

Human Resources Update

November 2006

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Your Opinion Counts!

Once again the University of Saskatchewan asks all employees (faculty, administration and staff) to share their opinion on many subjects by completing the 2nd annual Employee Opinion Survey.

The survey, which was launched late October across our campus, is quick and easy to complete. It will help us to work together toward improved work environments. We also ensure complete confidentiality – so go ahead, tell us what you think!

"This is a web-based survey and people can be assured of anonymity and confidentiality of responses as no information that can identify individual respondents is collected in the survey," says the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, Barb Daigle. "It is not distributed or collected via e-mail so no 'from' information is attached."

The survey results will provide information to help us:

1. Identify the gaps between the current environment and the workplace described in "Renewing the Dream"
2. Provide valuable information to support the development of programs and services that meet our goal of establishing healthy, productive and diverse work environments
3. Clarify the challenges that need our collective focus to support the advancement of our University

4. Provide a baseline against which to measure future progress in pursuit of those goals
5. New this year: unit results (if a large enough response rate is received we will be providing unit results to the Deans/Directors of each unit)

Since this is the 2nd annual survey, we can now measure our movement toward (or away from) our goals against past results. The more people who participate with honest, authentic input, the better able we will be to chart our progress and re-direct our efforts in a positive way.

"Renewing the Dream" isn't just a saying... it is a plan that has outlined many goals and has established a commitment to creating "a healthy and productive work environment characterized by teamwork, open communication and trust, in which employees at all levels have a strong sense of belonging".

We all have a choice – so please participate in this survey. It is an opportunity for individuals to help strengthen our organization and focus our best thinking to reach individual and organizational goals.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Surinder Saini at 966-4853 in Human Resources.



The University of Saskatchewan is proud to be included in the Top 10 employers in Saskatchewan as selected by Mediacorp Canada, a publisher that produces an annual reference guide that compiles 'a compendium of best practices across every sector of the economy, both public and private'.

Take The Lead In Work Life Balance

Ease The Pressure - Lighten The Load

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Partner massive workloads with high-speed expectations and you've got a recipe for disaster. Remove any sense of control and toss a lack of appreciation on the pile, and the mix grows downright explosive. If you find yourself leading a group through high-pressured times, here are ten ways you can ease the pressure on yourself, your colleagues, and your employees.

1. Test The Truth

Start with yourself. Yes, you may love your work, the challenge, and the rewards. However, give your work-style the two point acid test. Have your physician and a fitness expert rate the state of your physical health. Ask those who matter in your personal life (close family and friends) how pleased they are about your availability and involvement in their lives. Listen with care and attention. Adjust accordingly.

2. Model The Way

Take care of yourself and be seen to be taking care of yourself. When you take a walk, a break, a breather, a vacation, you telegraph to others that it's OK for them to do the same. Work flat out 24/7, send emails at 2:00 in the morning, and it won't matter what you say to others. They'll follow your lead and feel guilty if they don't or can't. Your lived example sets the tone and the pace.

3. Link To Purpose

You and I can often do more than we ever thought possible when fired by a compelling reason for tackling a job. Lift up your eyes and encourage those around you to do the same. Meetings, paperwork, phone calls—they're all just busywork unless they're linked to a real and vital purpose. What are you really trying to accomplish? How are you serving your clients? Why does the work matter? Make this deeper, broader view part of your everyday conversation.

4. See The Whole Person

Take the time to keep in touch with those around you. Stay current with what is happening in their lives at work and beyond. How are their needs and interests changing? What other pressures are they facing that might affect their capacity now

and in the future? Yes, I know you're busy. You'll be even busier if key people burn out or drop out and you didn't see it coming.

5. Monitor The Workload

Each time you delegate major tasks to others and add to the workload, ask these questions: How does this affect the other tasks we have on the go? Do you need help reordering priorities? Do we need to juggle responsibilities or call on outside resources to handle the fallout from the changes we're discussing? Help others draw the line between what's essential and what can wait.

6. Lighten The Load

Protect your group from outrageous expectations imposed from elsewhere. Negotiate on their behalf for reasonable time frames, helpful technology, and appropriate resources. Identify processes that can be simplified. Stop providing some services and filling certain roles. Pinpoint tasks that could be done less often or less perfectly with minimal risk.

