

Operating Staff Council Meeting Minutes Wednesday, August 12, 2009

Members in Attendance: Janice Aviza, Ann Boylan, Monique Couillard, Matty Leighton (Chair), Patrice MacNevin, Janice Pierson, Sandra Reynolds, Brian Tobin (Recorder)

Members Not in Attendance: Slava Bruder (Vice Chair), Carol Knox, Laurie Anne Malizia, Lisa Wilder

Guests: Sharon Demers, HR; Lon Sattler, SPPC

Agenda Items

Welcome/ Minutes Approval – Matty Leighton

Matty gave a brief update on some of the recent projects and topics being discussed at the OS council meetings:

1. Matty and Sandra will be presenting a list of survey questions to the OS Council regarding the OS Promotion from Within project.
2. Matty is currently searching for a new PAT liaison.
3. As promised, Matty asked Joyce Massicotte with Sustainability about having more compost bins place on campus now that vendors are using compostable cups. Unfortunately, because the current compost bins at the Dairy Bar have not been very effective, there are no plans to add more bins at this time.
4. Human Resources will be providing the OS Council with a report of new OS hires, allowing council reps to send them a welcome message and invite them to meetings.
5. Matty has been working with Guy Eaton and others on a joint council meeting; at this point it seems unlikely to happen, however, since the academic year is upon us. Cooperative Extension has been very busy too.

The minutes of the July OS Council were not approved at this meeting.

Proposed Staff Development Grant Changes

Because Vice Chair Slava Bruder was unable to attend the meeting, this topic has been tabled until the OS Council meeting in September.

On-Line Harassment Training Concerns

Patrice mentioned that the Dimond Library will be hosting harassment training sessions on 8/26 as part of welcome back day.

Some council members voiced concerns about the fact that the faculty union has filed an objection to the training. The main issue was whether or not ALL employees would be held to the standards of the training, if one group does not participate. Sharon Demers assured the council that the training covers the existing harassment policies of the university, so every employee is responsible for upholding those policies, whether they undergo training or not.

One council member asked if the cost of the training is somehow being borne by employees, since it is required by our insurer. Sharon Demers clarified that the cost of liability insurance is completely separate from the cost of health and dental insurance, and is not passed through to employees.

Matty and some of the other council members mentioned that sometimes faculty who supervise staff members seem distracted by their commitment to their academic mission. This can be complicated by the fact that, in some departments, the chair is the staff supervisor and the chair changes frequently. Is it possible to create a situation where faculty have an incentive to become more involved in the supervision and professional development of staff members? This could be a future agenda item.

Matty mentioned she received an email from a constituent who was concerned about the university administration tracking employees' answers online and using the results to retaliate against specific employees. Sharon Demers was very clear in stating that there is no way to track any employees' responses. The responses are not stored; the only thing that is stored is whether or not an employee completed all the modules of the training.

Other feedback regarding the survey included:

1. Some of the cartoons were a bit silly
2. No audio, or the audio was poor
3. Most council members said they enjoyed the training and were surprised at how much they learned.

J-Term Closure

As a result of the new J-Term, some departments will be closed longer during the winter break. Dining, for instance, will not be open during J-Term, and UNH will not be at full operation. There is a possibility, however, of creating a win/win situation by using the New England Center for housing and food service. The concern of the councils is that some status OS employees will be out six weeks, and will 1) use up all their earned time, and 2) have to pay back the university for their portion of their benefits premiums for the period during which they are unpaid. This is a hardship for any employee.

The council questioned Sharon Demers about whether or not affected employees would be able to file for unemployment. Sharon said she would research how NH unemployment laws view this situation and report back to the council. At the same time, the council discussed making high-level decision-makers aware of the effects the J-Term may have on OS.

Can the university spread out benefit payments more logically for people that have to cover when they are out?

One council member asked about setting contract employees up on pay spreads? Unfortunately because contract workers are not on a fixed schedule, and their hours may vary, it is not possible set up pay spreads for them.

