Disability Support Services — Accommodations for Interviewing and Employment

Guest Columnist Alan Russell, Director Disability Support Services

Are you aware that Rice University human resources policy No. 402-94, Accommodation of applicant/employees with disabilities, applies to all applicants for employment, faculty, and staff? In its hiring and personnel actions, Rice University does not discriminate against individuals who are disabled. The University provides reasonable accommodations (if not an undue burden) for applicants and employees with disabilities so they can complete the application process or perform their work.

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act protect qualified individuals with a wide range of mental and physical impairments that substantially limit or restrict a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, caring for oneself, learning or working. They also protect qualified individuals with records of substantial mental or physical disabilities. Finally, individuals who are perceived as having disabilities, when in fact they do not, are protected by Section 503 and the ADA as well.

How to request accommodations:
Applicants who need an accommodation for a disability should contact the HR Recruitment team. Employees who are disabled and need accommodations should tell one of the following: their immediate supervisor, department chair/director or the Human Resources Department.

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act provides protections and guidelines for qualified persons with disabilities to receive reasonable accommodations in the work environment. For detailed information, see Rice University Policy No. 402-94.

A person who is not satisfied with the accommodations provided may seek advice from the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity.

More information about job accommodations can be found at Job Accommodation Network (JAN): http://askjan.org/

An individual who requests accommodation may be asked to provide a statement from a physician or other health care professional explaining the individual’s functional limitations if job-related and consistent with business necessity.

Rice University may make pre-employment inquiries into the ability of an applicant to perform job-related functions, and/or may (cont. on page 2)
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ask an applicant to describe or to demonstrate how, with or without reasonable accommodation, the applicant will be able to perform the duties of the job.

Employees with temporary work or mobility restrictions should contact Disability Support Services (DSS) to evaluate options for assistance during their recovery period (e.g., temporary handicap parking registration).

Employees with major medical or physical conditions (e.g., epilepsy, diabetes, cardiac conditions) that might cause a health crisis while at work should consider completing a Medical Alert form, available through DSS.

If an employee chooses to complete the Medical Alert form, he/she then distributes the form to various work personnel. Examples might include the Rice EMS unit, coworkers or an employee’s supervisor. Contact the director of DSS to discuss the form and possible distribution to selected personnel.

Completing a Medical Alert form does not guarantee specific medical responses or treatments in the event of a crisis. The purpose of the form is merely to familiarize university personnel with an employee’s medical background in the event of such a crisis.

DSS works in conjunction with the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity, Human Resources, and individual departments in providing disability-related services.

Employees of Rice University who have disability-related needs or questions can contact DSS. The director of DSS is the resource at Rice University on matters relating to general disability information.

Pictured: Alan Russell, Director of DSS
Location: Allen Center, Room 111
Hours of operation: Regular business hours year-round
Phone: (main) 713-348-5841 / (adaptive technology) 713-348-5754
Fax: 713-348-5888
E-mail: adarice@rice.edu

HR Happenings (cont. from page 1)

resources and affirmative action attended the recent employment outreach symposium, “Good Jobs for Everyone”, hosted by government agencies OFCCP, EEOC, US Wage and Hour Division, Texas Veterans Commission and GHILG to get more insight and contacts with agencies, programs and services aimed at assisting veterans with obtaining employment.

Pictures from the “Hiring Our Heroes” event: Above - Staff Recruiter Michelle Potoczniak talking with job fair candidates. Right—pictures of the promotional poster and the “Hero 2 Hired” kiosk available for use by the veteran’s in attendance. The event was just one of the 2012 hiring fairs being put on in 400 communities. This program was launched last year by the US Chamber of Commerce.

For more information about Veteran recruiting efforts at Rice, contact us at jobs@rice.edu.
Wiley’s Words of Wisdom

I want to be sure you all are aware of our new hire orientation for new staff members at Rice University. This is a half-day program that includes a presentation covering the history of Rice and various policies that all new employees need to be aware of, a tour of campus, and a lunch at one of the serveries on campus. We encourage all new employees to come to one of our new hire orientation sessions, and the closer to their start date, the better! However, we understand that there can be schedule conflicts, and we can always reschedule the new employee to a later session if necessary.

Whenever you submit a hiring proposal, there is a section to complete that lets us know who the direct supervisor of the new employee will be. The person named in that section will be the one notified when we send an e-mail out a week prior to the employee’s scheduled new hire orientation session. This e-mail lets you know when and where the orientation is, and the new employee(s) scheduled to attend. If there is a scheduling conflict, please let me (Wiley) know as soon as possible so that we may reschedule the hire. Also, in all new employees’ offer letters, the orientation date they are scheduled to is mentioned, and that orientation date will always be the available session closest to their start date. We try to keep capacity at 15 to 20 new employees, depending on the time of the year. All orientation dates are listed at http://people.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=702, and new dates may be added based on need and number of employees requiring orientation.

