# SEI OR FALL 2020 SAN JACINTO COLLEGE<sup>SM</sup>











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#### **About San Jacinto College**

Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the citizens of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. San Jacinto College is among the top 10 community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute for Community College Excellence, and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College serves approximately 45,000 credit and non-credit students annually, and offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. San Jacinto College's impact on the region totals \$1.3 billion in added income, which supports 13,044 jobs. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA and Aa2 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's.

For more information about San Jacinto College, call 281-998-6150, visit sanjac.edu, or join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter.

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## NEWS & NOTES

#### San Jacinto College Foundation raises \$360,500 for students in need

The San Jacinto College Foundation raised more than \$360,500 with its 2020 Gala with a Twist fundraising campaign, announcing the campaign's success at the College's board of trustees meeting in June.

"Fundraising campaigns like this are critically important to our success," said Dr. Brenda Hellyer, San Jacinto College Chancellor. "These generous donations enhance our ability to help students in the ways they need it most. Some face an unexpected emergency and need immediate help, and others are working day in and day out to overcome ongoing obstacles. It's our mission to help every student achieve their educational goals, and we are so grateful to the community, our partners, and our employees for helping us do that."

One hundred percent of the funds raised will benefit San Jac students with immediate needs. The funds will offset costs such as tuition, books, food, clothing, transportation, and child care for student recipients and will also help the College continue to provide students with vital campus resources.

"Fortunately, this year's fundraising gala was originally launched in January as an online campaign, so we were able to continue our efforts during COVID-19, which has directly impacted so many of our students in complex ways," said Ruth Keenan, the foundation's executive director. "Our fundraising efforts became even more critical in light of the pandemic."

In addition to the \$360,500 raised by the fundraiser, the Foundation approved \$200,000 in emergency funding in March to assist students with \$250 scholarships during the COVID-19 crisis, and nearly 1,200 students have received the emergency aid to date. The College has also distributed more than \$3.7 million to students via San Jac emergency aid grants through the Federal CARES Act.

To donate and support the San Jacinto College Foundation, visit sanjac.edu/foundation or call 281-998-6104.

#### San Jac 3-peats as Top 10 community college in the nation

ASPEN

**TOP 10** 

2021

This summer, San Jacinto College was named as one of 10 finalists for the \$1 million 2021 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's

signature recognition of high achievement and performance among community colleges.

Awarded every two years since 2011, the Aspen Prize recognizes institutions that achieve strong student

outcomes across four key areas: teaching and learning, degree completion and successful transfer to four-year institutions, success in the workforce, and equitable outcomes for diverse student groups.

In 2017, San Jacinto College earned the Aspen Rising Star Award, naming the College one of the top five community colleges in the nation and in 2019, the Aspen Institute named San Jacinto College as one of the nation's top 10.

"It is again an honor to be recognized by the Aspen Institute for the incredible work being done at San Jacinto College to help our students reach their educational goals," said San Jacinto College Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer. "This recognition is due to the dedication of our Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff to ensure that all of our students have the resources they need and well-planned educational pathways to complete their certificates or degrees. On behalf of everyone at San Jacinto College, I thank the Aspen Institute for this amazing honor."

"San Jacinto College is always improving," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the College Excellence Program. "The college has comprehensively restructured its systems to align everything to students' success, from before they enroll until they complete a degree. The college is also especially effective in building relationships with employers to deliver what the community needs to thrive and ensuring that graduates succeed in the workforce."

The 10 Aspen Prize finalists were selected from the nation's 1,000 community colleges in a process that included qualitative and quantitative data analysis and engaged more than 30 experts in the field.

After a rigorous review process in fall 2020, a distinguished jury will convene in early 2021 to select the prize winner, finalists with distinction, and a rising star and allocate a \$1 million award among them. The winner will be announced at a May 2021 event in Washington, D.C.

#### North, South Campuses welcome new provosts

San Jacinto College has announced the hiring of two new College provosts following the retirement of two longtime College leaders. Dr. Alexander Okwonna and Dr. Aaron Knight have been named provosts of the San Jacinto College North and South Campuses, respectively. Their tenure in these positions began in July.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Okwonna and Dr. Knight to San Jacinto College as provosts," said Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer. "Both leaders were selected after a national search that included months



Dr. Aaron Knight

of interviews and several forums with San Jacinto College employees. Dr. Okwonna and Dr. Knight exemplify the core values at San Jacinto College and will be excellent leaders as we transition on the North and South Campuses. I look forward to working with them as we continue to support our students along their higher education pathway."

