This is an update from the Office of Human Resources regarding requirements under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and how they impact your tax filing for the 2015 tax year.

As you may know, the ACA imposes certain requirements on large employers, such as Lafayette College, to report whether they have offered “affordable minimum essential” health care coverage to any employee who works, on average, 30 hours or more per week. In order to comply with this requirement, the College will be issuing Form 1095-C to all of our full-time employees, certain part-time employees who were enrolled in coverage, and individuals with COBRA coverage. The 1095-C Form will provide individuals with a statement affirming that the College does provide affordable, minimum value coverage. Forms for the 2015 tax year will be mailed no later than March 31, 2016, but please allow seven to ten business days for delivery.

Form 1095-C is important because you may need it in order to complete your taxes, starting for the 2015 tax year. In general, the ACA requires that any individual who had health care coverage through the College will be required to provide proof of coverage at the time of their tax filing this year. This is part of the ACA “individual responsibility requirement”, which mandates that individuals either demonstrate that they had health care coverage in 2015, or pay a penalty.

In addition the Form 1095-C, you should also receive a Form 1095-B from Highmark Blue Shield, if you were enrolled in one of our health plans in 2015. You will use the information on this form as proof of coverage of yourself and your enrolled family members. While the information obtained from the 1095-B and 1095-C Forms can be helpful in completing your tax return for 2015, they may not be specifically required this year. (Please consult with your personal tax professional.)

Based on the March reporting deadline, it is possible that some employees may file their taxes before receiving Form 1095-C from the College. For more information on this topic, the IRS issued a Q&A about the health care information forms. The Q&A is intended to educate individual taxpayers and describe the forms, who will provide them, and the purposes they serve. You can find a link to the IRS Q&A here: https://www.irs.gov/Affordable-Care-Act/Questions-and-Answers-about-Health-Care-Information-Forms-for-Individuals.

The Q&A clarifies that taxpayers do not need to wait until they receive the 1095-C Form before they file their taxes. Other forms of documentation may also be used to provide evidence of health care coverage, such as insurance ID cards, explanation of benefit forms, W-2 or payroll statements, or other statements from insurance companies. In any event, taxpayers can comply with the minimum essential coverage filing requirements if they simply check the applicable box on their 1040 Form, indicating that they had coverage in 2015.

The foregoing is not intended to be individual tax advice. As such, you are encouraged to discuss this issue with your personal tax advisor.