

Staff Morale & Community Outreach Committee (SMCO) Report

November 11, 2019

Chair - Paul Eitel, Co-Chair – Melissa Taylor. Committee Members, Senator's – Ken Allen, Bobbi Carlton, Skip Hurley, Jessica Key, Angela Ren, and Ex Officio: Non-Voting Andrew Grubb.

Meets the third Thursday of each month, alternating between meeting locations of: Belknap SAC Bldg. W301 12:30 to 1:30, and HSC CTR Bldg. Rm 125 11:00 to 12:30.

SMCO met Thursday Oct 17th, 11 am at CTR Room 125

Minutes: Discussed on setting positive morale framework during day-one during orientation, as well as continuing this framework during staff member's service life at U of L. What has been noted by staff members, was a lack of opportunity within their department allowing for advancement and or training, which seems to be systemic in many departments across U of L. Whether it got that way due to departmental complacency, perceived budget limitations, short falls in management focus on staff member advancement etc. That it appears that if and when an opportunity for advancement did come, the department looked for someone outward before looking inward at existing staff. To further compound this, there was a lack of opportunity for any staff: training, continuing education, seminar's etc., in which these items go to the core of affecting ongoing staff morale.

On a direct observation – This is regarding new hires and setting positive morale day-one during orientation. My department has been short one position for a little over three years, and thankfully just two weeks ago we finally filled it. I started training this new hire, and found out that a lot has changed in how new hires are now oriented, and I'm still finding out what they were and were not oriented on.

In the past for example, new orientatees were given a campus tour, a lunch at the U-Club (and I understand if this was cut out due to cost) and the time to review all required video's like workplace sexual harassment videos etc. Instead, they were asked to review these later, but no direction as to view these at their new work space, nor was the supervisor alerted that this needed to be done, or time allotted to do so. The other curious item was, they must have cut out the campus tour as well to save time/expense, but didn't even give them a simple campus map to show them where they work on campus, or highlights to feel welcome.

So, some additional investigating to do on these items that would certainly question on how the tone is set, good or bad for a new staff member from the very start.

Next SMCO Meeting – November 21st - Belknap SAC Bldg. W301 12:30 to 1:30 Guest Mr. Brian Buford and Diane Tobin University Ombuds, working on group collaboration morale issues.

SMCO Chair update on the search for UPDC Director – In August I had the honor of being selected to the search/review committee for the position of Director/Managing Architect at University Planning, Design & Construction (UPDC). The list of 28 external, and 2 internal candidates were assembled and reviewed over the past two and half months. The committee narrowed their search to five candidates to be interviewed via Skype, which resulted in four candidates being invited to campus for in person interviews. Upon those interviews, our top one and two candidate recommendations were given to Mr. Mark Watkins, and Sajid Mian for final decision - Decision Pending.

Paul