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BEHIND THE SCENES: SAC STATE MAIL CENTER

If you visit Sac State's Mail Center, you will find a very small staff, but lots of big activity. On our visit today, a long narrow tube has just arrived from Athletics for shipping – javelins on their way to the repair shop. Mail carriers are preparing for their routes. Mail bags are set up for sorting, and a directory of campus employees and their locations sits nearby for quick reference.

The University Mail Center is not your typical corporate mail room. Sacramento State is a

community of over 30,000 students, faculty and staff, and the Mail Center is no different from any other post office for a community of this size. The full range of mail handled includes media mail for the library, first class mail and express mail services. Other services include processing of incoming and outgoing U.S. mail, and bulk mailing, which includes: addressing, list cleansing and certification, tabbing and inserting. The Center also coordinates overnight parcel delivery services through UPS.

Currently, four mail clerks and one supervisor ensure the processing, pick up, and delivery of intra-campus mail to 148 departments, auxiliary organizations and the United States Geological Services (USGS) offices located on campus. Four distinct routes consist of from 18 to 43 stops each – three on campus, one on the outskirts.

The Mail Center experiences work fluctuations aligned with University activities, as do many of the University's departments and units. For instance, boating season is just around the corner, and the



Mail Center Team: Steve Bolton, Monica Patterson, Chris Ponder, Rich Filson (supervisor), Randy Davis

Center just finished a bulk mailing job for the Aquatic Center. Soon, commencement will take center stage.

Like the U.S. Postal Service, the dedicated Mail Center team values timeliness, efficiency and accuracy, ensuring delivery of incoming mail every day to the correct location, and mailing of outgoing mail no later than the day after pick-up.

Supervisor Rich Filson says that the important characteristics of a mail clerk are physical strength and endurance, along with attention to detail. Most of Sac State's mail clerks enjoy the work because it gets them outside. This can be a blessing or a curse, depending on the weather. Chris Ponder likes the interaction with people on his route. Others agree. Back in the Center, they work as a team, processing thousands of incoming letters, flats and packages every day and mailing thousands more to people and organizations around the globe. The bulk mail operation alone is responsible for getting information and event notices distributed to several thousand interested alumni and the general public each month.



Holiday mail awaits return of Mail Center staff

Center staff has a great sense of pride in efficiencies that have been implemented to save resources. In conjunction with Reprographics, direct mail pieces can now be printed and distributed through the Center, with the equivalent service and turnaround times of an outside vendor, but at significant savings to the campus. And, this year, the Mail Center has entered a no-cost partnership with a vendor to screen incoming bulk mail for duplicates and obsolete names, and to update campus addresses. This will significantly reduce the volume of unnecessary deliveries and printed matter going into the campus waste stream.



Mail trucks sport posters advertising campus events

The Mail Center has long supported campus sustainability goals by using electric carts versus gas-powered vehicles, a transition implemented around 2000, well before other campus departments. Recently, the Center has teamed up with Reprographics to provide printing of posters for campus events, which are then displayed on mail carts up until the event date.

Some of the biggest challenges for the Center include the increasingly complex and varied rules and regulations governing the preparation and acceptance of mail by the U. S. Postal Services. Center staff stay informed of these changes in order to provide the campus with the most current and effective ways to get their mail to their target audience.

If Center staff could change one misperception about their services, it would be this. They are not “just” a mailroom, but a full service operation, with services and products for all facets of the mailing and package shipping industry. You may not know, for instance, that they carry many U.S. Postal Service products, including: custom, certify and return receipt forms, express and priority pouches and boxes; trays and tubs for bulk mailings; intra-campus envelopes. Or that they provide next day air, 2nd and 3rd day shipping and ground services through UPS, to both domestic and international destinations. Also, unidentified mail does not go into a dead letter file, as some think. Center staff is conscientious about correctly identifying and delivering mail, and they have effective tools at their disposal, including a payroll locator report, the University’s online website directory, and a network of current and retired staff.

You can help the Mail Center get your mail to its destination by ensuring that it is properly and completely addressed, with campus mail stop, individual’s full name and department name.

Sac State Mail Center Staff is: Rich Filson, supervisor, Steve Bolton, Monica Patterson, Chris Ponder, and Randy Davis.