All new employees will also receive an e-mail about a week prior to orientation. This e-mail lets the employee know when and where the orientation will be held and what to expect during the orientation session. Occasionally your new employee’s e-mail may not be activated (which could be due to a delay in HR Services receiving the PAF, etc.). You may not be aware that this is the situation, so please check your junk e-mail (cont. on page 4)

Diana’s Descriptive Demos

The Human Resources department has recently updated their website and we now have a new user friendly layout. We’ve added some cool new features, such as an Employee Spotlight, a calendar and even a “How to” video on how to navigate our site. One of the many things that we re-arranged and moved is the RICEWorks link. Instead of being on the main page, as it was on our website, it has been moved under the “Recruitment” section of the website. In this descriptive demo, I will help you locate the RICEWorks link and how to bookmark it for your convenience.

On the main HR website, you will see a side menu on the left hand side as you click on Recruitment; it will direct you to our new Recruitment section. On the Recruitment page, you will see that under the main side menu, there is now a mini-menu providing you with all the Recruitment content, such as the Hiring Process, Guides for Staff Hiring and On-Boarding New Employees. The new link to RICEWorks which is also on this mini-menu, is actually labeled “RICEWorks for Departments & Hiring Managers”. Once you click on that, you will be at the RICEWorks website!

It is a good idea to bookmark this site. If you are using Firefox or Safari as your web browser, you should see the following on the top menu: File, Edit, View, History, Bookmarks, Tools (Firefox)/Windows (Safari) and Help. As you click on Bookmarks, the pop up menu will give you the option to “Bookmark this page”, which will prompt another pop up for you to organize your bookmark in a specific folder, or to rename it if you want. You can also use the short-cut Ctrl+D to bookmark this page. If you are using Internet Explorer, you will see the same menu, but instead of Bookmarks, it will say Favorites. Under Favorites, you will have the options to ‘Add to Favorites’ or to ‘Add to Favorites Bar’ and to organize it however you want. So next time you need to use RICEWorks, you can simply go to the top menu of your preferred web browser, click Bookmarks/Favorites and select the RICEWorks page.

Michelle’s Miscellaneous Megabits (Information)

As some of you are aware, we are in the heart of what we, the staffing recruiters, call the “Hiring Season”. It is the time of year after budgets have been approved and when schools and departments post new positions. Hiring a new staff position is one of the most important things you do! Hire well and you reap the rewards with increased productivity, better morale and service, but hire badly and you will suffer the consequences that may include losing diamond employees or other fallout as a result of a disastrous hire.

So to make the best hiring decision, consider incorporating these practices into your process:

⇒ Use behavior based interview questions (Tell me about a time when...).
⇒ Pre-screen candidates through phone interviews before bringing them in to interview in person.
⇒ Ask stakeholders to participate in the interviews (panel interviews).
⇒ Utilize skills assessments when appropriate (MS Word, Excel, etc.)
⇒ Complete reference checks (don’t assume you’ll learn nothing useful; you’d be surprised how many times a top candidate has fallen out after a reference check).
⇒ Enlist the assistance of your dedicated recruiter. We can help in scheduling interviews, escorting candidates, setting up skills assessments, etc.

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Rice University HR Recruitment

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Wiley's Words of Wisdom
(cont. from page 3)

please be sure to share with
your new employee the infor-
mation that was sent to you a
day or two prior to the new
hire orientation session so that
they know where to go, what
to expect, etc. On the day of
your new employee’s orienta-
tion, you may want to have
them check into the office
before they come to orienta-
tion. If for some reason orient-
tation is cancelled due to
weather or some other cause,
an e-mail will be sent and a call
made to both the supervisor
and new employee.

We encourage all new staff to
attend orientation. If there are
any long-term temporary em-
ployees or post-docs in your de-
partment that you would like to
have attend orientation, please e-
mail me at wbennett@rice.edu,
and I will be happy to schedule
them for our next available ses-

Top 10 Reasons to Hire a Military Vet-
eran (cont. from page 1)

6. Respect for procedures: Veterans have
gained a unique perspective on the value of
accountability. They know how policies and
procedures enable an organization to exist.

7. Technology and globalization: Because of
their experience in the services, they are
usually aware of international and technical
trends pertinent to business and industry.

8. Integrity: Veterans know what it means
to do “an honest day’s work.”

9. Conscious of health and safety stan-
dards: Thanks to extensive training, veterans
are aware of health and safety proto-
cols both for themselves and the welfare
of others.

10. Triumph over adversity: In addition to
dealing positively with the typical issues of
personal maturity, veterans have frequently
triumphed over great adversity.

Michelle’s Misc. Megabits
(cont. from page 3)

We have added information
to our website under
“Recruitment” to help you
with the hiring selection
process.

Please let us know how we
can be of assistance in hir-
ing the best candidate avail-
able for your open position!