Staff Development, Advancement and Recognition Task Force Report
April 2013

I. Introduction – Overview
   a. This task force explored issues related to providing opportunities for professional growth and advancement of University staff. Examples of areas explored include: the addition of levels of advancement for staff, leadership and professional development opportunities, and rewards and recognitions.
   b. Membership of the Task Force: Angel Miano (Chair); Cathy Thomas; Cheryl Fogle; Cindy Gelines; Brian Hand; Heidi DiFranco; Randy Warrick; Sharon Brannen; Annette Beeler; Chris A. Clark; Donald King; Chet Longley; Maria Chandler; Sonya Bishop; Matt Herpich; Vicki Collins; John Hutchens
      Ex-officio: Jeff Priest
   c. Meetings took place every Thursday at 9AM in the Palmetto Room of the Student Activities Center from January 31st to April 12th.

I. Relevant Factors
   a. A Lime Survey was sent to all staff with questions developed by the committee regarding staff development, advancement and recognition, as well as preferences and needs. The response rate was 55%. Participants were also encouraged to write in additional answers. Survey results are attached.
   b. Committee members also researched other institutions and their practices regarding staff appreciation, promotion and advancement.

II. Recommendations
   Increase staff salaries/hire a consulting company to investigate ALL staff positions at USCA to identify a promotion/step process
   Staff salaries are below the average salaries for similar positions in other universities. Staff personnel have no process in place for moving up in the pay band under our current system. After reviewing the results of the survey, it is clear that providing a way to increase pay is a high priority among staff.
   The survey targeted non-monetary rewards that staff members would like. However, there are numerous comments from staff regarding an increase in the cost of living while salaries have remained the same.
The College of New Jersey has a performance-based promotion system for staff, which is attached to this report. This can be used as a guideline in creating a promotion process for our staff. Notable components of the process are:

- In order to be eligible, one must be a full-time staff member for five or more years. After the first promotion, the employee must remain with the college an additional three years to be eligible for subsequent performance-based promotions.
- The employee must show achievement in his/her area of responsibility and extra contributions to the campus as a whole.
- Applications are reviewed at several levels, and the employee has an opportunity to respond to negative recommendations.

a. Increasing staff salaries to those of comparable positions at other institutions will directly address the issue of staff salaries. Providing staff members opportunities to be their own advocates regarding raises will increase pride in their work and encourage more involvement in the university. The promotion process is a direct way to acknowledge staff members for their years of service and accomplishments, both in their job and the community.

b. Balanced Scorecard Perspectives:
   i. Financial
      1. There will be increased costs associated with raises for staff. However, not all staff members will necessarily choose to participate in the program, so the cost may be less than giving raises across the board.
      2. There may be an initial cost if an outside consulting firm is hired to investigate how a step process could be implemented.
   
   ii. Employee and Organizational Capacity
      1. None

   iii. Programs, Policies and Procedures
      1. First, increase staff salaries to closer match the average salaries for comparable positions. In addition, implement a process similar to the one used for faculty promotion and tenure. Participation in the promotion program for staff would be optional. It would not result in an increased title. Instead, it would be an opportunity for staff to move farther along in the existing band. If a staff member opts
to participate, each job category will have particular steps/accomplishments that staff will fulfill in order to receive up to a 5% raise.

iv. Students and Stakeholders

1. All staff could be involved if they so choose

Flexible work schedules and paid time off for community service/outreach

- Address staff salaries
- Expand reputation/awareness of USCA
- Expand and enhance community relationships/partnerships

Considering flex-time scheduling would enhance morale and be instrumental in decision-making for those considering leaving the university due to low salaries. Flex scheduling does not mean closing university offices one day per week; it merely means allowing staff flexible-hour options for completing work hours. For example, an employee could work an extra hour four days per week in order to have a half day off one day per week. While this may seem an inconvenience for some departments, one must consider that a department is able to function when an employee misses a day due to illness or a vacation day. It does not seem unreasonable to have a planned day or partial day off with a week's worth of work hours completed. In addition, this could also benefit a department by expanding open hours, making staff more accessible to students and the community. In the task force survey (page 8), 79% of respondents felt a flexible schedule could be a very effective (58%) or effective (21%) method of making an employee feel more appreciated. Additional comments on pages 28 and 29 also support the idea. Happy employees are more apt to speak in a positive manner about their jobs (expand reputation/awareness) than those who are dissatisfied. While this does not increase staff salaries, it certainly might lessen sentiments of being underpaid if an employee has more control over working hours.

Another concept that was highly popular with survey respondents is paid time off for community service. For example, employees could be allowed one hour of paid time away from their job per month to participate in community service. This would be consistent with the Double Knot commitment to interaction between community and campus. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of respondents felt this would be somewhat effective - (24%), effective - (25%) or very effective (28%) toward making them feel appreciated.
a. Balanced Scorecard Perspectives:

i. Financial

1. There should be no direct costs related to this recommendation.

ii. Employee and Organizational Capacity

1. None.

iii. Programs, Policies and Procedures

1. Policy that requires either work-hour flexibility or strongly encourages it; policy that would allow for one hour per month for volunteer activities; volunteerism would be documented by the service agency.

iv. Students and Stakeholders

1. A direct positive impact on students follows enhanced employee morale.

2. Additional volunteerism would be highly beneficial to community/stakeholders.

**Improve and actively support positive faculty/staff/supervisor relations.**

Comments in the Staff Satisfaction Survey and anecdotes shared in the Task Force meeting reflect that, although many USCA staff members believe their relationships with faculty and supervisors are positive, some are unhappy or dissatisfied with their faculty/supervisor relationships.

