Preparing for Influenza

H1N1 heightens our need to properly care for ourselves and others during flu season

This year’s flu season is predicted to last through fall and winter with both seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu present. While there have been confirmed cases of H1N1 influenza at MnSCU institutions this fall, at this time no cases have been confirmed at Bemidji State University or Northwest Technical College. We can expect, however, that members of our campus community will become ill with flu-like symptoms some time during the year.

As a result, I am asking the campus community to work together to reduce the impact of the flu by practicing healthy habits and by remaining home from work or class if illness strikes.

Because it is possible that a larger-than-normal proportion of the campus community will develop flu-like symptoms this season, the University is continuing to take steps to prepare for possible outbreaks should they occur.

We are implementing the University’s Emergency Operations Plan. Both the Emergency Management Team and the Emergency Operations Team have been activated. To learn more about the teams and their responsibilities, review the current plan that is found on the Office of Security and Safety’s Web site. The influenza planning section, first developed to address the possibility of avian flu, starts on page 15: http://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/security/forms/docs/emergency_procedures.pdf (short URL: http://bit.ly/3he6hg)

The University is also working closely with local governmental agencies. A Community Health Planning Group has been meeting for months and discussing various scenarios and planning needs. The group is composed of our County Nursing Service, North Country Regional Hospital, public schools from kindergarten through college level, care facilities, various emergency response groups, the Beltrami County Emergency Operations Team and others. These groups have collectively spent several years practicing for health crisis events as a county and a region.

Individual actions are also important in containing the spread of influenza. I encourage all faculty and staff to follow these state health department recommendations for staying healthy:

• Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.
  • Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.
  • Consider getting the seasonal flu vaccine. Campus flu shot clinics are scheduled for Wednesday, October 14, from 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. in Memorial Hall 100 at Bemidji State. On Thursday, October 15, another clinic will be held from 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. in Conference Room B at Northwest Technical College. Bring your health insurance card; otherwise the cost is $24.
  • If you are at higher risk for flu complications from H1N1 flu, consider getting the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk for H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, heart disease or diabetes.
  • If you are sick, stay home. If you become sick at work, go home. Faculty and staff who are not sick can safely come to work.
    • Visit “Flu Facts” on BSU’s Web site to learn more about seasonal and H1N1 influenza.
      http://www.bemidjistate.edu/news_info/health

We will continue to monitor the flu situation as it develops and will keep you informed of any changes.

In the meantime, practice healthy habits, consider getting the seasonal flu vaccine and stay home or go home if you’re ill. These simple actions will have a significant impact on reducing the spread of this year’s influenza.

The President’s message originally appeared on BSU’s faculty-staff listserv on Thursday, Sept. 17.
For more than 40 years, Bemidji State University graduate Dr. Will Antell has been on the front lines advocating higher education opportunities for American Indians. On Thursday, Sept. 24, he will return to his alma mater to discuss his lifetime of work during the American Indian Summit sponsored by the AIRC.

Antell’s keynote address, which will be held at 10:30 a.m. in the AIRC’s Gathering Place, will focus on the development of American Indian education beginning in the 1950s, when few opportunities existed for Indian people to pursue higher education, through its evolution to today’s college campuses with resource centers and support programs dedicated to Indian students.

Antell has spent more than four decades in public education including 30 years in the Minnesota Department of Education. While at the department, he served nine years as the assistant commissioner of education.

A former Bush Fellow and faculty member at the University of Minnesota and Harvard University, Antell served six years as a MnSCU trustee from 2000-06. In 2005, he was given a Life Achievement Award by the National Indian Education Association, an organization he helped found in 1970.

Antell’s keynote address is part of an all-day summit that begins at 10 a.m.
Living Well, Working Well

Campus group to begin a series of faculty and staff wellness initiatives this fall

When the BSU/Northwest Technical College Living Well, Working Well Task Force sees the doors open on its inaugural event next week, more than a year’s worth of behind-the-scenes work will finally pay off.

More than a year ago, Riki Scheela, professor of nursing, began gathering a group of people on campus who were interested in wellness initiatives, and eventually assembled a group of eight people who would make up the wellness task force.

“This was just something I wanted to do,” she said. “And I was fortunate to find others who were also interested in starting something like this here at BSU.”

The group spent its first year together developing a mission and goals, and also surveyed the faculty and staff to determine their interest in wellness initiatives.

The survey results indicated a large percentage of the respondents were looking for help with a variety of wellness issues, such as weight loss, ways to increase physical activity and deal with stress in the workplace, and Scheela started guiding the task force to create activities the survey showed that faculty and staff were looking for.

According to Scheela, the task force has a variety of activities throughout the upcoming year. Each month will have a theme of activities, with “Stressbusters” as the theme for October. Activities supporting that theme will include noontime exercise and meditation lessons and activities meant to introduce methods of dealing with stress at work. The group also plans to participate in a “Ride Your Bike to Work Day” in October.

