (Dominguez)
Student Affairs

Edna (Dominguez)
Student Affairs

Catina (Rover),
Thank you so much for working all last weekend in order to ensure our new year appointments were approved in a timely manner. I could not help but notice that you worked last Sat and Sun (full days even!) in order to make sure our docs in define were approved well before they needed to be...which is a significant reflection of your dedication to the success of our efforts in making sure our staff, temps and work study students are taken care of as the new year begins. I cannot begin to tell you how saddened I was when you left our office, however, I always knew you were destined for a role at UTSA that would benefit more of the population than you were able to touch within the confines of SFAES. You are truly an asset to our administrative community and I feel fortunate to have had sometime to work with you before you moved on to your true calling. You are truly a “Partner for Successful Solutions” and I must tell you that it is appreciated by all that have had the privilege to work with you.

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Sincerely,
Bryan (Hilburn), Student Financial Aid

Edna (Dominguez)
Student Affairs
Hi Mrs. Thibodeaux,

I just wanted to drop you a note of congratulations on your spotlight in the Business Horizons. It is well deserved! I know like so many new employees, I was very grateful to have your assistance during my new employee orientation. I appreciate all of your assistance. Thanks for being that shining star in my momentarily chaos. I wish you and your family many blessings.

Sincerely,
Connie Kimbrough
University Police

We just went thru another fiscal year, and I just want to say thanks to the Disbursements Office. Deby Bailey and her staff are part of the funnel that we have to travel through every day. Everyone up there, from Teresa, Wanda, Amanda, Dorothy, Rocky, Lisa, Deby, (all three of them) and everyone else Thank You, Thank You, Thank You. It’s nice to work here with people like you. Also, thanks to Juan Macias, Purchasing, what can I say, thanks for all your support, “FACILITIES” Maintenance Team, thanks for all your support, cooperation, understanding, and Team Work and of course to my team, Jorge Rizo, Alfonzo Villarreal, and Ray Chandler. Keep up the outstanding performance. Look forward to another fiscal year.

Felix Hernandez
Facilities

Hello Jane (Wilcox),

Before I let another day go by, I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate working with Jennifer Tobbon for all of my parking requests.

She always answers my questions (no matter how ridiculous) and goes above and beyond the call of duty to assist with our various special events parking. Not only is she doing a great job; she handles it with a wonderfully positive attitude. She is a great asset to the Parking & Transportation Department as well as UTSA.

Regards,
Maureen (Bird), College of Business

Hi Cortnee and Martino,

Project Innovation lunch was a success today! We had 12 guests including Dr. Romo and Sonia Martinez (Special Assistant to the President) and both were very pleased with the food. Dr. Romo stopped by our office and mentioned to Edda and myself that the food was “very good” and the chicken was “very tasty” and had “good flavor”. Other guests also commented on how good the food was. Please know we appreciate everybody’s hard work and effort to make our events successful. We will continue passing these great comments to you so that you may also share with the rest of the staff. By the way, service was also great-on-time and great customer service.

Aramark Staff on-site: Mari Martinez, Carlos and Chef Eduardo.

Thank you much!!
Ileana R. Aleman

Felix Hernandez, Alfonzo Villarreal, Ray Chandler and Jorge Rizo. 

I just wanted to thank all of you for your hard work during FY09 which resulted in an excellent outcome of the Resale Inventory Reconciliation we submitted to Financial Affairs.

Our variance was $0.1%, which is outstanding considering the value of the inventory was $456,694.80.

Appreciate your continuing focus and dedication to making sure the job gets done right.

Thanks, Susan (Whitley)
Facilities
University Police Promotions

It is with great pleasure that we announce the promotions of Corporal Geoffrey Merritt and Officer Darwin Odom to the position of Sergeant, effective September 6, 2009.

Geoffrey Merritt came to us in 2002 from Trinity University PD where he had been a sergeant. He was transferred from Patrol to Crime Prevention in 2004 and promoted to Corporal in 2006. Geoffrey has done an outstanding job in Crime Prevention. He is responsible for making various presentations to not only students and parents, but faculty and staff as well. Geoffrey does HR training in “Dealing With Disruptive Students” for Counseling and Judicial Affairs. He teaches “Personal Security and Safety Awareness” and trains new Resident Assistants. Geoffrey has also participated in the TABC Statewide Conference on College & University Symposium. He is a certified TCLEOSE Instructor and SAFVIC Instructor. In addition to his Crime Prevention and training duties, Geoffrey also produces the weekly and yearly crime stats reports for the Cleary Act and is editor of the monthly Runner Beat Newsletter. He will remain in Crime Prevention and we look forward to his continued leadership and development in this important area.