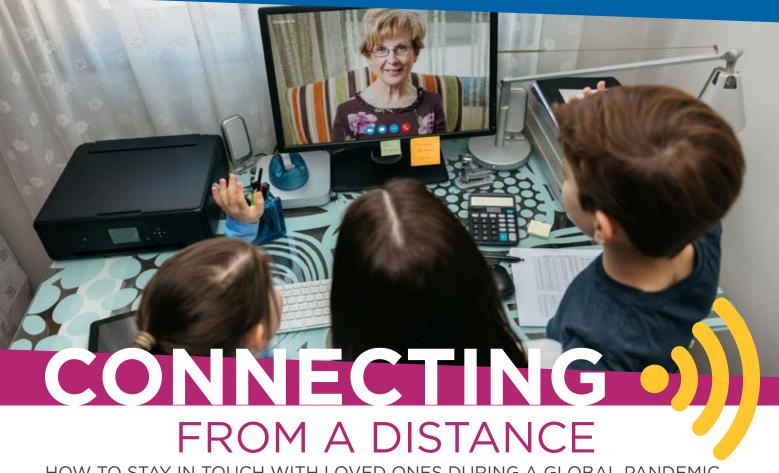


Dr. Alexander

Dr. Okwonna took over for Dr. William Raffetto, who retired after more than 35 years of service to San Jacinto College. Okwonna has been in higher education for more than 15 years and most recently served

as the dean of health and natural science at the South Campus. Okwonna is also a registered pharmacist and has served in the United States Army. He holds an Associate of Science degree from Houston Community College as well as a Doctorate in Pharmacy from Texas Southern University.

Dr. Aaron Knight replaced Dr. Brenda Jones who also retired from the College after nearly 20 years. Knight has been in higher education for more than 25 years and has spent the last 20 years at Houston Community College, most recently as dean of social and behavioral sciences. Knight holds master's and bachelor's degrees from Sam Houston State University as well as a doctorate in political science from Texas A&M University at College Station.



HOW TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH LOVED ONES DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

By Melissa Trevizo

Keeping socially distant is the new normal during the COVID-19 era, but that doesn't mean you have to miss quality time with your loved ones. Thankfully, there are a host of applications for your mobile device or computer that will allow you to make new memories together.

San Jacinto College's Digital Marketing Manager Jahmal Clemons offers these social media suggestions for keeping in touch with loved ones:



**FaceTime:** This is one of the most accessible options because it comes built into the iPhone. First, make sure both parties have an Apple device (iPad, iPhone, or iMac), set a time, and be ready to spend time with loved ones doing your favorite twoperson activity, be it a board game or a tour of your garden.



**Messenger:** Facebook's instant messaging service is a great way to connect with folks near and far. Messenger allows you to communicate through text, pictures, and videos. Users don't even need a Facebook account to use the app. You can also send money instantly, play virtual games, and request a ride through Uber or Lyft.



**Group Chats:** Group messaging apps are easy text-based tools to stay in touch with several people at once. One challenge you may find is that different family members may have different phone carriers and messages aren't always received. Thankfully, free apps like GroupMe and WhatsApp make it easy for everyone to get together. Sharing pictures or recalling a shared family memory has never been easier.



Video Calling: Can't meet in person for the family reunion this year? Consider using a video conference app like Google Duo, Zoom, or HouseParty. Like the group chats, everyone must have the app and a device with a built-in camera. When it's time to meet, everyone will appear on the screen, Brady Bunch-style. This allows users to chat freely while seeing all of the other members.



**Digital Music Services:** Thanks to apps like Spotify and iTunes, it's never been easier to experience music's power to connect us. Create a shared playlist and host a virtual dance party using one of the video apps above.

There are many ways to connect virtually with friends and family during this uncertain time, and it doesn't have to be intimidating to set up a service. Most of these options are free and user-friendly, making it a snap to stay connected while staying socially distant.

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## YOU GOT THIS

#### OVERCOME CHALLENGING SEASONS WITH THESE TIPS

By Courtney Morris

Life screeched to a halt this spring, courtesy of a pandemic.

