Autumn greetings!

Staff Council continues to work on the ways in which we can support staff and effectively communicate important information. We are interested in the issues that you’re thinking about, and we can investigate questions and take on a wide range of issues of staff concern—from parking to the college retirement plan to understanding college policies and how they connect with individual circumstances.

We were happy to see many of you at our recent All-Staff Forum on October 29. We value your input, and hope many more of you can join us when we host a similar event in the spring. Answers to all the questions asked at the forum will be posted to our virtual bulletin board.

As mentioned at the President’s Forum on November 7, three main areas of focus this year will be 1) establishing an all-staff listserv to improve communication, 2) discussing how decisions that affect staff are made and how staff can provide input to those processes, and 3) re-evaluating how we come together as a community and how the college supports staff.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of the Chronicle, and we welcome your feedback. Send us an email anytime (chronicle@smith.edu) with suggestions and comments; we’d love to know what you want to learn more about.

Staff Council hosted its annual Cider and Doughnuts event on October 14. To learn about upcoming events for staff, visit smith.edu/staffcouncil/events.php.

Where am I?

Can you identify this spot on the Smith campus?

Let us know at chronicle@smith.edu. We’ll reveal the answer and a winner (chosen at random from all correct responses) on our virtual bulletin board by December 15.

Staff Council nominations are now open!

To nominate yourself or a co-worker for the Staff Council Spring 2015 elections, please visit smith.edu/staffcouncil/index.php and go to “Staff Council Nominations” located under “News and Events.” Alternatively, you may click the direct link here.

Members serve two-year terms and can serve multiple terms. Newly elected members will begin their terms on June 1, 2015.
Lynda.com available for staff use

You may have heard of lynda.com and perhaps even visited the site, but have you actually used it yet?

Lynda.com is a website that “helps anyone learn business, software, technology and creative skills to achieve personal and professional goals.” Smith College has a subscription to the website, giving employees access to thousands of easy-to-follow video tutorials for free, whether at Smith or from home.

Too overwhelmed to jump in and explore on your own? Here are a few classes that might be of interest to folks here at Smith.

Weekly Office Workshop with David Rivers
These are quick “episodes” that range from seven to 20 minutes and cover a wide range of tips and tricks in the Microsoft Office Suite. Topics include: Formatting Your Excel Data, Creating Envelopes and Labels in Word, and Top 5 PowerPoint Shortcuts.

Google Drive Essential Training with Jess Stratton
This course, in total, is much longer, but smaller “lessons” average five minutes. Throughout the class, you’ll learn the basic of navigating Google Drive, as well as dig a little deeper into each individual component of Spreadsheets, Forms, Slides, and Documents.

Playlist Center
The Playlist Center is an area you can use to find a cluster of classes from the experts at lynda.com. Lists range from designing a logo and setting up a WordPress account to taking a better photo and learning web analytics.

With lynda.com, you can learn about a variety of topics, such as Microsoft Office for work and photography for fun. To get started, log in to the Smith Portal, then log in to Lynda.com through the portal to create your Smith Lynda.com account.

Between the Lines/On the Screen program now offers year-round activities

The Staff Council Diversity Committee has a full schedule of book (Between the Lines) and film (On the Screen) events planned for the 2014-2015 academic year. Staff members are invited to read the books and watch the films on their own, then join a group for conversation.

Details about upcoming events will be posted in e-Digest and advertised on flyers around campus.

2014-2015 events

September 2014
Whistling Vivaldi
by Claude Steele
First-year reading activities

October 2014
The Intouchables
Brown bag lunch discussion

December 10, 2014
The Book Thief
Brown bag lunch discussion
12-1 p.m., Campus Center 102
(Take a few hours for yourself during Thanksgiving break to watch this great film! Extra credit: read the book first.)

February 2015
Tortilla Curtain
by T.C. Boyle
Brown bag lunch discussion
(Get some reading in over the Winter Break!)

