

ISSUE 2

VIBE

VOICES INSPIRING BETTER ENGAGEMENT



WELCOME TO THE APRIL 2026 VIBE NEWSLETTER

Who Are We and What Do We Do?

Voices Inspiring Better Engagement (VIBE) serves as a divisional resource to enhance employee engagement by sharing ideas, information and communicating on issues and topics.

VIBE serves as an advisory body to the Senior Leadership Team and provides vital support and capacity for developing, implementing, tracking progress, and assessing impact of initiatives undertaken by the Division. Please note that the group meets twice per month.

Our Mission:

Serve as an advisory group for all divisional staff members to the Senior Leadership Team
Act in an advisory capacity to the Senior Leadership team on existing and emerging policies, procedures, and activities.

Enhance communication and engagement throughout the division and within departments.
Provide staff with an effective way to inquire, connect, and promote success.
Develop and implement strategic initiatives designed to cultivate employee engagement.

In this issue:

- How to reach us
- BOOSTS
- Dates to Remember
- Launch of New Benefits “Freshservice” system
- Answers to questions from the Divisional Meeting
- People, Culture, & Belonging contacts and information
- OPERS and HSA information
- How to add “VIBE” bookmark in Flashline

Want more information or to reach out to us?

The VIBE website can be found at the following url:

<https://www.kent.edu/finance-administration/voices-inspiring-better-engagement-vibe>.

Visit this website to submit comments or suggestions, leave a BOOST for a fellow employee, or review the Resources and Training Opportunities section.

Resources and Training Opportunities include:

- FREE on-line training courses
- Links for KSU employee/employment related issues
- Networking opportunities
- Various security and access management sites
- Cybersecurity alerts, tips, and training opportunities to protect your identity
- Links to university training opportunities
- Plus much more

BOOSTS Received

Bringing Out Our Staff's Talent

Received March 2026

Cindy Swift - UFM Custodial received an anonymous BOOST

Cindy is the custodian in Harbourt Hall. She is exceptional at her job (our building shines!), and she has a terrific attitude.

Lynelle Austin - Accounts Payable received an anonymous BOOST

Lynelle has been so helpful explaining the pcard rules to me! It is so nice to find someone on campus that is patient, kind, and responsive!

Tim McGarry and David Allen - UFM Custodial received a BOOST from Adda Gape

I would like to thank Tim McGarry and David Allen for their help in McGilvrey Hall. They showed great leadership in helping with stripping and waxing and they provided great support to my staff.

Ben Crock and Mark Moscarello - UFM Lockshop received an anonymous BOOST

Thank you for your diligence and making our "problem" a priority!

Melissa Foley - Accounts Payable received a BOOST from Vicki Ladd

Melissa is awesome. No matter what my question or problem is, she is always there to help me get to the bottom of the situation. Thank you for your continued assistance, fast responses, and patience as we navigate through day-to-day tasks and the tackling of the department websites. You are truly appreciated, and I know I speak for many others.

JoAnna Hawkins - UFM Custodial received a BOOST from Melissa Lott

JoAnna cleaned the baseball facility in the dark with a flashlight so that usage of the facility could continue for the day once daylight hit.

Tina Jackson -UFM Custodial received a BOOST from Melissa Lott

Tina cleaned the baseball facility in the dark with a flashlight so that usage of the facility could continue for the day once daylight hit.

JoAnna Hawkins and Tina Jackson- UFM Custodial received a BOOST from Greg Evans

The power was out at the Baseball Stadium over the weekend of March 14 and 15, 2026. The day games were still going to be played. Both individuals did their best to clean the areas with flashlights so the games could go on. My appreciation!

Received February 2026

Amanda Walton - UFM Custodial received a BOOST from Mindy McCarthy

Our office recently moved to Heer Hall and what a pleasant surprise it has been to meet Amanda and enjoy the clean office and common spaces that she provides! Coming from Schwartz, we had nothing like this at all! She is friendly and willing to help with anything we need. Thank you, Amanda, for making us feel taken care of. We do not take your work lightly and truly appreciate you.

Received January 2026

Sheryl Stuczynski - Police Services received a BOOST from Janell Ryan

Sheryl helped out while we were short staffed. She spent half the day doing her "REAL JOB" at Police Services before coming to the Parking office to answer phones and assist customers at the front counter. When approached about working traffic details outside at the stadium for football games, she agreed to do that also, filling a HUGE need! Your help is very much appreciated by both the Parking Services front office and the enforcement team!!!

Upcoming Training Opportunities

For the most up-to-date information and offerings, please visit:

<https://www.kent.edu/people-and-culture/personal-and-professional-development>

Divisional Meeting

The semi-annual Divisional Meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2026, from 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM in the ballroom at the Student Center; email invitations were sent out. Be sure to RSVP.