7. Make It Safe To Say

If you want solid and reliable information on the status of projects and workloads, you need to ask the tough questions and be open to the truth. If you explode at news you didn't want to hear, you'll be served a milquetoast, censored version in the future. Being out of the loop will improve neither the quality of your decision making nor the quality of your relationships.

8. Curb The Whining

Letting off steam helps - to a point. Blowing steam repeatedly in the presence of someone who is not involved and can do nothing to resolve a situation is simply sidestepping responsibility. Curb the excuses, justifications and blaming. Encourage the practice of speaking directly to someone who can do something about a problem. Ask 'What can we do to move this situation forward?'

9. Share The Appreciation

You couldn't get the job done without the hard work and dedication of your colleagues. When you look at their contributions, does the effort required

match the reward provided? We're not just talking money. Notice what people are doing. Actively appreciate their contributions in person, in writing or in kind. Be specific, be current, be sincere. Words and actions of appreciation convey respect and honor the value of the individual. Co-workers matter. Do you let them know they matter?

10. Respect Time Off

Don't burden colleagues with information and problems that they can do nothing about just before they head off for the weekend or start their vacation. Resist the urge to place weekend and evening calls unless they are true emergencies. Guard against artificial urgency - needlessly working everyone into a frenzy of immediacy. Watch for it in yourself and challenge it in others.

Bonus Tip: Value Reflection As Much As Action

Speed and action are only half of the recipe for success. Honor the importance of calm reflection - thinking with care about situations and opportunities. In the long run, an immediate response is not always as valuable as a considered response. Carve out space and time to harvest the learning after important events and milestones. Schedule opportunities to pause, plan and ponder.

© 2006 - Pausemeister, Patricia Katz MCE CHRP of Optimus Consulting is a speaker, author and consultant who helps individuals and organizations restore the rhythm of renewal to work and life. Read more at "What's New" at www.pauseworks.com Patricia's new book *Press Pause—Press On: Bringing Balance & Perspective to Work and Life* is also available at the U of S Bookstore.



Things Keep Changing

How can I be more effective?



Donalda Cormier facilitates a two-day workshop that has been hugely successful in helping the University employees who have attended to make an important commitment. The program uses experiential learning because the best way we learn is by doing. She shares some of this with our readers.

The workshop is about helping each person make and hold a commitment to transform the U of S to the organization described in "Renewing the Dream"—an organization where people are creative and bring the best they can to work everyday; where they help cultivate an environment of collegiality and trust, and where people take pride in their success, in other peoples' success and in the success of the University.

A high performance organization is one where people go to work and love it. It is where they have the opportunity to make a difference; especially in an environment of rapid change. It is so easy in an organization to begin to feel that you "have to" do things rather than realizing that sometimes we do things because we choose to. We are here voluntarily and we forget that we are here because we choose to be here.

High performers are people who bring their best free thinking focused on what will help the organization – and sit it all firmly on a base of integrity. "How do I live in integrity everyday?" When you ask yourself that question you realize that true integrity is a moment by moment choice we make in all our interactions. We choose to either stay in integrity or slip out of integrity.

Today 70% of employees want to have their value affirmed – they want self-fulfillment, creativity and to make a difference. It is not only up to the leadership to create an environment

where people have the opportunity to do their best. We all have to be responsible to ourselves and responsible to our co-workers. And we must ask ourselves: "Am I willing to make a commitment to my success and to the success of the whole?" We can hold both commitments simultaneously.

In a changing environment people frequently operate on fear – the fear they may not be good enough or the fear that there won't be enough for them. Take some time to recognize this and consider these practical steps to help you:

- 1. Power of Commitment:**
It is so important to be clear and to hold a conscious commitment – ask yourself: "What is it that I am personally committed to and what kind of a workplace is it that I am committed to creating?" Hold those commitments for yourself.
- 2. Power of Learning:**
Identify your strengths – lead with them – it is all about learning!
- 3. Focus on Appreciation:**
Learn to live in appreciation - look hard for what is right and not what is wrong – and focus on appreciating what is right

There are lots of non-productive states that diminish energy and harm relationships, but there are two in particular that are epidemic:

- 1. Blaming:**
Blaming ourselves, blaming others and blaming 'them'. Notice when you are doing this – it is simple and powerful to ask yourself: 'How did I contribute to what happened?' That puts us in a place where we can do something about it.