Darwin Odom came to us in December 2006 and has worked in law enforcement for more than twenty-two years for several law enforcement agencies including Sheriff of Mills County Texas. Darwin is a certified TCLEOSE Instructor and is a certified K-9 Narcotics Interdiction Trainer. Prior to his law enforcement career Darwin retired as a Major in the United States Army and served in Special Forces during the Vietnam War and also in Intelligence and Brigade Operations during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He has commanded several hundred soldiers at one time and has been responsible for thousands of motor vehicles and aircraft. He also has extensive knowledge of Emergency Management and is a certified medic. Darwin is a past recipient of the Business Affairs Celebrating Excellence Award for his work in our Community Action Partnership Policing program (CAPP). Darwin has also assisted us with numerous critical incident training exercises that have been conducted for Patrol officers and supervisors. Darwin holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Communication and a Master’s Degree in Criminal Justice and needs just a few hours more for a second Master’s Degree in Business Administration.

Please join us in congratulating Sergeant Merritt and Sergeant Odom!

Diversity Advisory Board

Barbara Centeno, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, and Polo Cervantes, Assistant Vice President for Facilities, will serve on the newly created Diversity Advisory Board which has taken the place of the Committee on Diversity and Affirmative Action, but with a new charge and enhanced purpose.

The Board will be charged with advising Dr. Frederick, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, on several issues critical to promoting diversity on our campus and to ensuring that we maintain a campus environment that celebrates diversity and provides a welcoming multicultural experience for our students, faculty, and staff. Among the areas in which he will be seeking the Board’s advice are:

- recruitment of diverse faculty, students, and staff, and reviewing our progress in this area;
- an overview of our curriculum and programs, with an emphasis on how well they reflect the diversity of our population;
- the campus environment and how we can improve it so that it welcomes people of all backgrounds;
- setting appropriate diversity goals for the university;
- co-curricular program planning to highlight diversity issues;
- university policies related to diversity;
- content for a planned Diversity web page on the Provost Office site; and
- other diversity-related issues as they arise.

Worth Remembering

“Few things in the world are more powerful than a positive push. A smile. A world of optimism and hope. A "you can do it" when things are tough.”

--Richard M. DeVos
For Fire Prevention, the Time is Right!

Successful Fire Safety Emphasizes Planning and Prevention

September was National Campus Fire Prevention Month, and October 4-11 was National Fire Prevention Week. In November and December, fire prevention awareness will focus on home decoration. Drought conditions create tinderboxes throughout the Hill Country of Texas. Every six months, fire prevention experts will suggest tests and battery replacements for smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in homes.

UTSA started its 2009-10 academic year in August, featuring training for Floor Captain Safety Liaisons and Residential Advisors on fire safety, prevention, and emergency planning. Campus fire alarm systems are being tested and certified year round. Fire safety specialists will be performing annual maintenance on fire extinguishers in October and will continue to inspect them every month. The fire team tests fire sprinkler systems year-round.

So, even though National Fire Prevention Week has passed, the time is always right for fire safety. The UTSA Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management (EHSRM) fire team has these reminders for you as you settle into another academic year at UTSA and prepare for fall and winter at home.

The Texas State Fire Marshal’s office has compelling information for you to consider as you leave the safety of your home and office.

- Make a plan to exit your home and the office. That plan should have two separate routes, in case one is blocked by smoke, fire, or debris. Your plan should include a rally point – a place where all of you can gather to account for each other. This rally point should be sheltered and close to the building, but at least fifty yards away. Consider making plans with neighbors – you can shelter in their house, they can shelter in yours.
- Check home smoke detectors every spring and fall. When you reset your clocks for Daylight Savings Time, activate each smoke detector in your home to be sure it works. If they run on batteries, replace the batteries at this time. Teach children about what a smoke detector does and what it means when they go off.

