

- Ethics Officer's September 2007 Monthly Report

Summary

This report provides a general update on the progress and activities for the Ethics Office for September 2007.

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Activities

1. The renovations to the Ethics Office have begun and include the construction of a wall and re-arrangement to enhance visitor use and privacy.
2. Gil Garcetti, former L.A. County District Attorney, who is now an urban photographer, was the speaker for 46 Directors, staff members and guests at the Ethics Dinner-Discussion held on Monday, September 10. The focus of Mr. Garcetti's presentation was on how water issues in Africa impact our lives in the industrialized workforce. His presentation included photographs and essays from his new book, *Water Is Key*.
3. The Ethics Educator conducted an Ethics Office Orientation/Staff Development and a dry run of the Ethics Office Presentation to contractors to Metropolitan's Business Outreach staff and managers. The Ethics Office Presentation to contractors is currently scheduled for October.
4. At the request of the Inquiry & Review Committee, the Ethics Officer researched policies on relationships in the workplace and has created a draft policy for the General Manager's review.
5. The Ethics Educator reviewed alternative approaches to the development of on-line ethics course modules. The office will create content unique to Metropolitan.
6. The Ethics Office staff conducted Day 1 employee orientations for 17 new hires and Day 2 orientation for 15 employees.
7. The Ethics Officer, Ethics Educator and Senior Administrative Analyst attended the Ethics and Compliance Office Association meetings in Los Angeles, September 26-28, 2007.
8. The Ethics Office Web site logged 926 visitors from September 1-30, 2007.

Logged Questions and Matters of Concern

1. **August 13, 2007 – Issue: Employee Relations**
The Ethics Office was contacted by a union representative regarding an employee who had allegedly been turned down by management when the employee had requested that a union representative be present at a meeting. A complaint was made by the union to HR. The union representative was advised that Metropolitan offices do not double-handle complaints and that it is appropriate for HR to deal with the matter initially. The union representative was advised that he/she could request Ethics Office review after the HR review was completed. The union representative was informed on September 6 that HR completed its review and does not foresee any further investigation. The union representative has not informed the Ethics Office if he/she believes that there are violations of the Ethics Policy that have not been addressed. (239)
Disposition: Pending

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2. September 6, 2007 – Issue: Misuse of Funds
A person expressing concern in April 2007, requested follow up. The matter was investigated and closed in May 2007. The documents relating to this matter were reviewed and the complainant notified that the review was completed and did not reveal evidence of wrongdoing. The person expressed concern again on September 24 to both Ethics Office and Human Resources, requesting that the investigation be re-opened. The complainant was notified both by the Ethics Office and Human Resources that our investigations of these matters are complete.
Disposition: Closed
3. September 8, 2007 – Issue: Customer Relations
A concern was received regarding Metropolitan’s plan to add fluoride to drinking water. It was referred to the appropriate department for handling.
Disposition: Closed
4. September 12, 2007 – Issue: Employee Relations
An anonymous concern provided a variety of allegations regarding a section manager. The concerns were forwarded to the group manager for review. The group manager, who had received his/her own copy of the concern, had reviewed the matter and found the allegations without merit.
Disposition: Closed
5. September 13, 2007 – Issue: Nepotism
An employee wanted to be considered for a position in which, if he/she were hired, would be directly supervised by the same manager who supervises his/her domestic partner. The employee was informed that he/she could not be considered for that position and was advised that while it is the case that some domestic partners that were hired prior to the current nepotism policy have the same boss, Metropolitan hiring now conforms to the current policy.
Disposition: Closed
6. September 20, 2007 - Issue: Favoritism
An employee expressed concern prior to a job interview that he/she would not be fairly considered for the position, based on e-mails he/she had received from co-workers. The Ethics Officer contacted the recruiter to alert her to the concern and forwarded copies of the e-mail. As discrimination was alleged, the matter was forwarded to EEOC for review.
Disposition: Pending
7. September 25, 2007 Issue: Gifts
An employee received an invitation to attend a cocktail reception sponsored by a vendor. The invitation included a dollar bill. The invitation was declined and the dollar bill returned.
Disposition: Closed