Benefits Office Goes Live with Freshservice on April 20, 2026

Starting April 20, 2026, the KSU Benefits Office will officially be using Freshservice to manage all benefits-related questions and requests. Freshservice is the same ticketing system used by KSU IT and will help us get you faster, more accurate answers while making sure nothing slips through the cracks. Please note that Tuition Waiver and FMLA/Medical Leave requests will continue to follow their existing processes for the time being and are not impacted by this change. [Learn more about the Benefits Freshservice system.](#)

Answers from the Fall Divisional Meeting

Would SLT consider mentorship to foster a climate for internal promotions?

- We would certainly entertain the idea of mentorship and training to prepare internal candidates for promotion. This would require some details as to what position titles would have the opportunity to be promoted to what next level position. If the suggested positions are represented, a Memorandum of Understanding would have to be negotiated with the representing union.

When will the HR team and workers be back to work in the office setting, I am asking? I have always worked in an environment where HR has an open-door policy, but when I get over there, I'm always told to call because they are working from home?

- Department of People, Culture and Belonging (DPCB) is in the office. DPCB does have some staff that may telework, but not entire departments and no one is full-time remote. Staff do have appointments and meetings during the week, so scheduling an appointment in advance would ensure a staff member is available. Year to date in 2026, DPCB has had over 250 visitors to Heer Hall. DPCB recently changed the lobby to provide a waiting area. In addition, DPCB has many tools and resources available online. If there is a team member that is turned away, please let them know to reach out directly to Betsy McCafferty or Donna Sansonetti.

Please explain the university's unequitable practice of disparate bonuses and cost-of-living raises based upon union eligibility of the position. Represented/unrepresented.

- Bargaining unit representation is defined in the collective bargaining agreement and is on file with the State Employment Relations Board. Compensation for bargaining unit employees is a mandatory subject of bargaining and implemented in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement.
- Employees can contact Compensation if they believe they are being asked to perform work outside their classification. Compensation can then follow up with the unit. The PDQ process can be completed independently by the employee and then routed to the supervisor for input. The Compensation department can provide further guidance if needed.

Do I Need to Sign Up for Medicare When I Turn 65?

The following information was sourced from www.medicare.gov and approved by People, Culture and Belonging.

As long as you have insurance coverage by a sponsored group medical plan you don't have to apply for Medicare until you retire. Signing up for Medicare before your current coverage ends can help you avoid a gap in coverage.

If you have an HSA (Health Savings Account), contributions to this account should stop at least 6 months before you apply for Medicare Part A. If you are over 65, Medicare Part A is backdated up to 6 months from the date you apply, and you are no longer eligible to contribute to an HSA plan. Contributions during this period could be subject to penalties.

Enrollment into Medicare Part B can be delayed past age 65 if you or your spouse are still working and are covered by a qualified group insurance plan. Late enrollment in Medicare Part B can result in penalties. Be sure to contact Medicare before you are ready to retire to make sure you understand the timelines. If you are eligible for Social Security, be sure to contact them as well. Applying for Social Security could automatically sign you up for Medicare so you need to make sure you understand how the two work independently yet together.

Find out more information about Medicare at <https://www.medicare.gov>.

OPERS Live Webinars

OPERS offers a variety of educational webinars. If you haven't set up an account with OPERS go to www.opers.org to get started.

Whether you are new to OPERS or will soon be retiring with OPERS benefits, you can find valuable information on the OPERS websites.

Log into your account and click on Tools and Resources then locate the educational resources. From there you can view past recordings and see currently offered or upcoming webinars.

Division of People, Culture and Belonging (DPCB)

Contact information:

- DPCB Heer Hall General Line: 330-672-2100
- DPCB Library General Line: 330-672-2442
- DPCB General Email: people@kent.edu

Other Resources:

[Technology Workshops](#)

[Office of Strategy Management Website](#) (has training courses and can help with planning & process improvement)

[Lean Office](#) can also help with process improvement

The Division of People, Culture and Belonging provided Vibe with a copy of one of their brochures. A link to the brochure can be found at [DPCB Brochure](#).

The following two screenshots are the front and back of the DPCB brochure.



Dialogue and Difference Series

www.kent.edu/dialogue

Engagement and Well-Being Survey

www.kent.edu/voices

Faculty/Staff News Now

www.kent.edu/people-and-culture/facultystaff-news-now

Faculty & Staff Ombuds

www.kent.edu/facultystaffombuds

Juneteenth Jubilee

www.kent.edu/juneteenth

Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

www.kent.edu/people-and-culture/MLK

Staff Council

www.kent.edu/staff-council

Wellness Your Way Rewards Program

www.kent.edu/people-and-culture/wellness

Get in Touch!

