

Good afternoon, USC!

Here are your updates for the week of November 30th- December 4th

Important Dates:

Holiday Party: The USC Holiday Party is this Wednesday from 2pm-3:30 pm. You will receive your goodie basket at your desired location early that day.

To keep the tradition of the elf on the shelf, we are asking that each department takes the elf to create a scene or photo that best represents how the year 2020 went. Please message Jaclyn for when you would like the elf. In addition, please submit your photo(s) to Jaclyn in advance so that she can show them at the holiday party. We will then ask the Executive to choose their favourite one!

The dress code for the party (if you want to participate) is anything red, white and green! If you would rather not wear those colours that is perfectly okay!

Important Information:

Staff Parking: In order to ensure that staff have options for parking on an ad-hoc basis when coming in to work, the USC will be providing the option to obtain a daily parking pass from Maryann when parking one day at a time. Parking passes are \$8 each and each time a parking pass is obtained from Maryann, it will be deducted from your next pay. Parking passes can be used in any lot on campus and can either be scanned or provided to the parking attendant upon exit of the lot. Alternatively, you can download the HONK app which can be used for metered parking if you are not going to be in for the full day. The daily parking passes will be required upon exit of the lot so you can arrange to obtain a pass from Maryann in advance or on the day you come in to work. It will be up to each employee to determine if this pay as you go parking option is more economical than buying a monthly parking pass. If for any reason Maryann is not available, please contact Vicki.

Declaration of Conditions of Employment (T2200E) Tax Form: For those employees who have worked from home, there will be the option to claim a deduction of employment expenses. The USC will assist you in filling out this form as it requires an employer's authorization. If you are pursuing claims for expenses related to work from home on your 2020 tax return (including mortgage/rent expenses, utilities, internet etc), this form is required to be completed by your employer. Further details on claiming work from home deductions are your responsibility. The USC will simply verify your work from home arrangement by way of this tax form. If you wish to receive the authorized declaration form, please contact Karla and she will provide you with the form and details.

USC Engagement Survey:

With the end of our first full COVID-19 term fast approaching, it is time to reflect on all the changes we have seen and look ahead to how we can improve. I would like to tell you all that we will soon be able to return to the way things were, but it looks like we still have a long road before us. With that in mind, I would like to understand how we can best support you in our ongoing efforts to put your health, safety and well-being first. Understanding your current work environment and any uncertainty you may face will help us better support you in these uncertain times.

To do that, Karla and Geoff have created a short survey that should take you no more than 10 minutes to complete. The survey is hosted on the Qualtrics platform, and is completely anonymous. You are asked for some high-level demographic information to help us take follow-up action based on your feedback, **but** it is not possible to identify any individual respondent from this survey.

Please visit https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5jcPzOUdWHvUvaZ before the end of day on Monday, December 7th. We are asking for 100% participation from all of you.

I will always listen to your open and honest feedback so that we can make meaningful and impactful adjustments as the situation evolves. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, or indeed any other matter, my door is always open.

-Jeff

Parking:

For staff who will be returning to the office on an ad hoc basis, please see a link for daily parking options on campus so you can choose which option works best for you:

<https://www.uwo.ca/parking/find/visitor/>

Departmental Updates:**PEOPLE AND DEVELOPMENT:**

Health and Wellness Benefit: The Wellness Benefit is back! As per Subsection D of the attached updated Memorandum of Understanding, the \$400 Wellness Benefit has been reinstated as of November 10th, 2020. Items that were purchased since the beginning of this fiscal year are eligible for reimbursement through payroll as well as any other items purchased up until the end of this fiscal year. **Please note that there is now a web form available on the Hub [here](#) for you to complete and add your receipts to. This form will be submitted to Andrea and she will get your reimbursement added to your next pay.**

Benefit Plan Update: Our benefits plan only allows for the generic version of drugs to be covered as outlined in the plan booklet. However, if your physician would like for you to have the brand name version of the drug only (due to allergies etc.), you can have them complete a Brand Drug Prior Authorization form. This form can be found [here](#) on the Hub and it also can be found on the shared Full Time Staff Resources drive. Once you have had the form completed, please send it to the local london office of BPA either by fax to 519-453-3990 or by e-mail to London@BPAGroup.com.

Canada Life Update: Please find some information regarding upcoming changes to GRSAccess at [Canada Life | Canada Vie](#).

COVID-19 Information: SwipedOn: If you do not have a cell phone that supports the Swipedon app, we wanted to let everyone know that you can also login on the iPads located in the new USC InfoSource or outside the main office.

Wellness Program: Just a friendly reminder that if you would like access to a Headspace account you can enroll for free using this link! Headspace is a wonderful app that has guided meditation sessions, workouts, podcasts, and playlists created to help you focus while doing work! <https://work.headspace.com/universitystudentscouncilofwesternuniversity/member-enroll>

FINANCE Please submit your November 2020 documents ASAP. Include your approval and account #. PT payroll submissions to Tanee. If you have invoices on hold please bring to our attention.

