EMPLOYEE AND LABOR RELATIONS

The goal of the Employee Relations unit in Human Resources is to develop a highly skilled organization that strives to maximize individual potential by proactively developing employees and enhancing a positive, constructive, and efficient work environment. The university recognizes the importance of positive employee relations and providing avenues to assist employees in resolving issues that may affect their job performance. Visit the Employee Relations webpage to learn more: www.kent.edu/hr/management/employee-relations

Employee Relations is also available to work with managers and employees to develop processes to improve performance and enhance communications at all levels. This includes performance management tools, team development, meeting facilitation and change management.

Additional areas of responsibility for the Employee Relations office include:
- Develop plans to support human resources initiatives that enhance the working environment at Kent State University such as change management, turnover reduction, improved employee relations and other human resource topics as necessary to meet the varying needs of the university.
- Coach, mentor and train supervisors and management in the areas of employee management, performance reviews, disciplinary actions and other human resources topics.
- Develop working relationships with supervisors and employees and cooperatively develop solutions based on sound human resources and business practices.
- Ensure compliance with human resources policies and procedures as well as federal, state and local requirements; audit and enforce adherence to requirements; render opinions and advise management on needed actions.
- Collaborate with the Training & Development department and Organizational Design department to identify learning opportunities for organizational units.
- Informal mediation is available upon request.
- The implementation of the Transitional Work Program for employees injured on the job.
- The responsibility of the Performance Management System (evaluations) along with the Probationary Evaluation process.

The Labor Relations office is part of the division of Human Resources and oversees all aspects of labor relations activities for AFSCME-represented employees at Kent State.

The Labor Relations office also oversees pre-disciplinary hearings for classified, unrepresented university employees. The goal of the office is to create and sustain a collaborative work environment for collective bargaining members, unrepresented classified employees and professional leadership through interactions and progressive discipline. Visit the Labor Relations webpage to learn more: www.kent.edu/hr/management/labor-relations

Additional areas of responsibility for the Labor Relations office include:
- Serve as a resource to employees, supervisors and department heads regarding labor relations policies and issues.
- Administers and oversees the performance evaluation process for classified and unclassified employees.
- Administer and interpret the AFSCME collective bargaining agreement, university policies and relevant sections of the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code.
- Plan and direct recruitment activities and employment services for represented classified staff.
- Provide grievance and arbitration procedure administration for all classified employees.
- Administer pre-disciplinary processes for all classified employees.
- Assess and develop training programs for represented staff and supervisors/managers of represented staff.
- Represent the university in AFSCME collective bargaining negotiations.

For more information contact Karen Watson, Employee and Labor Relations Director, at 330-672-4636 or kswatson@kent.edu; Janine Bogden, Administrative Assistant, at 330-672-8526 or jbogden@kent.edu; Norma Karam, Administrative Clerk, at 330-672-8334 or nkaram@kent.edu. You can also email erelations@kent.edu.