Upcoming Activities

Staff Council invites employees to enjoy cider and doughnuts on Tues., Oct. 11, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. in front of Pierce Hall.

Smith’s New York City bus trip, sponsored by Staff Council, will be held on Sat., Dec. 3. This is a great opportunity to visit Times Square, see a Broadway matinee, go shopping, or take in a museum. Because of limited seating, the trip is only open to current staff and faculty. For more information, contact Wendy Martinez, Activities Committee chair at staffactivities@smith.edu.

We’re Counting on you!

If you enjoy opportunities to celebrate diversity and promote an inclusive, welcoming working environment, please consider joining the Staff Council Diversity Committee. Membership is open to all staff and, like all Staff Council committees, you don’t have to be an elected council member to join. The committee meets once a month to plan activities that promote awareness and celebrate diversity of culture, talent, background, lifestyle, and all other aspects of our lives. The committee will work this year with the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity and other departments to explore what it means to be a “diverse and inclusive campus” and to put good thoughts and intentions into action. For more information on how you can get involved with the Diversity Committee, contact Joanne Benkley, committee chair, at jbenkley@smith.edu.

Spotlight on Personnel Policy Committee

Do you wish you could ask Larry Hunt a question? According to the Staff Council Charter, responsibility for the examination, review and comment on college personnel policies and promoting improved staff training and development are those of the Personnel Policy Committee. In order to do this, a committee of about 10 people (three members from Staff Council and others from the Smith staff community) meet each month during the academic year. Every other meeting is held with Larry Hunt, associate vice president for human resources. In the past year, the committee has met with Laura Smiarowski, controller, Trish Rockett, assistant controller, and Lily Kane, human resources coordinator, who organizes staff training and development on campus.

The questions brought to the committee, and ultimately, to administrators come from co-workers. If you have a question, you can submit it to the Staff Council comment box at www.smith.edu/staffcouncil/ or contact Mary Lou Bouley, chair of the Personnel Policy Committee at mboleym@smith.edu. Some of the topics discussed by the committee in the past year included: limitations of the physical therapy health care benefit, procedures for signing up and being notified about acceptance into training and development workshops, Harvard Pilgrim’s lack of a local vendor for crutches, time sheet approval problems with supervisors, and reimbursements for courses. Don’t just wonder about personnel policy issues, ask!

The Daily Hampshire Gazette recently featured Smith staff member Addison MacDonald in the business profiles section. Here are excerpts from the article:

Job title: Manager, Smith College Conference Center

Duties: I supervise the operations of the new venue, which caters to the needs of the campus as well as to the larger Pioneer Valley community for a range of events, from business meetings, to private parties, to weddings. In addition to programming, I oversee sales, marketing, and general management for the venue.

How did you land your job? In New York, I ran the events and programming for the Directors Guild of America, so I come from a background in venue management and business development.

What’s most challenging about your work? The challenge is to strategically complete one task after another, without getting distracted by the length of the to-do list. So far, we’ve been making great progress and I’m lucky to be working with a really wonderful group of people.

What is your key to success? Success is loving and improving your work over a long period of time.

Tell us a little-known fact about you: Growing up, I used to travel with a circus during the summer. I can juggle various objects, walk the tight rope, and perform a variety of odd Eastern European magic tricks.

Photo by Chris Gentes
“How does the college put its mission into practice?” asks Pamela Nolan Young, Smith’s new director of institutional diversity. “It is by valuing the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff. By being a place that mirrors the global society, we are preparing students to lead; by engaging in dialogue and activities that will prepare us to prepare students to live those lives of distinction.”

About 13 years ago, Pamela Nolan Young faced a challenge of a lifetime. She went on a mission trip, sponsored by the Springfield Council of Churches, to rebuild a southern church destroyed by arson with colleagues in Springfield’s District Attorney’s Office. She began facilitating difficult conversations about race and racism. Young was no stranger to the South. She was born in Dothan, Alabama, where many of her family relatives still reside. But she said that volunteering as a facilitator for such talks was a tough assignment. She volunteered to facilitate, after she learned the scheduled facilitator couldn’t make it and the important week-long discussions on racism were in danger of being canceled. Although she was equipped with mediation experience and taught to think critically as an attorney, she soon realized that navigating dialogues on race required very different skill sets. Her passion caused her to struggle through, and although she remembers it as a painful experience, it ultimately changed her life and put her on a path towards working for diversity.

Known to her family as “a roaming intellectual,” Young was cut out to do diversity work. As a military brat, she lived in about a dozen states in the U.S., went to Dartmouth College in New Hampshire for undergraduate school (she attended Smith as an exchange student for a year), and attended school in London to study international law. (Her favorite place to live, she confesses, was San Francisco.)

As Advisor to the President, the former human resources director has her hands full. “Discussions about the ‘isms’ are not easy, but I believe they are necessary. No one, myself included, is without bias or some room for growth and development,” she affirms. She works to ensure justice and fairness for legally protected classes including age and ability, race and religion, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Her job responsibilities focus on four primary areas.

She serves as the college’s affirmative action officer; takes the lead to ensure that college programming for students, faculty and staff is diverse; works with other college departments to recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students; and oversees the Office of Disability Services, which she is working to re-envision with Director Laura Rauscher.

Although she is still becoming acclimated to Smith, she has gleaned a number of things since her arrival last April. She has learned that rank and class seem to be a particular issue at the college, and she wants to work on improving the way people are treated. She also wants to “help cast the net widely” for recruitment purposes and to increase staff diversity. She has already enrolled the college in two membership organizations, including the Commonwealth Compact and the New England Higher Education Recruitment Consortium, in order to “enlarge the college’s profile … as an employer that welcomes diversity.” Additionally, she plans to assist in the growth of Intergroup Dialogue on campus. She says, “There has to be evidence that [Smith] “is a diverse learning community that has moved beyond welcoming, celebrating, and appreciating diversity—to embracing diversity.”