Budget planning.....



PROMOTIONS PRINT PRODUCTION:

USC Promotions Print Production will be closed as of December 11, re-opening once we are back from the break. Please email print@westernusc.ca for all your printing needs before we wrap the year up! Poster Patrol is still accessible through our [website](#).

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

FYI - A new Spam email is circulating, seemingly from Western and offering benefits in response to COVID hardships. If you receive it, just delete...

In response to the current hardship in the community due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Western University, have decided to support both Faculty & Staff and Students to get through these hard times.

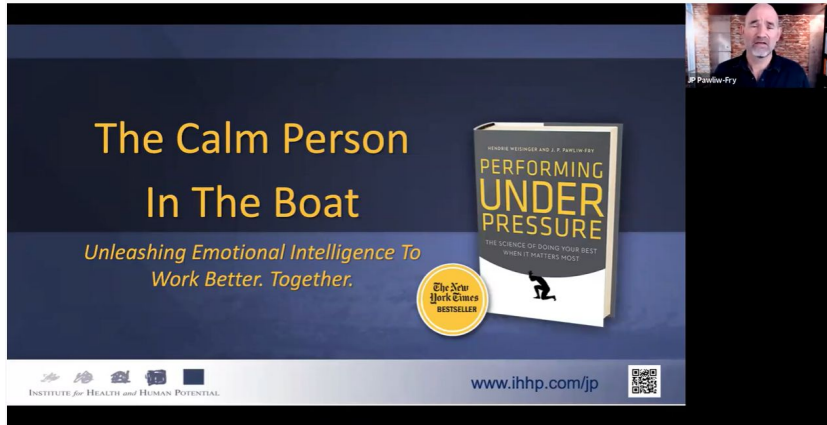
The University will award \$2000 to all eligible Faculties, Staffs and Students of the Western University, as COVID-19 support, starting from today, Monday, November 30, 2020.

Visit the WUO COVID-19 Benefits page and register with your information to apply for this giveaway.

Note: If you do not submit all the information requested, your application will not be processed.

In other news, a couple of videos that crossed my desk this week that I want to share.

First, a webinar hosted by Western's Communications and Public affairs with the author of "THE CALM PERSON IN THE BOAT Unleashing Emotional Intelligence to Work Better. Together." Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry discusses brain-based strategies to manage fear and emotions. Watch at <https://youtu.be/eFrv2qGuqiM> or click the image below.



Second, more Zoom training! Here's a great video providing an overview of the Zoom in-meeting controls. Click to watch or visit https://youtu.be/ygZ96J_z4AY...



RESERVATIONS & BUILDING SERVICES

New Starbucks in Lower Level

Western has started renovations on Room 34B in the Lower Level to make way for a new Starbucks Lounge. Let the dust and construction noise begin.

The Study Lounge

One November 16th we opened a study lounge in the Mustang Lounge. The Study Lounge is open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and consists of 45 single study pods, 5 double pods and 8 group pods for up to 4 people. These pods are bookable from 1 hour up to 7 hours per day. Students can pre-book study slots up to 7 weekdays in advance at the check in desk and will soon be able to book them online.

Renovations - Clubs Centre/Peer Support Centre

Work has started on clearing the Peer Support Centre, Food Bank and newly acquired SOGS Office on the second floor to make way for the new USC Clubs' Centre. The newly acquired YMCA space in the lower level is also being cleared to make way for a new Peer Support Centre. We hope to start demolition of these spaces this week and as we begin working through the design phase to be ready to begin renovations in January with an anticipated completion day of the end of April.

ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Elections are coming up soon! If you work with any students who you think would make good candidates, please encourage them to run! We'll be hosting everything online this year for safety, with nominations coming in on a new online platform.

General Election

Nominations Open: January 5
Nominations Close: January 12
All Candidates Meeting: January 12
Campaigning Opens: January 13
Campaigning Closes: January 26
Voting Opens: January 25
Voting Closes: January 26
Results Night: January 28

Vice Presidential Election

Nominations Open: January 29
Nominations Close: February 19
All Candidates Meeting: February 19
Campaigning Opens: February 20
Campaigning Closes: March 6
Voting (AGM): March 7

PRODUCTIONS

With the opening of the Mustang Lounge study space, we will be relocating our livestream headquarters to The Wave and setting up shop there for events and filming/recording as necessary. Please keep our capabilities in mind if students come to you looking to run virtual events!

We now have part-time staff in the building on a more regular basis, so if you need staff/labour support please don't hesitate to reach out. If your task is furniture/building related (picture hanging, office moves, and the like), please reach out via workorders@westernusc.ca. For event-specific tasks (poster/signage installation, initiatives, decor, etc.) feel free to email josh.try@westernusc.ca directly.