One last thought – is there a way to determine which employees will be impacted by the J-Term closure across the university? In other words, are there more departments than usual who will be closed for extended periods?

NEC Closure

There hasn't been much feedback regarding the NEC closure from constituents. There are no updates on the building. So far only one person has resigned from the NEC and is now working in a different position.

Recruiting/redistricting

Some OS Council representatives have many constituents in their districts while other OS Council representatives only have a few. Right now, the OS Council bylaws split up the council districts by BSC. Matty asked the council members to look at the bylaws during the coming month and think about whether the council should pursue changing the bylaw regarding districting? One rep suggested splitting districts by dining, facilities, and housekeeping, since they have so many members, and then splitting up the rest of the campus by geographic zones.

OS Promotion from Within Survey (*update*)

Matty and Sandra distributed a draft of the OS Promotion from Within Survey questions for OS Council representatives to review. Guy Eaton mentioned the Promotion from Within survey to some of the PAT Council representatives, and Matty did receive some responses from PAT reps. One PAT representative has ten PAT constituents that were formerly OS. Maybe the idea that it's hard for OS to move into PAT positions is simply a perception – we will be doing more research to see if this is true. One thing that should be considered is the ratio of PAT positions to OS positions.

Campus Junk Mail (*revisited*)

More campus junk mail is starting to show up in mailboxes. Matty would like a plan for the university that proposed a comprehensive, specific set of responses to the issue. This doesn't mean that the OS Council will be responsible for implementing the responses or solutions. The Waste Reduction Task Action Group will meet before the next meeting and draft a comprehensive report/plan.

Wrap up/Adjournment

The next OSC meeting will take place from 1:00 – 2:30 PM on Wednesday, September 9 in the Trustees' Board Room in T-Hall. OS Council meetings are open to all operating staff.

OS Council web site: <http://www.unh.edu/os-council/>

PAT Council web site: <http://www.unh.edu/pat-council/>

SPPC web site: <http://www.usnh.edu/hr/sppc.html>

Attachment A

On-line Discrimination, Sexual and Discriminatory Harassment Prevention Program

Overview

- United Educators (UE), our insurer, invited USNH to participate with a few other schools in an on-line pilot project re: Discrimination, Sexual and Discriminatory Harassment Prevention.
- GOAL: To establish a baseline education program mandated for all USNH faculty and staff to prevent acts of discrimination and sexual and discriminatory harassment.
- Such universal education is a necessary best practice to reduce liability exposure in a complex area of the law, and may also support a reduction in USNH's insurance premiums.
- A team of USNH Human Resources specialists and Donna Marie Sorrentino, UNH Director, Affirmative Action and Equity, have evaluated on-line programs and selected *WORKPLACE ANSWERS* as the vendor, one of the better quality vendors of this subject matter offered in today's marketplace.
- *Workplace Answers* offers a commercial product which includes three web-based courses that reflect higher education working and learning environments. While this commercial product offers good scenarios and legally sound advice, in order to best utilize limited funding, USNH chose not to commit additional resources to altering the course appearance and presentation style of material or tailoring the courses to include UNH-specific context.
- Endorsed, fully supported and encouraged by all campus Presidents, the Chancellor, and our Trustees. Provost Mallory also supports this initiative.

Ambassador Pilot Group

- The Ambassador Pilot Group includes key faculty, staff and administrators who were selected for their ability to effectively assess and assist in dissemination of the on-line training.
- Asked to complete on-line course or courses prior to the campus wide distribution: July for Staff; October for faculty.
- Their purpose is to affirm the importance of this program to their fellow faculty, chairs, and directors and encourage their timely participation.