Although "unprecedented" described COVID-19 circumstances, stressful seasons -- physical, emotional, or both -- can happen anytime. How do you prepare for them?

If you're looking to manage stress better or build your immune system, San Jacinto College instructors offer some ideas.

#### Fitness: Aim for realistic

Exercise. It not only busts stress and depression symptoms but can also reduce sickness.

See your home and nature as your gym. Start with a walk around the block. Then build to 30-60 minutes of daily moderate



exercise, breaking into chunks, if needed.

Trenton Denton, physical education professor, shares this adaptable rotation:

- Monday: Cycling
- Tuesday: Strength training
- Wednesday: Yoga
- Thursday: Walking
- Friday: Strength training
- Saturday: Water aerobics
- Sunday: Recovery/flexibility

Most importantly, choose doable goals.

"Discipline is the key to maintain a healthy lifestyle," Denton said. "Focus on the benefits of exercise and set and achieve realistic goals."

If you rarely exercise, consult your physician

#### **Diet: Plan to win**

Partnering with exercise is a healthy diet, which fuels your body and mind. Whether you're grabbing takeout or opening the fridge, plan ahead to avoid unhealthy food traps.

"Let's face it: we eat whatever is the fastest solution once we reach lunch and we're hungry," Andrea Huerta, culinary arts program director, said.

Leave chips and cookies at the store. Instead, focus on moderate portions of vegetables, fruit, whole grains,



lean proteins, and good fats (nuts, coconut oil, etc.). Huerta cooks freezable food in bulk for easy meals later.

"A favorite of mine is charro beans cooked in a crockpot on low overnight," she said. "I use dried beans, and in the morning, I divide into portions for the freezer."

#### **Immune system:** Listen to body

Help your body by preventing infection and recognizing when your immune system is

playing defense.

Protect your skin, nose, and mouth from pathogen entry. Also, improve your immunity with self-care:



- Get adequate rest
- Drink plenty of water
- Pursue stress-reducing activities
- Take probiotics to support good bacteria in the gut
- Take vitamin C and zinc to suppress viral replication

Listen to your body. Feeling unwell? Experiencing inflammation and fever? These are the immune system's natural responses as it fights infection.

"Often the feeling of malaise is the beginning of an immune reaction," said Dr. Lindsey

Douglas, medical laboratory technology program interim director. "Provide your body with extra rest, stay hydrated, and hopefully your immune system will successfully fight off invaders."

### Mental health: Choose joy, accept reality

Cayman Tirado, mental health services program director, calls it like it is: "Who

doesn't feel stressed?"

Rather than avoiding stress, she suggests managing overwhelming emotions. Tackle your



thoughts head-on since thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are connected.

"We can choose a helpful thought that moves us toward wellness or a non-helpful thought that moves us away from wellness," Tirado said. "Processing the emotion we're feeling rather than acting from the emotion can make a huge difference."

Focus on "radical acceptance" -- allowing and accepting what is.

"It's OK to feel scared or worried. Rather than push those feelings away, acknowledge what you feel," she said. "Then ask yourself what you need right now to best manage those feelings."

