

# System Speeds Purchases

The Purchasing Department's new system of ordering scientific equipment and supplies is so fast the order sometimes arrives before the paperwork is completely processed here.

Researchers in the medical center are benefitting from what Daphne Underwood, buyer for scientific equipment, calls the Space Age Purchasing Department.

Named ASAP (Analytical Systems Automated Purchasing or As Soon As Possible), the system links the Purchasing Department office on Buchanan Boulevard directly to the main Chicago computer of Scientific Products, the largest supplier of scientific equipment and supplies in the United States.

### Direct Line

When purchasing receives a requisition, Joy Robertson, purchasing assistant, uses a touch-tone telephone with a direct line to Scientific Products to code the catalog number, amount needed, Duke's purchase order number and destination.

Within 30 seconds to two minutes a teletype terminal prints out all the shipping information, price and the company's order number. The computer prints out the same information at the same time in the company's Charlotte warehouse. This serves as a packing slip when a truck brings orders from Charlotte twice a week.

"Even if a requisition takes a day in campus mail, this system is faster than calling an order directly to the company," Underwood said. "Our system overrides any others."

### Immediate Feedback

"We learn of any errors in our orders immediately and we don't have to wait two or three weeks to find out if an item is out of stock," she said.

If the Charlotte warehouse doesn't have an item, she explained, the company will reorder it from the nearest stock and will print out the location from which it is being shipped. The company has 40 warehouses in the United States.

Duke is the second institution in the country to install the system. Northwestern University was first.

Duke has more orders than any other institution and is serving as a model for other places interested in the system, Underwood said. The system is capable of handling 77 other purchasers.



**FASTER THAN EVER** — That's the service the Purchasing Department can offer to researchers like Capt. William Briner, assistant professor of radiology and director of radiopharmacy. Daphne Underwood (left), buyer for scientific equipment, and Joy Robertson, purchasing assistant, show him a teletype acknowledgement within two minutes after an order was placed. (Photo by Ina Fried)

## Cancer Factors

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infections as a first symptom, he said. Pain in a bone can also be a first symptom, particularly in the ribs, backbone, pelvis or skull. The pain often gets worse with exercise.

"Ultimately, what we're aiming at is prevention," said Grufferman, an assistant professor of community and family medicine. He is conducting the study with Dr. Harvey J. Cohen, an associate professor of medicine at the cancer center and chief of the medical service at the VA Hospital. Assisting is Caroline Peterson, a student in Duke's M.D. — Ph.D. program.

By examining medical records and by interviewing patients, the three will attempt to learn whether personal habits or occupations are linked to multiple myeloma.

### Environmental Factors

"Nobody knows the relationship between myeloma and alcohol use, diet, cigarette smoking, obesity, drug usage, chemical exposure or previous infections," Grufferman said.

Each myeloma patient studied will be compared with three or four other patients of the same sex and race and close to the same age who do not have myeloma.

In this way, the scientists can isolate those personal factors associated with the cancer.

"I hope we'll come up with one or more environmental factors linked to the disease," Grufferman said. "If we do, then we know what steps should be taken to reduce exposure to these factors."

Earlier studies showed that farmers and radiologists have a higher than normal risk for multiple myeloma. The Grufferman-Cohen-Peterson study will indicate whether workers in other fields also have a high risk.

## Benefits Help To Meet Employees' Needs

Do you know what your benefits are at Duke?

Although about 41 percent of the employees answering the Employee Survey believe the benefits are good, 76 per cent of them said they did not know as much as they would like about benefits.

Special articles in *Intercom* and later in the new employee newsletter (see story on page one), will cover frequently used benefits such as vacation and sick leave and other benefits such as health services, the retirement plan, leave policies, total disability, tuition and the PEP program.

### Duke's Contribution

Richard A. Bindewald, director of benefits and records, explains that employee benefits fall into two categories: *direct fringe benefits*, which are most often based on a percentage of the employee's salary (like the Employees' Retirement Plan) and sometimes require an employee contribution (like the Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance plan); and *indirect fringe benefits*, such as vacation, sick leave, and paid holidays.

On an average, Duke's contribution for both direct and indirect benefits is about the same as one-third of an employee's salary.

### Information Program

Many of the direct fringe benefits are detailed and may vary depending on an employee's length of service, age, salary, number of dependents, and on other criteria. To describe these more complicated plans, the benefits and records division of personnel offers the Benefits Information Program (also known as "BIP").

This program explains Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance, life insurance, Employees' Retirement Plan, and total disability insurance. The program takes about an hour and includes a question-and-answer period.

So far, 111 sessions have been held, and 1,893 employees have attended these sessions; the group meetings are small (average attendance is 17) so that employees can receive individual attention.

Departments wishing to participate in BIP should have a representative contact Al Williams,

manager of benefits and records, 684-6723.

### Important Benefits

"In planning benefits, the employer must face reality and be aware that employees have certain needs," said Bindewald. "Duke's benefit programs are planned to meet these needs."

According to the survey, employees agree on the importance of benefits. The benefits which employees say are most important

are typically those used regularly by employees: sick leave, vacation and paid holidays.

The following chart is designed to be a handy reference on frequently-used benefits. Like all quick guides, this chart does not cover these benefit policies in detail; for in-depth information, employees should contact their supervisors or refer to the Personnel Policy Manual (available to employees in their departments).

CHART OF BENEFITS (for fulltime, permanent biweekly employees)				
Type of Benefit	Purpose of Benefit	How Benefit Is Earned or Granted	Maximum Accrual	Available during Probationary Period?
*Vacation	Rest and relaxation, observance of religious holidays not covered by holiday policy, long-term illness after sick leave is used up.	0-3 years of service: 3.1 hrs. per pay period or 2 weeks per year 4-8 years of service: 4.6 hrs. per pay period or 3 weeks per year 9 years of service or more: 6.2 hrs. per pay period or 4 weeks per year.	1 and 1/2 times employee's yearly vacation earning.	No
*Sick Leave	Illness, doctor or dental appts., up to 5 days a yr. for illness of spouse, children, parents.	3.7 hours earned per pay period or 12 days a year.	700 hours (87.5 work days)	No
*Jury Duty Leave	To serve on jury or when subpoenaed as a witness.	Available as needed.	No accrual.	Yes
*Funeral Leave	To attend funeral of close relatives.	Immediate family: Up to 5 consecutive calendar days beginning with day of death. Other relatives: Up to 3 consecutive calendar days beginning with day of death or day after at employee's option.	No accrual, available as needed	Yes
**Election Leave	To vote in Presidential elections.	Up to 2 hours for each Presidential election.	No accrual, available as needed	Yes
*Holiday Leave	Time off to celebrate holidays.	5 days-designated each year by policy. 1 day-employee's birthday. 6 days-discretionary holidays, earned by being on payroll first day of Mar, Apr, May, June, Aug, Oct.	No accrual, discretionary holidays must be taken by Feb. 28 of following year	Yes

\* Employees who work an abbreviated schedule receive a percentage of benefit based on regular hours worked per week.

\*\* Employees who work an abbreviated schedule are eligible for full benefit.