- 2. Being Right:** It is easy to say 'I'm right' (related to blaming), which must mean that they are wrong. This just sets up a power struggle and creativity goes out the window. Ask yourself the question: "What can I learn here – what am I not seeing here – what am I not listening too?" Stop, listen and ask yourself these tough questions.

When you distort communication by not saying what you think, by telling a lie (even a little white lie) or by exaggerating rather than distorting what you are saying then you are not being authentic. This takes energy away from the relationship and reduces your ability to collaborate and bring the best thinking forward. Tell the truth; the quicker the better. This kind of operational integrity is critical:

- be authentic with yourself and others in your communication
 - keep your agreements
 - take responsibility
- Integrity is not an end-state – you have to work on it everyday and saying "it's not my fault" is slipping out of integrity.

Donalda's next sessions are November 18 and 19 at the Willows and other sessions are being scheduled for the remainder of 2006 and 2007.

Learn more by visiting
www.donaldacormier.com

One Person's Journey to Work-Life Balance

- by Nicole Wilton Elliott, Program Coordinator, Community Music Education Program, U of S

When I was asked to write this article my first reaction was, "Ha! That is a bit hypocritical, and when will I find the time?!" First let me say I am just like any other working mother. Many days I feel pretty rushed and busy. I have those feelings of guilt: Why do I work so much? Why don't I have more time for myself or my children?

However, over the past few years I have worked really hard to find more of a balance in my life. And several people close to me have commented that I seem to have a good sense of this balance.

Nine years ago I was widowed at a young age and left to raise two small children. Despite this tragedy it provided me with a lot of opportunities for personal growth. I learned how to take care of myself, and my children, without relying on a spouse for many of those day-to-day things we take for granted. Luckily, I had my parents very close by who helped me immeasurably. During this period, I began to work on those areas that many of us neglect. Without doing this I am not sure I would have made it through that difficult time.

I started with simple things like meal planning, freezing dinners for those hectic days, and carving out time for myself. Along with a support group during my first year as a widow I also had a group of women whom I met with weekly and this nurtured me in many ways. Socially it gave me a connection to others and because we all shared the same church it also helped to spiritually fill me up. The group was an outlet for me, a safe place to talk, share and vent my feelings.

As time went on I remarried and had another child. She is now 2 years old. This has also been challenging! Blending a family has its share of difficulties. But with the help of my new husband we found some really good ways to make our household run smoothly.

Help is necessary! Help around the house is crucial. As my children have grown (the older two now 14 and 12) they have become a vital part of making the household work efficiently. They have



weekly chores – cleaning their rooms, doing their own laundry, taking care of pets, and doing all the supper clean-up. They help with meal preparation too, and of course, babysitting. I realize I am lucky having the older two who are able help so much. Even at a very young age, when I was a single parent, they were taught how to clean up after themselves, set the table, unload the dishwasher, sort laundry, etc. Today, they are very independent young ladies and that is what I had hoped.

For myself, I try to maintain a few things that help me feel balanced and centered. I exercise regularly, which provides me with time alone to think and unwind. This is challenging of course, but I have found that waking up earlier and getting that done is the only way I can do it. It starts my day off right and helps me to cope much better.

I do things with my husband regularly and alone! We go to movies, dinner, or just hang out together.

I have to admit the one remaining area that still needs attention is my friends. I do have many friends, but don't talk to them (or see them) as often as I'd like. Email is great, but I certainly don't have as much time to chat on the phone as I used to.

I have set many personal goals and I slowly work towards achieving them. Over the past few years I have pursued further degrees in my music teaching and I have been working towards many other personal goals. Professional development workshops and courses are opportunities that I jump at!

I also set aside private time for each of my older girls. Whether it's going for coffee together, or lunch, shopping or to the library, we try to carve that out at least twice a month. It's very important to them to have some one-one-one time with me especially as they grow into those teen years.

Creating balance is an ongoing journey and I think the main things are to keep trying, be open to new ideas, and don't get stuck in old ways. We are all busy people, but hopefully we can keep things in perspective and remember what is truly important.

At an early age I was forced to decide what truly mattered. Yes, we all need to make a living and be self-sufficient, but what it comes down to is family, friends and happiness.

We all deserve that!

Send us your feedback

What kind of information or articles would like to see in the HR Update?

Would you send us a story or information to be considered for printing in the HR Update?