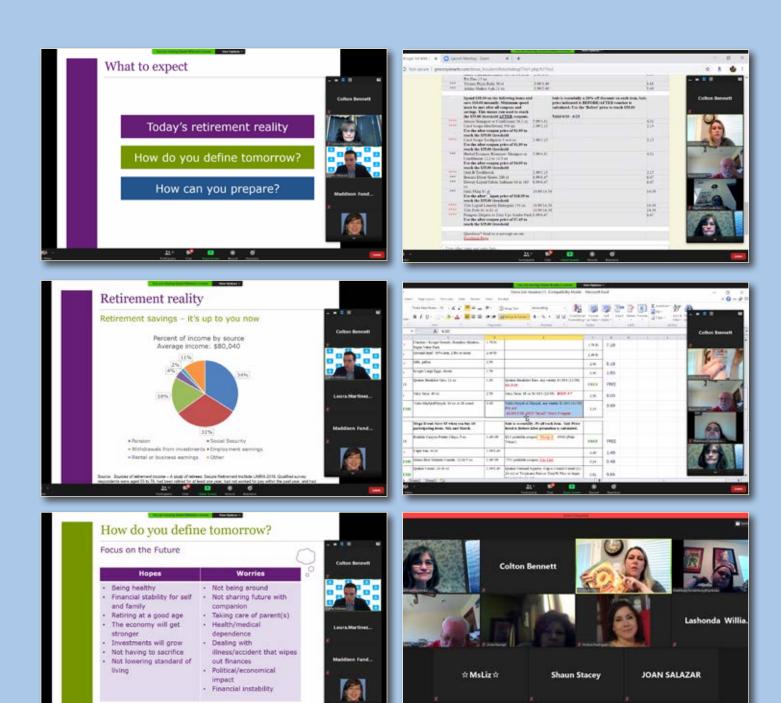
#### Challenging seasons will end

Life won't stay this way forever. It will get better.

Overwhelmed? Go for a walk. Eat healthy food. Rest. FaceTime your grandkids. Pretty soon, these habits will become a lifestyle.

"Maintaining good health happens by checking in with yourself and addressing your needs in a proactive, healthy way," Tirado said.





## CPD LEARN @HOME

San Jacinto College's Continuing and Professional Development (CPD) Community Engagement Center is bringing Learn@Home Zoom courses to the local community during the College's altered operations period due to COVID-19. In these examples, attendees logged in to the Extreme Couponing session to learn how to get the most out of coupon deals at local retailers, and they joined in the Women and Wealth Zoom session with MDT Financial Advisors to learn more about investing. For more information about CPD Learn@Home Zoom courses, visit sanjac.edu/learn-home.

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Many adults anticipate retirement the way kids count the days until Christmas.

But at San Jacinto College, some faculty and staff keep office hours beyond typical retirement age, enjoying the work itself. A few shared what keeps them at San Jac and motivates them each day. (Hint: It's not just the paycheck.)

#### **RICHARD MCKAY, 68**

#### HIRED THANKS TO AN ARGUMENT

The South Campus library director has been with the College 35 years, starting as the public services librarian (a.k.a. reference librarian) in 1985 and advancing to his current role in 1992.

#### Q: How does your job keep you young?

A: My typical work week is predictably quiet but not without its gratifying moments. I think it's more personal momentum than anything else. I have a fun job. I keep telling people this, but nobody believes me!

#### Q: How do you maintain energy and positivity on the job?

A: I won the job lottery. I've spent the past 35 years doing work I find rewarding and useful to others. When I was in parochial school, the teacher made us pray for a vocation. I guess things worked out -- for me, at least.

#### Q: What is most challenging about your job? Most rewarding?

A: Once in a blue moon, I'll find myself needing to have an uncomfortable conversation with a library patron or an employee. At times like these, I remind myself I need to be wide awake and aware of what's best for the school and for the person I'm talking with. Every conscious breath I draw in the library is a gift, and I'm thankful for it. I work with, for, and around wonderful people.

#### Q: How do you maintain work/life balance?

A: I'm lucky. The things I do as part of my job are so similar to things I do for enjoyment and personal enrichment that there's little question of the two being at odds with each other.

#### Q: What's an interesting fact about you?

A: I got my job here by accident. When I interviewed for public services librarian, I wasn't the committee's first choice. Dr. Parker Williams (South Campus president at the time) called her No. 1 pick to offer him the job and got into an argument with him that ended with her taking back the offer. I know this because Dr. Williams told me about it. She was still upset about it years afterward.



#### **KEVIN HALE, 59**

#### WORLD RECORD HOLDER

The professor of business management and maritime administration has been with San Jac since 2013. After serving as a temporary instructor, he transitioned to full-time professor.

#### Q: What is a typical work week like for you?

A: It consists of teaching five to six classes in person and online, attending to faculty senate business, and working on initiatives such as the South Campus "Speaking of Business" series and Venture Pitch Competition.

#### Q: How does your job keep you young?

A: I find myself learning new things all the time and doing a great deal of reading and research to provide current information to my students.

#### Q: What is most rewarding about your job?

A: The most rewarding parts of my job are three-fold: first, when a student graduates with a degree or certificate; second, when a student graduates and then moves on to a four-year college; and, third, when a student earns a promotion at work using the knowledge she gained in class.

