This newsletter is designed to present York employees, former employees and retirees with useful general information pertaining to their pension & benefits. Please keep in mind that as this newsletter is distributed to different groups with different entitlements, (for example former employees no longer have benefits), that all articles may not pertain to you and your situation.

Committed to Quality Service

Our staff in Pension & Benefits consists of experienced professionals who are committed to providing superior customer service while providing the information you need to fully understand your pension and benefits coverage. All of our staff are equally capable and committed to providing you with the best possible service. Accordingly, we no longer use an alpha sort to determine which of our staff will assist you. This allows us to provide a higher level of service as there is no more waiting for a particular staff member to become available to assist you. TIP: When submitting forms, please ensure they are fully completed before scanning and emailing them to us at askpb@yorku.ca. Emailing scanned documents is a convenient way to keep a record of forms you’ve completed.

We’ve Moved!

We are now located at 8 The Chimneystack Road in the Kinsmen Building.

How to reach us:

Phone: Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (416) 736-2100 ext 27572
Email: askpb@yorku.ca
Mail: Human Resources, Pension & Benefits, Kinsmen Building,
8 The Chimneystack Road, Toronto, ON, M3J 1P3
Fax: (416) 736 – 5607

How we reach you:

For active members, we routinely rely on the e-mail address you have input in hrselfserve (typically, your York University email address) to communicate with you. As such, it is important to check your inbox regularly for any updates we may send you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Effective January 1, 2013 the only P&B Times that will be mailed out are to retirees of the York University Pension Plan for whom we do not have an e-mail address. It will continue to be available online at http://www.yorku.ca/hr/services/employees/benefits.html and we will continue to advise active and deferred members for whom we have a valid email address via e-mail when a new issue is available.
Tax Assisted Retirement Savings

A little history
In 1991, as part of a number of reforms made to the Income Tax Act, the federal government introduced a system for assigning a value to your participation in a registered pension plan in order to reduce your personal registered retirement savings plan (RRSP) contribution room. The aim of these reforms was to introduce more tax fairness into the retirement savings system. Since then, all pension and RRSP funding for individuals has to fit under one tax shelter umbrella. The yearly maximum for tax assisted retirement savings (i.e. the total of pension plan and RRSP contributions) is equal to 18% of one’s earned income up to a yearly limit.

Contributions to York University Pension Plan
Your regular contributions to the York University pension plan lower your taxable income and, as described above, affect your RRSP room. After you file your income tax return, the Canada Revenue Agency sends you a Notice of Assessment, which includes a statement of your RRSP contribution room for the year. You may make an RRSP contribution up to this amount, or carry it forward within limits, for use in a future year. Contributing to an RRSP is a simple and widely used strategy to defer the payment of income taxes.

Pension Adjustment (PA)
A pension adjustment is the deemed value (as defined by the Income Tax Act) of the pension benefit you earn earned in a year. Your PA reduces the maximum amount that you can contribute to an RRSP contributions for the next year.

In the York University Plan, your PA is the greater of your contributions, plus those of the University; and the benefit provided by the minimum guaranteed formula. Your PA is reported on your T4 slip and must be included on the income tax return you file each year.

Calculating RRSP Contribution Room
Your RRSP contribution room is based on a formula. Basically, it’s 18% of your previous year’s earned income to a yearly maximum ($22,970 for 2012) minus your previous year’s PA. As indicated above, your RRSP contribution limit is also provided by the Canada Revenue Agency on your Notice of Assessment.

Albert Einstein & Canada’s Official Languages
While we're on the subject of Income Tax, here’s a couple of amusing quotes:

“The hardest thing to understand is income tax”.

- Albert Einstein

“Anyone who believes that Canada’s only two official languages are English and French has never read the Income Tax Act.”

- Marc Denhez

Question:
What is a past service pension adjustment (PSPA)?

Answer:
As outlined above, your PA reflects the benefit you earned in a pension plan in a given year. If you retroactively increase that benefit – most likely through a transfer of pension service between registered plans – you’ll receive a past service pension adjustment (PSPA) to reflect that improvement. A PSPA is the difference between the PA you originally received, and the PA you should have received, based on the impact of the improvement. A PSPA reduces the amount you may contribute to an RRSP.