Spring 2015
The Lady in Number 6
Brown bag lunch discussion

You can expect the next issue of the Chronicle in March 2015!
Faculty and Staff Reading Series seeking writers to present their work

Smith College is in the third year of its Faculty and Staff Reading Series, which features poets from the college.

Organizer Jennifer Blackburn says, “For many working writers, poetry is the job we come home to after a day at work, or work at on the weekends, and the opportunities to share our work are fewer and much farther between.”

Some of the series’ readers have published full-length poetry collections or chapbooks, others publish their work in journals and magazines, while some are just starting to get their work out into the world.

In October, Karen Kukil, associate curator of special collections, and Marlene Znoy, libraries systems supervisor, read their work. They also read poems by Susan Sanborn Barker, Smith’s administrative assistant in the Sophia Smith Collection and College Archives until her untimely death earlier this year.

This spring, the series will feature Floyd Cheung, Professor of English, and Gail Thomas, from the Jacobson Center, both are releasing new books this academic year.

Any staff or faculty members interested in participating in a future Faculty and Staff Reading Series event should contact Blackburn via email at jblackbu@smith.edu.

College sponsors subsidized child-care program

Did you know that when school is out, Smith College sponsors two subsidized childcare coverage programs for children of benefits-eligible employees?

The People’s Institute in Northampton provides childcare during the winter months when the Northampton public schools are closed due to inclement weather. They also provide coverage during the February and April vacation weeks.

The subsidized cost of the Snow Day program is $10 per day per child, while the cost of a four-day Vacation Week program is $40 per week per child.

In addition, there is an annual $20 per child registration fee required to enroll in the programs. Eligible employees must also register through the Smith College Office of Human Resources. For a registration form and more information on the program, contact Lynn Cocco in Human Resources at lcocco@smith.edu.
From the Archives: Elsie P. Leonard, Smith’s longtime purchasing agent

For anyone who finds the monthly budgeting of a single household challenging, consider the tenure of Elsie P. Leonard, purchasing agent at Smith from 1922 to 1947. Charged with overseeing the purchase of thousands of dollars worth of food and equipment for the college, Leonard developed skills and systems that made her work more efficient, as well as more cost effective for the college. She hosted salesmen at her office in College Hall, then posted the product and prices in a special room designed for house mothers to come and place their orders. Working with housemothers, she kept records of what students ate over the years to assist with her purchasing power.

Before coming to Smith, Leonard graduated from the University of Minnesota and was interested in institutional economics and the benefits of purchasing power. She was a housemother in a dormitory at Wellesley College before taking the position at Smith. During World War II she surmounted the challenges of rationing of all sorts, the establishment of a new program—the WAVES, part of the U.S. Navy Department—as well being as the point person for purchases of scientific equipment, which no doubt assisted with the war efforts of the college.

Leonard left Smith in 1947 and retired to her house—one once known as the Ben Smith Tavern—on the Hadley Green. She donated books to the Smith College library, and laundry lists, newspaper clippings, and other historic items to the College Archives.

Thanksgiving match program going strong

The Student Affairs Office is prepared for its fifth annual Thanksgiving match program.

Each year, as many as 230 students stay on campus during the Thanksgiving break. Staff and faculty participating in the match program invite students home with them for Thanksgiving celebrations.

“Hosting international students at our home for Thanksgiving has been an incredible experience for my entire family,” says Sandy Doucett, associate vice president for Development, who welcomed Sanita Dhaubanjar ’13 of Nepal, along with some of Sanita’s friends, for four Thanksgivings at her home.

Sandy adds, “introducing a student from a far-away country to this quintessential American holiday has added to our own appreciation of the day.”

The deadline to volunteer as a host in 2014 has passed, but for more information about the program email Jan Morris at jmorris@smith.edu.

Contact us

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Staff Council Virtual Bulletin Board: smith.edu/staffcouncil/bulletin.php

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