

HEO FORUM GENERAL MEETING MAY 8, 2025

Announcements:

1. **Spotlight on HEOS Relaunch:**
 - The “Spotlight on HEOS” initiative is resuming. Recall in the past we spotlighted Ingrid Bonadie Joseph (Library) and Jemima Francois (HR).
 - Sandy will coordinate nominations and sketch out the information—send suggestion names to the HEO Forum email
 - Goal: feature one individual per month.
2. **Forum Representation Update:**
 - Ivana Taveras has stepped down after re-election.
 - Mimoza Frankfurt, the alternate, will take her place.
3. **Fall Speaker Planning:**
 - The steering committee is planning a speaker series for the Fall.
 - Suggestions (should be emailed to the Forum. We anticipate having President Cantor as one of the early speakers.
4. **Next Meeting:**
 - Scheduled for **June 12**.
 - Guest speaker: **Kelly Stevens from Sustainability**.
 - Attendees are encouraged to send advance questions.

Presentation by Human Resources:

- **Speakers:** Gowrie Kamintzky (HR Director) Jemima Francois (HR Manager), Tamara Poghosyan (CUNYFirst Manager).
- HR emphasized their support role and encouraged HEOs to contact them for any assistance.

Question & Answer Period

1. Salary Differential Application:

- **Types Covered:** Degree differential and assignment differential.
- **Assignment Differential Details:**
 - Applications are online.
 - Eligibility: Must be at the last step for one year.
 - Award: \$2,500.
 - Reviewed annually in June; effective dates from July 1 to September 1.
 - Reviewed by Labor Management Committee, then HEO Committee, and finally the President.
 - **Since 2017:**
 - 42 applications received.
 - 28 approved.
 - 10 applicants retired.
 - 4 applications pending.

2. CUNY Labeling on Pay Stubs

- The switch in naming on pay stubs (now showing as “CUNY ORP before tax”) is just a label change due to a new PayServe system. It refers to the same Optional Retirement Plan.

3. Edenred Transit Deductions

- Some employees are seeing what looks like double deductions for transit. Edenred has acknowledged this as a glitch, not an actual double deduction.
- You can check your transit card balance by texting **"XBAL"** to **855-859-227** (make sure your account is set up first).

4. Employee Self-Service (CUNYfirst) Changes

- Some changes like **name and marital status** need documentation and will not be finalized without review by HR.
- **Address changes** made through CUNYfirst may not be visible to HR, so you should also notify HR and Benefits directly.
- Make sure beneficiary and personal data are current to avoid serious issues later.

5. Optional Retirement Plan (TIAA-CREF) vs. Defined Benefit Plans

- You **cannot buy back time** under TIAA-CREF or other ORP plans. Buybacks only apply to defined benefit plans like TRS or NYCERS.

6. College Assistant Hiring & Processing

- If all documents are correct and complete, onboarding can happen in under 3 days.
- Missing items (e.g., fingerprint receipts, processing fee, enrollment verification) will delay the process.
- HR emphasized not to assume an incomplete packet will be accepted — even if an employee starts getting paid.
- HR will work with individuals with financial hardship or other issues, but consistency with policy must be maintained.

7. CUNYfirst Access, Email, and IDs

- Access to systems like email and ID cards **only occurs once the person is fully active in CUNYfirst**.
- An automated message will be sent to the personal email provided in the hire packet when that happens.

8. Mandatory Trainings & Cybersecurity

- Cybersecurity and other mandatory trainings are tracked by CUNY and critical for access retention.
- Non-compliance can result in access loss (email, systems, etc.).
- These trainings are found in **Blackboard under Organizations**.
- For issues with courses (e.g., Gender training), try different browsers if it gets stuck.

9. Annual Review Process for Unapproved Applications

- Applications not approved in a given year are **automatically reviewed annually**—no need to reapply.
- Final decisions rest with the **President** after HR reviews.

