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CATCHING UP ON THINGS—University President Terry Sanford, back at Duke after his leave of absence, perused *Intercom* last week as part of his effort to familiarize himself with recent goings-on around here. Noting that 61 employee accidents were reported in the last "safety scoreboard," Sanford said, "That figure is too high, and we've got to reduce it." Sanford also said, "It's good to be back." (Photo by David Williamson)

Employee Relations Opens the Door for Personnel

A Sympathetic Ear and a Helping Hand

"I was getting ready to be evicted from my apartment," a hospital employee said recently. "I had been sick and out of work."

"Employee Relations called my realtor and got them to give me some more time," he said. "And they also sat down with me and helped me work out a budget."

Another hospital employee, Verlene S. Beasley of microbiology, said "When people have something to go wrong we always go to Glory (Gloria McAuley) or Wanda (Wanda Crenshaw) to assist us how to go by it. They always have a cheery smile and make you feel better when you talk to them. We should have had this program before the employees. It solves a whole lot of problems."

Those were just two of the many nice things people had to say when they heard *Intercom* was preparing a story about Employee Relations.

People and Policies

According to Herbert Aikens, director of the service and associate director of personnel, "Employee Relations is a supporting arm of the Personnel Department charged with the responsibility of insuring that policies affecting people at the

university are fair and that they respect the rights of both employees and supervisors."

It was established to help the university, an organization with thousands of different individuals and an equal number of different personalities run as smoothly as possible, he said.

Working with Aikens toward this goal at the medical center are representatives Wanda Crenshaw and Gloria McAuley.

Employee Relations might be called the "people" part of personnel. When employees have problems related to their work or in their personal lives, they can go to the three staff members in Room 1160 of the hospital's first floor with the knowledge that these concerned individuals will lend them a sympathetic ear and a helping hand.

Open Door

"The door is always open," Aikens said.

"Employees come to us for all kinds of reasons," Ms. McAuley said. "Some of these reasons may be financial or they may be related to the person's marriage or children. Sometimes they just need someone to talk to."

"Most people want to discuss something related to their jobs," Ms. Crenshaw said. "In these cases, we talk to the employees and then to the supervisors to try to get an accurate picture of the problem so we can help both parties toward a solution in a fair and impartial way."

Coffee Hour

One of the most successful programs initiated by the Personnel Department and implemented by Employee Relations has been the "Employee Coffee Hour." Approximately twice a week, Aikens and representatives Crenshaw and McAuley meet with employees of a service department within the hospital.

In a candid session over coffee and doughnuts, employees and supervisors will raise questions concerning university policy, suggest policy changes, point out working conditions that need improvement and voice opinions on "life" within their departments.

"The coffee hour brings employees and management together in much-needed discussions," Aikens said. "It is an open forum for

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Gallstone Study Gets Under Way

By Charles Young

A major research effort to determine the feasibility of using concentrated amounts of a natural body chemical to dissolve gallstones is getting under way here.

Successful results could mean a considerable reduction in the number of gallstone disease patients requiring hospitalization and surgical treatment.

Funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health, the study is to run for three years and eventually will involve up to 900 patients nationally. As one of the 10 institutions chosen as treatment centers, Duke's share of the total grant is \$499,520.

The study involves the use of chenodeoxycholic acid (CDCA) which is one of the primary bile acids normally produced by the liver. The bile is stored in the gallbladder until it is needed to aid in digestion of fats in the diet. Stones form when there is a heavy concentration of cholesterol in the bile.

Dr. Malcolm P. Tyor, head of the division of gastroenterology in the Department of Medicine, said the study will attempt to show that by "feeding" additional quantities of CDCA it is possible to improve the body's ability to cope with cholesterol buildup, thus preventing the formation of stones.

In addition, he said, it is hoped that the treatment will make it possible to dissolve stones that already have solidified.

There are an estimated 15 million Americans who have gallstone disease, Tyor said, and "at least 50 per cent and perhaps up to 70 per cent of those who harbor cholesterol gallstones stand to benefit" if the study shows the treatment to be effective. Cholesterol gallstones make up 85 per cent of all gallstone disease, he said.

About 800,000 new cases of the disease are reported each year in the United States, Tyor said, and of these patients about half are treated by

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DR. MALCOLM P. TYOR