#### Q: How do you maintain work/life balance?

A: I set a schedule and keep to it. I learned early during my service as a naval officer it is easier to set a time to complete a task correctly initially than to need to find the time to have to complete it correctly a second time.

#### Q: What's an interesting fact about you?

A: When I was 19, I held 1/100th of the world record for the 100-mile relay run indoors. I was part of a group of 100 runners who ran 1 mile each. We covered 100 miles indoors faster than had ever been done previously.

#### MARY GILLISPIE, 79

#### POSITIVE PART-TIMER

When she retired early from hospital nursing management, Gillispie wasn't ready for full retirement. The associate degree nursing adjunct faculty member has been with the College since 1994 and teaches two health assessment classes each semester.

#### Q: How does your job keep you young?

A: I continue to work because I feel I have some small part in developing the nurses of tomorrow. Also, coming to work gives me something to look forward to. I have to get out of bed, put on some makeup, and be ready for the day. I also have to stay current with what is happening in the profession.

#### Q: How do you maintain energy and positivity on the job?

A: I am the kind of person who does much better when I am active, so having a schedule works well for me. The students help keep me positive. There is an energy that exists in the nursing classroom that creates excitement as we explore the concepts of nursing.

#### Q: What is most rewarding about your job?

A: It is always a beautiful experience to attend the pinning ceremony for new graduates. These graduates, dressed in new white nursing uniforms, are presented the Central Campus nursing pin, symbolic of their successful completion of the nursing program. We, the faculty, watch with pride as these intelligent, eager new nurses enter the profession.

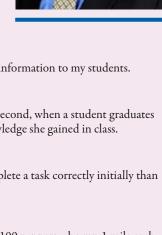
#### Q: What would you tell someone considering retirement?

A: If you are considering retirement, have a plan! You have been active for many years. You will appreciate "a breather" but then may become bored. Working part time works great for me. I get to work with students but also have time for other activities.

#### Q: What's an interesting fact about you?

A: I have a daughter, son-in-law, two grown granddaughters, and two great-grandchildren.





## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

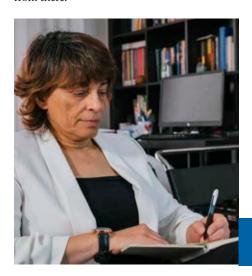
## **DURING COVID-19**

By Andrea Vasquez

One of the largest impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is on the economy. Many have lost jobs, been forced to retire, or have seen retirement funds disappear overnight. However, the other impact many consider is time. Due to social distancing, many employers nationwide are now requiring everyday operations to be done from home. This means more time with family and in general more time at home. For recent retirees who now have to make financial decisions on whether or not to re-enter the workforce, some are rediscovering old dreams of owning their own business or perhaps tailoring current plans to accommodate the new needs that have arisen due to the pandemic.

Like any entrepreneurial endeavor, everything starts with a business plan. San Jacinto College Business Management Professor Kevin Hale suggests looking at the bigger picture when creating your plan.

"The main thing to consider is what will the world, Texas, or Houston look like post-coronavirus," said Hale. "What would have worked pre-coronavirus might not suffice, so any considerations have to take into account shifting from how things were to how they might be going forward. Start with looking at businesses that are thriving despite the coronavirus and the various shutdowns and go from there."



Once the business plan has all of those considerations covered, the next step is researching business loans. COVID-19 has forced interest rates to drop to some of the lowest numbers in decades. Hale reminds entrepreneurs that despite the appealing low rates, it's still a loan.

"Right now, loans do have low interest rates, but it still has to be repaid," he said. "Any business should take into account keeping overhead as low as possible to stay financially viable. That means operating with as few employees as possible and no unnecessary expenditures on capital purchases – rent or buy used if possible. Also take into account how much risk you are ready to tolerate. If possible, hold off on taking a loan until 2021 at the earliest, assuming a loan could be had."

For those looking into what type of business they want to start in the age of COVID-19, Hale suggests looking into the medical equipment supply, delivery services, carry-out food restaurants, and food trucks. These sectors are in high demand everywhere due to social distancing and health safety requirements for employees and patrons. He also advises entrepreneurs to avoid starting brick-and-



mortar businesses in retail as well as anything upstream, midstream, or downstream in the oil and natural gas sectors, again due to the pandemic's effect on companies requiring most, if not all, employees to work from home.

