

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING
DEAN'S STAFF ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF HR REPORT DISCUSSION
FEBRUARY 2, 2007

Dean's Staff Advisory Committee, Friday February 2, 2007, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm.

The meeting was chaired by Ralph Dickhout, Chemical Engineering.

Attending the meeting:

Carol Kendrick, Architecture
Karen Gallant, CBET
Ralph Dickhout, Chemical Engineering (Chair)
Cutberto Santillan Rios, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Bev Rodgers, Management Sciences Engineering
Andy Barber, Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering
Tariq Naqvi, Systems Design Engineering
Nenone Donaldson, Dean of Engineering Office
Dave Walsh, Engineering Computing Dept
Rick Forget, Engineering Machine Shop
Kim Boucher, Engineering Undergraduate Office
Adel Sedra, Dean of Engineering
Bill Pudifin, Executive Assistant (Secretary)

Absent

Bruce Stickney, Civil Engineering (Vice-Chair)

I HR Report – Dean's Comments

- initially the HR review was to be an external review
- back pressure resulted in it being an internal review by HR itself
- result is attached report which was presented at Dean's Council in November (approx)
- initial instructions were to take the report back to units and determine reaction and feedback
- a small task group headed by Alan George was set up to follow up, collect feedback etc
- however, not clear what timetable is for this – no recent information or communication
- Dean has distributed to Chairs and Assoc. Deans in Engineering for feedback

II Committee Discussion of HR Report (Note: Additional Committee Member Comments in Appendix A and B)

- report very subjective - contains very little factual information/data
- little effort to obtain industry standards
- language weak, could be stronger
- too much "feelings/subjective comments/anecdotal"
- not very professional
- report being used to make HR's defense of it's operations etc

- claim they don't want to be "policy police" but who is to do it?
- there are some good policies but don't appear to be enforced

- two issues – one is the policies themselves, good or bad – other is the administration of the policies
- necessary to change the policies that aren't working but don't blame HR for current policies
- separate problems with policy and problems with HR
- Hay System is a mystery
- HR's role in reclassifications and performance ratings needs to be clarified
- suggested that it needs to be adjusted, that HR may have too much input in these two areas
- question of whether they have the expertise to determine job grades
- don't really understand the jobs well enough
- this may be part of the reason that it takes so long
- time factor is way too long for assigning job grades or doing reclassifications
- perhaps give more control to managers re: qualifications
- HR could do admin side, make managers aware of ramifications of decisions
- level of HR involvement in deciding job qualifications should be reduced
- suggested that an HR person should be embedded in the faculties

III Various Comments

- Appendix A is feedback from people interviewed
- report continues to be vague
- report definitely weak, unprofessional
- not enough external comparisons
- function of hiring, new positions, reclassifications definitely being overmanaged
- makeup of various committees handling staff matters - includes many HR staff
- difficult to get impartial viewpoint or effective input when HR staff are there
- need training for HR staff

IV Ongoing Action on Report

- Bill Pudifin to determine what other faculties are doing with report
- Dean to meet with Alan George and the task group
- summary of discussions to be distributed to members of DSAC for feedback to be ultimately given to Dean
- will not distribute to all staff at this point – keep “CONFIDENTIAL”

APPENDIX A

Comments on “Report to the Vice President Academic & Provost on the Human Resources Self Study Report”

This report is a good start, but it doesn't go far enough. Before you can assess or improve on anything, you must measure it. I saw little of that in this report. Yes, the number of their participants was quantified, in that over 150 personal interviews, several focus groups and 6 site visits were conducted. But the report itself is not specific enough in the way of measurement – not enough numbers; no charts, graphs, or tables

- no hard data. An example of this is Item IV (a) para 2, HR appears to do many things well – payrolls on time, benefits and pension advice and assistance ... What exactly are the turn-around times in these tasks – 24 hours, 48 hrs? Could this not have been measured? And it is subjective in places, such as Item IV (a) para 4, 5 and again in para 6 where it alludes to customer service. The goal of the study is “improving the quality of its services” – and I'm reading that to be delivering “Quality Customer Service,” but I would like to see that in print. Also are there Industry Standards within HR?

I like the general structure of the report: Item, e.g. Reclassification Process (the area or topic) and then following with Action (the recommendation), but I don't like the placement of the summary – I thought it should appear at the beginning as the Executive Summary. And where are the Recommendations or the Conclusion?

Structure, Resources and Reputation - Action (or implementation): 2nd para: a "Customer Service Team" is a good strategy – something specific, but all of HR should be customer service focused, meaning they need to also look at internal customer service.

- 1) Salary Administration - Reclassification Process: 1st para: again not specific enough – what is "request is excessive" – is this months, years?
2nd para: "Staff Relations Group provides significantly more assistance in helping managers" good comment from feedback.
Action: Add another point; look into streamlining this process– work smarter (more efficient), not harder.
- 2) Staff Relations: covered well.
- 3) Recruitment and Selection: This topic is discussed well with the exception of the turn-around time (timely manner) from when a request received from a dept. for a new employee to the start date of the successful candidate to fill that vacant position. And are their customers pleased with this.
- 4) Advertising: "a feeling" is a very general term (poor wording) and should not appear in a report.
Action: specific recommendations are offered though.
- 5) Pension and Benefits: This area is OK.
- 6) Payroll Administration: Para 1 is very specific, clear and concise – good!
- 7) Training and Development: Again, clear with specific details.
- 8) External Comparisons: The sampling of 6 other HR departments provides a good picture of what others do.

Appendix A: valid input.

Appendix B: lots of valuable suggested HR services to be implemented.

In conclusion, this report covers a lot of ground, and gives a good general picture of HR. However, the language of the report could be stronger and the details more specific – there are too many subjective comments, e.g. in the Introduction ("... it is inevitable that for those who are unsuccessful, Human Resources will be considered responsible.") I suggest HR still needs to have an External Review – an objective assessment of their service to all their customers, the UW community.

APPENDIX B

Comments of the document entitled “Report to the Vice President Academic & Provost on the Human Resources Self Study”

This is just to add to all that was said during the last Dean’s Staff Advisory Committee Meeting, February 2, 2007.

I believe that overall the document lacks objectivity. An external evaluation of the HR department is absolutely necessary, in order to validate the veracity of the information provided. This is without even mentioning that there comparisons that are given in it are not backed up by any figures, numbers.

All the problems that are mentioned throughout the various sections of the document have been ongoing for several years.

I think that there is no real point in criticizing this document directly, since the report itself does not work.

Throughout the report, HR keeps on passing the blame of any important issue to the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Staff Compensation. Probably we should then pass our recommendations to them to really review all the policies that have affected (and keep affecting) staff members such as; the obsolete Hay Evaluation tool, unfair performance appraisals, outdated position descriptions, unconventional recruitment practices, etc.

I know that we were asked to comment on the report, but I guess that my comment will be that there is no comment; I rather comment on what policies could make a difference.

W. J. Pudifin
Secretary