Take the kids to the local fire station to meet the fire fighters. When a child sees a fire fighter in bunker gear for the first time during an emergency, they might get scared and try to hide. Your kids should know that fire fighters are there to protect them. Introducing the kids to fire fighters helps the kids understand that there’s a real person under that helmet and mask.

The Fire Team is ready to help you with your fire safety learning needs, too. If you want to take a scheduled fire safety class, sign up through TXClass. We can come to you, too – if your workgroup or team wants a fire safety class, just let us know at x5250. We can also teach you how to use a fire extinguisher to put out an actual fire – weather permitting!

Here are more useful resources:

- NFPA National Fire Prevention Week Website
- Fire Safety Tips for Adults
- Have an EXIT Strategy - when going out to restaurants, bars, clubs, or any other event.

Early Voting For Amendment

The 2009 Amendment, Joint General, Special and Bond Election is just around the corner and employees should take advantage of early, extended hour voting opportunities to avoid long lines on Election Day scheduled for Tuesday, November 3rd, 2009. Early voting begins on Monday, October 19, 2009 and will continue through Friday, October 30, 2009.

When it is not possible for an employee to vote before or after normal working hours, supervisors may grant employees a reasonable period of time off for voting during business hours. Employees should be current registered voters in order to qualify for the time off. Time off for voting should be requested in advance and approved by the supervisor. Employees granted time off should record this time as “O - Other” on their individual time sheets. No reduction in vacation time or salary will be made for the time taken to vote as long as supervisory approval is obtained.

For information on early voting, locations, hours and voting districts, please visit the Bexar County Elections Department at http://www.co.bexar.tx.us/elections/index.html.

For additional questions, please contact Employee Relations at x7891.
State of the University Address

UTSA President Ricardo Romo delivered the "State of the University" address last week to more than 600 members of the UTSA and San Antonio communities, discussing UTSA’s bid to become a tier-one research university and the notable advances made in support of that vision.

"When we speak of becoming a premier university or a national research university or a tier-one university, what we really mean is that UTSA creates an environment where young people can come to achieve their full potential, and where scholars can come to reset the boundaries of human knowledge and creativity," said Romo. "This is the university we are becoming."

Presently, UTSA is among the top third of American universities for funding in research and sponsored programs.

To view full text and video of the address go to: http://www.utsa.edu/today/2009/10/stateofuniv2.cfm.

HR News

The Holiday Season will be here before you know it!

HR recommends that all managers have their employees submit their vacation requests starting now to determine departmental coverage for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, to include the skeleton crew days in December. Please refer to the UTSA holiday schedule. As always, all employee requests for leave during the holidays are subject to business needs and management approval. Taking action early can help the department provide needed coverage, minimize disruption and provide employees the opportunity to plan ahead.

Daylight Savings Time is Coming!

On Sunday, November 1, 2009, at 2:00 a.m clocks will be set back by one hour in observance of the end of Daylight Savings Time (DST). Employees working during the change to standard time will receive credit for nine (9) hours worked for that completed shift and should be reflected on the employee time record. Work adjustments within the seven day work week may be made by departmental supervisors to prevent the accrual of overtime or state comp time hours.

If you have any questions, please contact Human Resources at 458-7891.

Employee Assistance

For your convenience, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers onsite counseling services that are available at the 1604 Campus (Tuesdays, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.) and the Downtown Campus (Thursdays, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.). To schedule an onsite counseling appointment, please contact Deer Oaks at 1-866-EAP-2400.

An Employee Assistance Program is a confidential benefit that includes short term assessments, counseling, prevention/education, crisis intervention, and referrals. Most employees experience periods in their lives that they find stressful or overwhelming. Perhaps there are times that you may experience depression or anxiety stemming from work, family, legal, financial, or health related problems. Deer Oaks EAP Services is here for you.

For additional information, please visit the Employee Relations website.
Training has been scheduled throughout the month of October. For a listing of specific dates and times and to enroll, go to TX Class at http://www.utsa.edu/hr/Training/index.cfm For instructions on how to access/enroll in TXClass, please click http://www.utsa.edu/hr/training/TXClassInstruct.cfm or call Training and Development at 458-4658.

Business Affairs Promise

We are committed to helping you achieve your goals through excellence in service -- every person, every day, every job.