Overall, Hale encourages prospective, new, and current business owners to follow the guidelines put forth by medical professionals regarding social distancing, mask usage, and hygienic practices. Although the current situation fluctuates daily, like all other difficult times, as the saying goes, "this too shall pass."

"The current state of affairs will end eventually, so do what you must within the law to stay viable and look for opportunities to grow your business," said Hale. "Be ready to take advantage of whatever may come from where we are now."

For more information on San Jacinto College business programs, visit sanjac.edu/program/business.



Andrea Vasquez

## FIGHTING AGE DISCRIMINATION

Despite the growing numbers of a retiring workforce, the employment sector of those age 50 and older also continues to increase. According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), by 2024 there will be nearly 41 million Americans age 55 and older working. Unfortunately, some of these employees may experience age discrimination, if they haven't encountered it already.

Within the last five years, age discrimination cases have been brought against Google, the LA Times, and IKEA, among other corporate enterprises. Current national legislation like the Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act (POWADA) would restore protections of The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) eroded by a 2009 Supreme Court ruling in Gross v. FBL Financial Services Inc. which made it more difficult for workers age 40 and older to sue businesses for age discrimination such as being forced out of a job or denied a work opportunity. The ruling states that older Americans must prove age was the decisive factor in an employer's decision. The proposed POWADA bill would revert to the previous ADEA legal threshold, which said that older workers must prove age was just one of several factors.

For those who find themselves in this situation, the important thing to know is what to do to avoid or confront age discrimination.

#### Job applications

Almost all job applications require your date of birth for security reasons. While this may worry applicants, San Jacinto College Career Services Coordinator Brittany Bonds says your résumé is key.

"A good rule of thumb is to focus less on dates and put more emphasis on skills, accomplishments, and related experience," said Bonds. "Additionally, keeping information on your résumé relevant and focused on experience within 7-10 years can help. You can't always avoid dates or information that reveals age, but you can control how you provide information to an employer that helps them to see it's not a concern."

#### **Interviews**

Most hiring managers and committees are trained on what questions can and can't be asked during job interviews, especially when it comes to age. However, there may be situations where someone hasn't had that training. Bonds advises to focus on your expertise and bring the conversation back to what you bring to the table.

"The No. 1 thing to avoid is discussing age repeatedly yourself in an interview," she said. "It's easy to fall into the trap of addressing the 'elephant in the room' through light humor, but in fact, you may inadvertently be bringing attention to a concern that wasn't there before. Show the employer that you understand that you are older, but you also understand your value as an applicant. I often remind job seekers - only **you** know your worth and can advocate for yourself as a candidate during an interview. Be able to talk about your value with confidence (but avoid arrogance) to help them to see why you are an ideal person for their position."

#### Online/social media presence

It's commonplace for many potential employers to search candidates' online and social media presence to ensure they would be a good fit for the company and its culture. Some older applicants may just be venturing into social media, while others may not have updated their professional profiles in years. When it comes to professional online and/ or social media sites, always keep things

"For sites like LinkedIn, make sure you have a recent professional picture that is a good

representation of you for the role you're seeking," said Bonds. "It's also a good idea to make sure your information is up to date and reflective of your recent job history and experience. Keep in mind that résumé formats change frequently and expectations adapt, so be sure your résumé is reflective of today's job market trends - older résumé formats can be a key 'tell' of senior job seekers."

#### **Confronting age discrimination**

Ultimately, if applicants or employees believe they are being discriminated against because of their age, there are proper procedures to follow according to their company's human resources guidelines. In general, Bonds says to address the issue respectfully with your employer first, build your case with detailed, factual documentation, then advance to the human resources department.

"If you have addressed the issue with the employer/supervisor and your concerns are dismissed or not addressed, there are steps to take to protect yourself and appropriately move forward," she said. "First, be diligent about notating the specifics of your concerns – i.e. how your new work hours differ from others in the office, trends you see that specifically indicate discrimination against you vs. others in the office, etc. Second, notate all comments that are made against you with dates and times, and make sure to note if others heard the comments being made. Overall, state the facts and keep emotions at bay. Finally, approach your human resources department when ready, and try to have reasonable solutions to the issues. Be able to advocate for your work and results. The more evidence you can show in the situation, the better your argument will be."



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