How do you think we could improve the HR Update:

How would you like to receive future issues of the HR Update? At home? At Work?
Electronically? Printed?

Is it useful to you as you balance work and life?

Do you have any other comments?

Please send your responses to
HR_progress_update_feedback@usask.ca

Send to:

Human Resources
E140 - 105 Administration Place
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 5A2

or e-mail to:
HR_progress_update_feedback@usask.ca



Working with Value Statements at the Library and Translating Them to Workplace Behaviour



Over the summer months, Dr. Vicki Williamson, Dean of the University of Saskatchewan's library, guided her staff through a consultative and engaging strategic planning process. The plan they developed (Library Strategic Plan 2007-2012) outlines future directions and priorities for the U of S Library and continues to evolve and improve during the University's second round of Integrated Planning.

One of the many discussions the Dean and her staff engaged in during planning workshops was around values and the importance of reflecting organizational values in their daily work. "There was a strong temptation to develop a list of Library Values but in the end we avoided this and went back to basics and considered the values as endorsed by the Board of Governors back in 1993 and essentially described in "Renewing the Dream," Williamson said. "We committed again to these values but were keen to have a conversation about the workplace behaviours, which would reflect such values on a day-to-day basis. From this

perspective we found the values identified in the University Employee Opinion Survey to be very helpful."

During the course of our planning discussions all Library staff had the opportunity to offer input and feedback. We held feedback sessions and established a "blog" on the Library's Intranet.

"We wanted the matters that Library staff feel very strongly about to be at the forefront of our planning discussions and reflected in our values statement," Williamson added. "As information professionals working in an information rich environment and a knowledge age, we wanted to acknowledge our special context – hence the addition of the critical value related to intellectual freedom and censorship of Library resources."

Working through the Library Advisory Committee, Dean Williamson also sought staff input and feedback to the idea of establishing a staff award. Beginning in 2007, the award will recognize "a Library staff member who actively demonstrates

behaviours in the workplace which reflect the University and Library values". The award – additional career development and/or enhancement of the working environment of the recipient – is intended to help all Library staff live out the values in their daily work.

Dr. Williamson knows it will take time, but she feels that just placing the values on paper doesn't mean that people can or will use them. She plans, along with her staff, to build a culture that is solidly ingrained in living the values they have committed to uphold.

"Our plan gives a high focus, among other things, to our relationships (internally within the Library and beyond) and engagement to build and strengthen relations and connections within the Library, within the University and beyond," she says.

The value statements the Library has endorsed are:

As Library staff, in working with each other and our community, we:

- are honest, supportive and sensitive in our communications.
- respect and value individual and cultural differences.
- support innovation, creativity and risk-taking
- learn from our failures.
- celebrate our successes.
- are fair and forthright in our dealings.
- confront problems and issues openly and directly.
- cultivate an environment of collegiality and trust.
- ensure the protection of privacy and the right to confidentiality.
- "uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor Library resources."*

*American Library Association Code of Ethics (1995, accessed via the web on August 2, 2006
<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/codeofethics/codeethics.htm>)

Upcoming Events

Workshop

Enhancing your Personal Effectiveness in the Changing University

– Facilitated by **Donalda Cormier.**

In this two-day workshop, which is sponsored by the Associate Vice-President, Human Resources and the Vice-President, Finance and Resources, you will explore how to bring out the best in yourself and others, even in the midst of disruptive change. You will learn how to shift out of non-productive states that diminish your energy and harm relationships. Finally, you will learn how to stay in integrity in your relationships, regardless of circumstances.

These sessions were well received, and to support that, we are continuing with a session in January for those already on the waiting list. If you would like to be placed on the waiting list for future sessions, please contact Barb Meier at Barbara.meier@usask.ca.

2007 Dates: January 17 & 18; February 27 & 28; March 27 & 28; April 24 & 25

There will be a nominal charge of \$100.00 per person to cover the costs of food and refreshments, material, etc. We encourage you to attend individually or in work teams. The sessions will fill up quickly, so please register soon by contacting Barb Meier at Barbara.meier@usask.ca.

Workshop

Franklin Covey – 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and 4 Roles of Leadership.

This five day workshop is spread out over a couple of months. Although future dates have not yet been set, if you are interested in registering for this workshop, please contact Sandra Friesen at Sandra.friesen@usask.ca.

In the Next Issue

Employee Opinion Survey results
Performance Framework