10. Advanced Degree Differential

- Currently applies **only to Assistant to HEOs and CLT series**.
- Amounts: **\$1,000 (Master's), \$2,500 (PhD)**.
- Degree must be **related to job/department**.
- **New contract (effective March 2027)** will expand eligibility to **HEAs and higher**.
- Supervisors may submit a justification if the degree's relevance is unclear.

11. Reclassification Process

Two main ways:

1. **Direct Application:** Employee or supervisor applies online, including job description and org chart.
 2. **Green Paper Process:** Requires division head approval and secured budget; goes through HR, the HEO Committee, and CUNY Central.
- **New contract requires response within 90 days** and adds a **PSC rep to the committee**.

12. HR Points of Contact

- **Website has a directory**, but people often default to long-time staff.
- Contact correct teams:
 - **Benefits:** Debra Berger, Valerie Kelly
 - **Payroll:** Separate unit
 - **General HR:** Valerie Kelly, Tamara, etc.
- Clarified roles to avoid being “bounced around.”

13. Communications & Website

- HR has a “**What’s New**” section, though the new website structure may be confusing.
- Open to considering a **quarterly newsletter**.
- Website navigation acknowledged as difficult; staff is available to help in person and is working with ICIT to improve clarity.

14. Proof of Employment for Pension Buyback (TRS)

- HR sends employment verification to TRS promptly after request.
- TRS (not HR) delays the process — can be **up to 2 years**, unless you're close to retirement.
- If stuck, contact **Benefits** or **Valerie Kelly** to follow up.
- HR has a reputation for responsive in-person help.

15. Office Hours and Accessibility

- Official hours: **8 AM – 5 PM**, but many staff are there **before and after hours**.
- Open-door policy: walk-ins are welcome, especially for urgent issues.

16. How Long Does It Take to Process a College Assistant Appointment?

- **Standard Timeline:** Once a **complete and correct new hire packet** is submitted, processing usually takes **less than 3 days**—though 3 days is the official estimate.
- **Delays Happen If:**
 - Documents are missing or incomplete.
 - Required receipts (fingerprinting or processing fee) are not included.
 - Enrollment verification for student exemptions is not provided.

17. Key Requirements for a College Assistant Appointment:

1. **Completed New Hire Packet**
 - Must be accurate with all required documents.
 - Incomplete packets will delay processing and may be placed on hold.
2. **Fingerprinting**
 - Required **if not a full-time CUNY student** (12 undergrad credits / 6 grad credits).
 - Submit **fingerprinting receipt** with the packet.
3. **Enrollment Verification (if claiming student exemption)**
 - Needed to **waive fingerprinting**.
 - Must show **full-time status**.
 - Spring verification can be used for **summer hiring**, but **fall verification** must follow for longer-term appointments.
4. **Processing Fee (\$25)**
 - Required if appointment exceeds **240 hours per fiscal year**.
 - Submit receipt with the packet.
 - Fee is waived under certain contracts but still needs documentation.

Important Compliance Points:

- **I-9 Form:**
 - Must be completed within **3 business days** of employment start.
 - Documents must be verified **in person** (no photos or scanned copies).
 - Submitting an I-9 late or electronically is a compliance violation.
- **No Retroactive Processing:**
 - Some departments have allowed staff (like college assistants or adjuncts) to begin working without HR paperwork—this is **a serious violation**.
- **System Access (CUNYFirst, Email, etc.):**
 - Access is **only granted once processing is complete** and the employee appears in **CUNYFirst**.
 - An automated email is sent to the personal email listed on the hire packet with steps to activate access.

18. HR Support & Training:

- HR is committed to onboarding support and **will work with you** if there are financial or logistical issues.
- However, **exceptions are limited** to avoid long-term confusion or policy breaches.
- **Cybersecurity and compliance training** are mandatory. Failure to complete them may result in **loss of access**.
- Weekly training reminders are sent; **check Blackboard > Organizations** for available sessions.

19. Career Development:

- HR encourages use of **CUNY and DCAS professional development resources**.
- Future plans include departmental strategy meetings to support training, promotion paths, and performance management beyond just disciplinary measures.