The activities for November and beyond are still being finalized, but Scheela plans for the group to play an active and vital role in the well-being of the campus community.

While Monday’s “Living Well, Working Well for Busy Faculty and Staff” event is the task force’s first official campus event, the group actually started its work over the summer. More than 20 people participated in a Weight Watchers at Work group that met at Northwest Tech; that group collectively lost around 370 pounds. A new Weight Watchers session began this week.

For more about Living Well, Working Well and for a listing of the group’s events and activities, visit it at: http://bit.ly/1NYKDQ

Staff Feature

Andy Bartlett, associate director of communications and marketing

Introduction

One new addition to BSU Insider this year will be feature stories in each issue on a member of the University’s faculty or staff. I decided it was only fair to make myself the first victim. The profiles will feature a brief question-and-answer section followed by an adaptation of James Lipton’s famous group of questions that conclude “Inside the Actor’s Studio.” In other words, I want these to be fun.

If you have suggestions for a faculty or staff member you’d like to see featured here, e-mail me at jbartlett@bemidjistate.edu or call my office at 2746.

What’s your job at BSU?

I’m the associate director of communications and marketing. I oversee communications for the university, primarily in the area of media relations. I’m also on the editorial board for Horizons, the University’s alumni magazine, and the editor and producer of BSU Insider, the faculty and staff newsletter for the campus community which you’re reading right now.

How long have you been here?

I came to Bemidji State in May of 2001 as Sports Information Director, and held that job until the spring of 2007. I had an opportunity to move across campus into this position at that time, and I took advantage of the opportunity. It’s been a fun, but very challenging, change for me.

What’s your favorite thing about being at BSU?

I enjoy that it’s 78 degrees here while my parents are baking at 105 in Kansas. The people here have been fun to work with and have always been helpful and supportive. It’s a great place with a lot of potential to do some really wonderful things.

Inside the Beaver’s Studio

2. What is your least favorite word? “Obamania”; it’s tabloid nonsense like “Bennifer” or “Brangelina.”

3. What turns you on? Things I cannot afford flavored like electronics and cars.


5. What sound do you love? People talking in theaters during movies.

6. What sound do you hate? My kids giggling, and in all seriousness, trees full of locusts. I miss that sound from home...

7. What profession other than yours would you like to attempt? Computer programmer.

8. What profession would you not like to do? I would be an absolutely terrible professional athlete.

9. If heaven exists, what would you like to hear God say when you arrive at the pearly gates? “Dude, are you ever lucky you didn’t get the other guy.”
Personnel News
New faces and old friends in new places

• Evonne McKinzie joined Records Office as a temporary assistant registrar effective Sept. 1, 2009.

Campus Notes
Updates on the activities and achievements of our friends in the campus community

BSU Foundation
• The fourth annual Community Appreciation Day event on Aug. 27 was a huge success. The BSU Foundation estimated more than 2,500 guests attended the event this year, and more than 6,200 servings of food were distributed. There were 20 academic and club booths at this year’s event, and nine of BSU’s varsity intercollegiate athletic programs hosted playing activities for kids.

Student Development and Enrollment

Health Science and Human Ecology
• Dr. Lorraine Boyle, associate professor of professional education, presented “eFolios Showcase What Pre-Service Teachers Know and Can Do” on Aug. 6 at the 2009 eFolio Summit, sponsored by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. The summit was held on the campus of Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

Above: The M*A*S*H* crew, played by Dawn Huseby, Joe Czapiewski, Wray Wright and Marla Patrias of the BSU Foundation, competed in the United Way Chili Cookoff at the Paul Bunyan Mall this week. Members of the Alumni Association donated ingredients for the four-gallon chili, named “Major Burns,” all of which was served to participants in the cookoff. It marked the third year the Alumni Association and BSU Foundation have participated in the chili cookoff, and planning is already underway for the 2010 entry. Wray makes a great Klinger...

Arts and Sciences
• Dr. Ellen Jones was lighting and scenic designer for a production of the Samuel Beckett play “Waiting for Godot” at the Lost Nation Theatre in Montpelier, Vt. The show opened on Aug. 6 and recently completed a six-week run.

"#" required after long distance codes starting Sept. 29

Effective Sept. 29, Paul Bunyan Telephone is switching to a different long distance provider. Our long distance codes will remain the same but we will need to enter a pound sign (#) after the code.

Here is an example of how to place a long distance call beginning Sept. 29: Dial 8-1-651-555-1212. When you hear the tone, enter your 6 digit long distance code, followed by the pound sign (#). If you have your code programmed into fax machines, telephones, etc, you will need add the # to the end of those as well. If you have forgotten your long distance code, e-mail your BSU tech ID and phone number to Marie Bock (mbock@bemidjistate.edu) and she will e-mail it back to you.