“Enhancing the Staff Experience”
Project submitted for Rutgers Leadership Academy
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“Enhancing the Staff Experience”

“A happy worker is a productive worker”
“Enhancing the Staff Experience”

Project Overview

School of Communication and Information Strategic Plan (2014-2017) outlined an effort to “create and implement an internal staff development program to promote an even higher level of service excellence.”

Much literature around job satisfaction and employee morale in higher education, but mainly focused on faculty and individuals in teaching roles. There is a growing body of literature focused on staff and administration.

Factors contributing to increased job satisfaction and increased intentions to stay.
- Staff who feel recognized and appreciated and that their work is important to the organization.
- Staff who feel they have influence and input in their work environment.
- Staff who feel they have an opportunity for upward mobility.
- Staff who feel they have a good connection to the constituents of the organization.
There are some positive models and practices that can come out of the types of staff relationships we see in Student Affairs. Staff appear to be:

- More team-oriented
- Have more collaborative work projects
- Have more opportunities for community and collegial engagement

Ultimately, this project involves giving administrative, non-teaching staff the opportunity to engage with other administrative staff in non-work related activities involving social experiences, professional development experiences, and personal development experiences. I believe that spending time together outside of their daily responsibilities will foster more communication, more collaboration, and ultimately increase job satisfaction, job morale, and staff intention to stay.

Because we all know, “a happy worker makes a productive worker”.
Primary goal of this project is to facilitate a positive staff experience by:

- Increasing staff opportunity to interact with other staff.
- Increasing staff opportunity to have input in organization decisions about personal and professional development.

By doing so, we hope that we can see positive changes in
- Job satisfaction
- Job morale
- Staff turnover
Examination of some of the literature around *job satisfaction*, *employee morale*, and *intention to stay* often focuses on staff in teaching roles. Fewer research programs have focused on staff in administrative non-teaching roles. One of those early research programs was led by Sandy Staples and Christopher Higgins.

**Staples and Higgins (1998)**
- Job satisfaction positively correlated with intention to stay
- Employees more satisfied when they feel
  - Their personal growth is emphasized in the workplace
  - They are involved in decision making
  - The organization supports them.
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Survey

Asked non-teaching administrative staff the following questions.

1. How interested are you in participating in activities or programs that are not work related? (1 = Very, 5 Not Very)
2. What types of activities or programs would you be interested in attending?
   - Social activities
   - Professional development activities
   - Personal development activities
3. How likely would you participate in social/professional/personal activities that occur outside of traditional work hours?
4. How likely are you willing to help plan and organize any of these social/professional/personal development activities.
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Results

1. How interested are you in participating in activities or programs that are not work related? (mean = 2.76)
2. What types of activities or programs would you be interested in attending?
   - Social activities (frequency – 11)
   - Professional development activities (frequency – 7)
   - Personal development activities (frequency – 7)
3. How likely would you participate in social/professional/personal activities that occur outside of traditional work hours?
4. How likely are you willing to help plan and organize any of these social/professional/personal development activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social Activities</th>
<th>Professional Activities</th>
<th>Personal Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help Organize</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Timeline and Next steps

Fall 2016
- Distribute surveys
- Identify volunteers

Spring 2017
- Form committees for activity group(s)
- Plan, schedule, organize, execute events
- Survey attendees

Summer 2017 / Fall 2017
- Update and re-distribute survey
- Plan, schedule, organize, execute events
- Examine next phase for formal staff development plan
Implications for Leadership

Servant-leadership (Greenleaf 1970): where the employee’s well-being is placed over the leader’s self-interest. Characteristics of servant-leadership include work environments in which:

- The people (i.e. the employees) are valued
- Community connections are built amongst members
- People have an opportunity for development and growth
- Authenticity is displayed
- Leadership is shared

Servant-leadership is just one example of an evolving approach to management and supervision that has positive outcomes on administrative staff job satisfaction, staff morale, and staff intention to stay.
Across the University, we can model leadership styles – both in academic affairs and student affairs – that aim to foster better communication, engagement, and that promote positive staff outcomes.

- Leaders must be responsible for maintaining healthy work environment.
- Leaders commit to incentives for professional development and growth.
- Leaders engage in succession planning.