

*Dec. 15, 2016*

It certainly has been a busy and fulfilling fall semester throughout the university. In the Department of Human Resources we have had an active fall and we have a number of initiatives (both new and annual ones) planned for early in 2017.

We recently marked the six-month milestone of MyHR being operational. During these six months, the MyHR team handled more than 12,400 cases and 6,000 phone calls! This is a significant volume of activity and, in the interest of ensuring client needs are being met and identifying ways to improve the client experience, we have worked with the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning (CIAP) to launch a client survey. From Dec. 5 to Dec. 21, more than 600 people from the St. John's, Marine Institute and Grenfell campuses who have used MyHR, will be receiving an email with a link to a client survey. All survey responses are voluntary and anonymous. I encourage anyone receiving the survey to complete it, it should only take a few minutes. We are looking forward to receiving the results and hearing what our clients have to say.

With 2017 just around the corner, I want to remind you of the pension contribution changes that will be coming into effect in January. In November, HR advised the university community that the contribution rate under the Memorial University Pension Plan for both employees and the university will increase by 1.5 percentage points on Jan. 1, 2017. This rate increase is a result of the impact of lower interest rates, improvements in longevity and demographic changes. More information on the contribution rate increase and the review of the pension funding model and governance that is underway can be found [here](#). To help you understand some of the other deductions that will be taking effect as of Jan.1, 2017, our payroll manager has put together a memo regarding 2017 federal and provincial income tax rates including the basic personal amounts for each as well as information on the Canada Pension Plan, employment insurance and the provincial Deficit Reduction Levy. You will find this memo [here](#).

In anticipation of T4s and T4As being processed in early 2017, I want to encourage you to sign up to receive them online. While more than half of Memorial's employees now receive their tax forms electronically, this is an area where we can improve our sustainability efforts. Also, it is important to note, that those who sign up to receive their tax forms electronically get them earlier than those who choose to get printed copies in the mail. If you have not already provided consent to receive your tax information electronically, I would encourage you to consider doing so. This can be done easily by following the steps outlined [here](#). If you wish to continue receiving your tax forms in the mail, please confirm the personal address you have on file for T4s is up to date, step-by-step instructions to do this are available [here](#). Please remember, employees are responsible for ensuring their information is accurate.

The popular Health Improvement Program (HIP) will be starting up again this January and accepting applications for new participants. A newsline will be distributed early in 2017 on this initiative. Employee wellness is also looking at offering a new health program this winter where an outside provider will visit the St. John's campus bi-weekly for blood collection services. We will be providing more information on this initiative as dates and times are worked out. A third employee wellness initiative we are working on is the annual Wellness Fair. This fair is a collaboration between HR Employee Wellness and Student Wellness and Counselling and will be taking place on Feb. 16, 2017. I hope to see you there.

Another annual initiative that will be taking place in early 2017 is the retirement seminar. A date and location for this seminar will also be announced in January.

In closing, I would like to encourage you to attend and get involved with the various festivities planned at Memorial to celebrate the holiday season. I hope you find the time to enjoy some of the functions and celebrate the season with friends and colleagues.

Sincerely,

Stephen Dodge