For further information, please call (416) 736-2100 ext 27572 or email askpb@yorku.ca
What’s the best way to get info about my benefits coverage?

The best way to get information about your benefits coverage is to contact Sun Life who is your benefits provider. They can be reached by calling 1-800-361-6212 Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET. In addition, they have a website (www.sunlife.ca/member) which is a one stop shop for plan members.

Discover the benefits of going online

Submitting your claims online is a convenient way to get your claims processed more quickly and easily, which means you get your money back faster. Why spend time filling out paper forms and waiting for your cheque to arrive?

When you submit your claims online, they are processed instantly and your money is usually in your account within 24-48 hours.

Sign in to My Sun Life (mysunlife.ca) to access many self-service options and useful resources to help you manage your benefits plan. My Sun Life is password protected, fast, convenient and great for the environment. You can also access My Sun Life on our website under “Quick Links.”

Sign in to mysunlife.ca to access these great features:

› Sign up for direct deposit and submit your claims online for instant processing to get your money back faster than waiting for a cheque.
› View your claims statements as well as your claims history.
› See details of what’s covered under your specific plan.
› Check when you or your family members are eligible for your next glasses or lens purchase, or your next dental checkup.
› Print an “all-in-one” coverage card to keep in your wallet.
› Access and print your customized claim form.

Resource centre

Looking for health & dental smart shopping tips? Do you want to make the most of your drug coverage? Are you planning a trip soon? Education is everything when it comes to your benefits plan and Sun Life makes it easy. Check out the Resource Centre at www.sunlife.ca/member.

The resource centre is intended to provide you with valuable resources to help you educate you on all things group benefits.

Simplifying Access to Information

Our “Ask an HR Service Expert” function will soon be called “Ask HR.” but will continue to be available at www.yorku.ca/hr and is ideal when you’re looking for quick answers to common questions (i.e. Does the Tuition Fee Waiver cover all fees charged to the student’s account?). Remember to complete the “Are you satisfied with your answer?” portion and feel free to include any suggestions for improvement. All questions are important to us and will be captured so that we can continue to grow our answer base. If the answer to your question is not available today, it may be tomorrow - so keep coming back!

For further information, please call (416) 736-2100 ext 27572 or email askpb@yorku.ca
Pension Plans Play Growing Role

Survey said…

A new survey of Canadian workers by pension consulting firm Towers Watson has found that pension plans are an important workplace benefit that helps to attract workers. This is the result of economic uncertainty and growing fears about inadequate retirement incomes.

The survey also found pension plans play a growing role in retaining existing workers. In addition, it was found that one-third of Canadian employees would be willing to sacrifice part of their pay in return for enhanced retirement security, and one in four would give up a bonus in exchange for additional retirement benefits. The idea that so many workers would trade pay for better retirement security is an emphatic indicator of the unease that employees have about their ability to save for retirement.

Your Pension Plan

The York University Pension Plan is a key component of your total compensation package and is designed to help provide you with a solid foundation for building your retirement security.

The York University Pension Plan is made up of two parts – a money purchase part and a defined benefit part. These parts are combined so that you receive the opportunity to benefit from the investment performance of the Trust Fund, while being protected against market downturns through the guarantee of a minimum pension.

Need More Information?

Information provided in this newsletter is of a general nature. Should you require further information that specifically pertains to you please contact the Pension & Benefits office by e-mailing askpb@yorku.ca or call 416-736-2100 extension askpb (27572) between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm Monday to Friday. For Fridays from June 1 up to and including Labour Day weekend the phones will be answered until 3:00 pm.

In the event the information contained herein conflicts with the applicable contract, policy or guideline, the terms of the contract, policy or guideline will prevail.

Here are just a few websites you can access to gain more information:

Sun Life’s Plan Member services:  www.sunlife.ca/member
York University Retirement Planner:  www.yorku-ret.ca
York’s Pension & Benefits Office:  www.yorku.ca/hr/units/cpb/pensionbenefits.html
York’s HR Self Service:  https://hrselfserve.yorku.ca/psp/HR91PRD/?cmd=login
York’s Retirement Planning Centre:  www.yorku.ca/retire