Library Office

*Office of the Vice President | Division
Administration and Strategic Initiatives |
Learning, Engagement & Belonging*

University Library, Executive Suite 251
1125 Risman Drive
Kent, OH 44242

P: 330-672-2442

E: people@kent.edu

Heer Hall Office

*Employee Relations | Talent Management |
Equal Opportunity & Compliance |
Compensation | Benefits & Wellness | HR
Records | Learning, Engagement &
Belonging*

635 Loop Road
Kent, OH 44242

P: 330-672-2100

E: people@kent.edu



@PeopleCultureKSU



@PeopleCultureKSU



www.kent.edu/people-and-culture

You Belong Here!



KENT STATE
UNIVERSITY

Division of People,
Culture and Belonging



What We Do



Talent Management

- *Oversee application processes.*
- *Facilitate new hire paperwork, issue offer letters, verify degrees, and handle recruitment ads.*
- *Conduct background checks, I-9 reviews, reference checks, and provide onboarding guidance to university partners.*

HR Records

- *Ensure timely payment and accurate personnel record-keeping for staff.*
- *Process leaves of absence and personnel changes (new hires, class/title/pay changes, funding, FTE, supervisor, renewals, separations).*

Division Administration & Strategic Initiatives

- *Manage large-scale projects and university-wide events.*
- *Create and analyze engagement, climate, and exit surveys; conduct assessment and research.*



Equal Opportunity & Compliance

- *Ensure access and provide information, consultation, and guidance on equal opportunity, harassment prevention, and discrimination.*
- *Provide confidential counseling for harassment and/or discrimination concerns.*

Employee Benefits and Wellness

- *Manage medical, dental, prescription drug, and vision coverage, and retirement plans.*
- *Administer benefits related to FMLA, paid parental leave, workers' compensation, domestic partner benefits, and employee assistance programs.*
- *Promote holistic wellness through programs, biometric screenings, and flexible work arrangements.*



Employee & Labor Relations

- *Train supervisors in employee management, performance reviews, and disciplinary actions.*
- *Oversee all aspects of labor relations for AFSCME-represented employees.*
- *Manage pre-disciplinary hearings for classified, unrepresented university employees.*

Learning, Engagement & Belonging

- *Provide transformative learning opportunities for personal, professional, and institutional growth.*
- *Support meaningful employee engagement, recognition, and appreciation.*

Compensation

- *Develop and implement compensation programs to attract, retain, and develop the workforce.*
- *Manage pay policies and programs for all employees except faculty.*
- *Handle pay plans, job evaluation plans, wage and salary surveys, and the evaluation and audit of positions.*

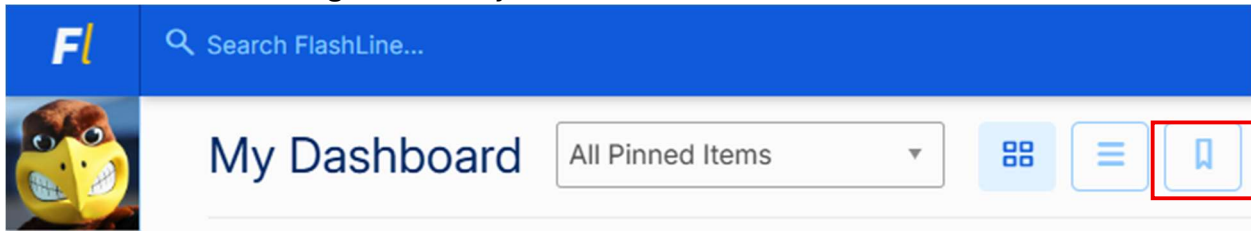


How to Bookmark a Link to the Vibe in Flashline

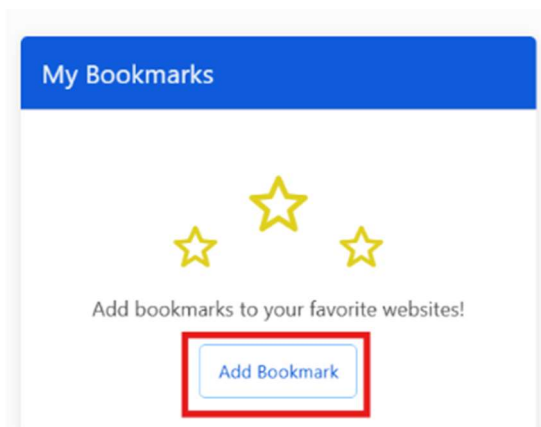
You can bookmark the link to The Vibe website <https://www.kent.edu/finance-administration/voices-inspiring-better-engagement-vibe> to your dashboard in Flashline.

In FlashLine, click on My Dashboard

If you have not bookmarked any other websites, you should see an “Add Bookmarks” icon that looks like a ribbon to the far right on the My Dashboard line.



Click on this icon; the icon will disappear. Scroll through any items that you may have pinned and locate My Bookmarks. Click on “Add Bookmark” button.



Name the link

Copy and paste the link above into the web address line then click on Add Bookmark.

The direct link should now be saved.