On-Line Program

- Courses are relevant to the higher education working and learning environment
- Case studies, relevant laws, sample situations.
- May read and respond, leave, and return to the program at your convenience.
- Can be taken on any computer with access to the internet.
- E-mail notification from *Workplace Answers*.
- The e-mail subject line will read *UNH Discriminatory Harassment Course Registration for [Your Name]*. You can access the course(s) anytime.
- Individuals are asked to complete their course(s) within 30 days of notification; reminders sent until the course(s) are completed.
- Content questions, contact Donna Marie Sorrentino, 862-2930 v/tty or dms@unh.edu.
- Link or technical problems, contact Christina VanHorn, 862-0519, or Christina.Vanhorn@unh.edu.

Attachment B

University of New Hampshire Discriminatory Harassment Prevention Web-based Training

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why am I expected to take these course(s)?

The University System of New Hampshire is providing Faculty and Staff this interactive training program from *Workplace Answers** because education is the most effective way to provide a harassment-free working and learning environment. USNH does not tolerate unlawful discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment.

2. I deleted my e-mail and/or can't find the registration e-mail with the link. How do I access my course?

Contact your campus Human Resources (HR) training administrator: UNH Durham: Chris VanHorn, chris.vanhorn@unh.edu 862-0519 UNH Manchester: Stacey Silva, stacey.silva@unh.edu 641-4166.

3. After I have completed the course(s) will I be able to review or print the information?

Yes, this is an on-going resource for you. You may click the link that was sent to you with your registration email and regain access to your course(s). Use the left and right arrows to navigate the content. You will be able to review your responses and print the information.

4. After I have completed the course(s) will I be able to review or print the information?

Yes, this is an on-going resource for you. You may click the link that was sent to you with your registration email and regain access to your course(s). Use the left and right arrows to navigate the content. You will be able to review your responses and print the information.

5. Am I being graded or scored on the questions asked in the course(s)?

No, the objective of this training is to increase your awareness of the legal and policy issues related to this topic, so your responses are not being graded or scored.

6. Who will know if I have completed the course(s) or not?

HR and Affirmative Action and Equity Office (AA&EO) will know who has completed the training and you will continue to receive email reminders from *Workplace Answers* until you have completed your course(s).

7. Will anyone be able to see my responses?

No.

8. What are the courses being offered and who takes which course?

Faculty will take the *Unlawful Harassment Prevention–Faculty* version; Staff will take the *Unlawful Harassment Prevention-Staff* version. In addition, all Faculty and Staff in supervisory roles will take the *Unlawful Harassment Supervisor Supplement*.

9. Why do I have to take two courses and my colleague only has to take one?

All Faculty and Staff take a foundation course, either *Unlawful Harassment Prevention–Staff* or *Unlawful Harassment Prevention–Faculty*. Supervisors take an additional course called *Unlawful Harassment Supervisor Supplement*.

10. May I make suggestions for content changes?

No, this is a commercial product and further modifications are not available.

11. If I have more questions about discrimination or harassment whom do I contact?

Contact the Affirmative Action and Equity Office at 862-2930 V/TTY.

12. How long do I have to complete the course(s)?

You are asked to complete the course(s) within 30 days of receipt of your registration e-mail.

13. How long will it take to complete my course(s)?

It takes approximately 1½ hours to complete the faculty and staff foundation courses. The supervisor supplement will take an additional 45 minutes.

14. Will I receive reminders about completing the course(s)?

Yes, periodic e-mail reminders will be sent to you by *Workplace Answers* until you have completed the course(s).

15. What happens if I can't complete the course in one sitting?

It is not required that you complete the course in one sitting. You can start and stop the training as many times as you like, and you will be brought back to the place where you previously left off.

16. May I print out my certificate upon completion of the program, and do I need to mail a copy to HR or AA&EO?

Yes, you can print a copy of the certificate. No, it does not need to be submitted to HR or AA&EO.

17. If I have experienced discrimination or harassment whom do I contact for assistance?

Contact Donna Marie Sorrentino, Director, Affirmative Action and Equity Office at 862-2930 V/TTY immediately.

****Workplace Answers* is the vendor that developed the curriculum and hosts the web-site for the on-line training.**