In the spring 2013 Staff Satisfaction Survey conducted by the task force, 30% of respondents responded “no” or “uncertain” when asked if they felt as if they were treated with respect. When asked if they were treated as equals by other university personnel, 48% of responding staff replied with “no” or “uncertain”. When asked if they feel their thoughts and ideas are valued, 49% of responses were negative or “uncertain.”

It is recommended that existing methods utilized to facilitate positive Staff to Faculty/Supervisor relationships be improved, and new methods for doing the same be explored.

Potential actions may include:

- Evaluate effective existing informal systems utilized at the departmental/office level and encourage their adoption across many or all offices/departments.
  - Many Staff Satisfaction Survey respondents commented on recognition and support systems that help them feel respected and appreciated. The most
common techniques were simple verbal thanks from supervisors and faculty, being included and consulted about decisions that pertain to their area, and receiving fast and/or frequent verbal feedback from supervisors on work completed.

- Other comments indicated that individual departments or areas have “Shining Star Awards,” regular staff meetings, birthday/anniversary lunches or celebrations, email recognitions, and travel/professional development opportunities.

- Institute new programs that are designed to recognize, prevent, or solve Staff to Faculty / Supervisor relationship issues.
  - Suggestion: Develop and include guidelines and training to foster positive staff relationships in Supervisor Training, New Faculty Orientation, and New Staff Orientation.
  - Suggestion: Develop an anonymous “tip line” for staff members to report instances and issues that arise on campus. Without an anonymous system for reporting concerns about staff to faculty/supervisor concerns, there is an increased chance that those issues will go unaddressed and unresolved.
  - Suggestion: Develop annual “supervisor review” modeled on the current “Unit Head Evaluation” used for faculty to evaluate departmental leadership. Though some divisions of USCA have systems that provide supervisors with assessment and feedback, a formalized campus-wide system would address the perception that faculty opinions of supervisors are more highly valued than those of staff members.

  a. Addresses themes of:
     Grow the university
     - No direct effect, except that when visitors, current students, and potential students visit campus, a welcoming and positive atmosphere among all USCA constituents will be evident and make a good impression.
     Improve the current budget/funding situation
     - Decreased staff turnover will also decrease expenses required for searches and training.
     Increase program / degree offerings

Address faculty / staff salaries

Be more responsive to a broader range of students
- USCA’s staff members are more representative of minority and non-traditional student populations. A valued and fulfilled staff force can function in an encouraging, mentoring, and advisory resource for these students.

Expand reputation and awareness of USCA
- Staff achievements contribute to the overall reputation and recognition of USCA in the same manner as faculty achievements.
- USCA staff members are active in area governmental, charitable, social, and educational communities. Respected and fulfilled staff members are consulted by their peer groups about USCA as an option for potential students. Disrespected and unhappy staff members are consulted as well.
Expand and enhance community relationships / partnerships
• See 2nd bullet on previous item.

Enhance organizational efficiency and innovation
• A respected and satisfied staff work force is committed to and actively engaged in the process of improving the institution.

b. Balanced Scorecard Perspectives:

i. Financial

1. Possible costs to Human Resources: additional work load and time dedicated to the development and implementation of new policies and practices.
2. Possible costs in additional supervisor training and/or hiring external trainers/advisors
3. Possible costs to develop tip line and annual supervisor review.
4. Possible costs of reward programs.
5. Savings in reduced searches and training as a result of higher retention.
6. Savings in increased on-the-job efficiency and possible reductions in use of sick leave to avoid problems.

ii. Employee and Organizational Capacity

1. Additional HR support for these initiatives.

iii. Programs, Policies and Procedures

1. None

iv. Students and Stakeholders

1. Greater staff retention
2. Improved job satisfaction
3. Improved staff to faculty/supervisor relationships
4. Improved staff productivity
5. Reduced staff absenteeism
6. Improved “buy in” by staff of USCA goals and initiatives

7. Improved customer service to internal and external parties

Look at the idea of breakfast or lunch with the chancellor. This could be in conjunction with birthdays or University anniversaries, at least something special for significant anniversaries.

a. This recommendation does not directly impact any of the themes; however, on a broader scale, it could influence two of them. Expanding the reputation and awareness of USC Aiken could be a direct result of people speaking more positively about their jobs because they feel valued on campus. Expanding community relationships could be achieved by inviting spouses, family and/or friends to attend major anniversaries with the institution.

b. Balanced Scorecard Perspectives:
   i. Financial
      1. This could have an immediate impact on budgets and some minor financial implications. If we intend to honor those who have 10, 20, or 30 years of service with a collaborative meal from our food service provider, there would need to be monies allocated to this project each year.

   ii. Employee and Organizational Capacity
      1. For all employee birthdays and major anniversaries, someone would need to consult the current calendar (posted on Post Time Notes) and alert the individual(s) responsible for the special recognition. The University needs to decide what “major” means.

   iii. Programs, Policies and Procedures
      1. No policy should be needed, just additional effort.

   iv. Students and Stakeholders
      1. All staff and faculty should be and would be involved. We want them recognized so that they enjoy what they do even more.