

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Gogebic Community College

Project Details			
Title	Human Resources	Status	COMPLETED
Category	4-Valuing People	Updated	09-13-2009
Timeline		Reviewed	09-19-2009
	Planned Project Kickoff	Created	11-24-2009
	Actual Completion	Version	1
	07-01-2007		
	06-01-2010		

1: Project Goal

A: The goal of this action project is to develop consistent processes across campus to address human resource functions. Where possible, functions will be assigned to specific departments but in reference to those functions where more than one department is involved consistent practices will be developed.

2: Reasons For Project

A: Currently, GCC does not have a Human Resources position or department. We are a small campus and as such the HR functions are conducted through various departments. The need for consistent application of HR functions is vital to the success of the college and its employees. Anticipated retirements, along with a Workplace Quality Inventory that identified employee concern regarding limited staff and limited resources has intensified the necessity for this action project.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: The administration of all functional areas of the college – Instruction, Student Services, and Business will be affected in how HR processes are executed and applied. Those who will be affected by the implementation of the HR processes will be the entire college employee population. An indirect impact will be the quality of instruction and support services provided to our stakeholders.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Research conducted and shared with the team has indicated that the main HR functions include: recruitment, selection, orientation, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, benefits, health and safety, collective bargaining, employee relations, discipline, termination, succession planning, position analysis, position description, job analysis, task analysis, rationalization. The HR team will address process consistency in each of these areas although focused action projects have been developed regarding succession planning and process diagramming.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: The target for completion of this action project is 12 months. Breakdown: 1. First 7 months – collect processes, procedures, descriptions, input pertaining to the critical processes outlined above from the various areas of the college involved in HR functions. Outcome I: Collection of processes, procedures, descriptions, input pertaining to HR processes. 2. Second 3 months – compare the processes resulting in identification of variances and consistencies. Where variances occur, bring parties together to attempt identification of best practice, consensus, or justification to sustain the variance. Outcome II: Mutually agreeable process for each of the HR functions addressed by the team as well as a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of each process – quantitative or qualitative. 3. Third 3 months – identification of resource needs to sustain each process and the availability of those resources. Where possible assign specific functions to a department or position. Outcome III: Development of a HR manual containing all the HR processes which will be sustainable and consistently applied across the campus. Outcome IV: Place the HR manual on our website along with a feedback loop. Outcome V: Currently respond and develop a mechanism to continuously respond in the future to feedback in a manner that indicates how much we really value people and how committed we are to continuously improving our Human Resources process and procedures.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: As indicated in G above, each step of the action project has been identified and provided with an outcome and a time frame. The outcomes stated are objective and measurable. It will be the team's responsibility to monitor their progress against the outcomes and time frames. If the team should identify that an outcome has not been met in the time frame indicated, the team will identify why the objective has not been met and develop a plan for corrective action to increase the ability to meet subsequent objectives and time frames.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Outcome I: Collection of policies, procedures, descriptions, input pertaining to HR functions to be addressed. Outcome II: Mutually agreeable process for each of the HR functions addressed as well as a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of each process – quantitative or qualitative. Outcome III: Development of an HR manual containing all the HR processes which will be sustainable and consistently applied across the campus. Outcome IV: Place the HR manual on our website along with a feedback loop. Outcome V: Currently respond and develop a mechanism to continuously respond in the future to feedback in a manner that indicates how much we really value people and how committed we are to continuously improving our Human Resources processes and procedures.

: Other Information

A:

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: • A new chair was appointed in November 2009. Regularly monthly meetings were held and meeting summaries were made at many All Staff meetings and written summaries were made available to All Staff via BlackBoard since November. • Outcome I (Collection of policies, procedures, descriptions, input pertaining to HR functions to be addressed) was completed. The HR Committee completed a review of current policy manuals and contracts and identified (a) inconsistencies between various written documents, (a) inconsistencies between documents and current practices, and (c) processes and procedures that need further development. • Outcome II (Mutually agreeable processes for each HR function addressed as well as a mechanism for evaluating effectiveness of each process –qual/quantitative) is nearing completion. o Suggested revisions to the Board Policy Manual, including substantial revisions to the Emeritus Policy, were forwarded to The Board of Trustees. The BOT will consider these items as they begin a cycle of reviewing sections of the Board Policy Manual annually. o A Recruitment and Selection Process flow chart was developed for new positions and for vacated positions and has been forwarded to computer services to be posted on the internal HR website. The system to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of and compliance with the process flow chart is to have committee members randomly audit searches, including seeking input from the college community on the searches. o A list of Orientation procedures for newly hired-faculty was developed and will be included on the Faculty HR website. It is believed that this list should be generally applicable to any newly hired employee, however it has not yet been finalized for all employees. An informal evaluation of the effectiveness of the orientation process for newly hired faculty is currently being done by Faculty Mentors. A more formal process for all employees may be considered. o The team attempted to obtain all policies regarding Health & Safety, with little progress. Thus it was determined that tackling this HR function would best be handled by the Facilities, Safety, and Technology Committee as a separate Action Project. Such a recommendation was forwarded to the Chair of that committee. o As a means to assess Employee Relations, the HR Committee combined the Workplace Quality Inventory and Workplace Satisfaction Survey (WSS) into one survey, combining and changing items when deemed appropriate to allow for more focused feedback. The WSS was administered in Spring 2009 and the results shared with all employees. The Committee then decided it would best serve GCC employees if the WSS was run in the Fall so there is more time to focus on improvements during the school year. Thus the survey was run Fall 2009 and the results – both the raw data and a summary – were shared with employees and placed on the internal HR website. The survey will continue on an annual basis in order to continually monitor employee relations. o A follow up survey addressing one specific area of concern identified on the Fall 2009 Workplace Satisfaction Survey was conducted and the results forwarded to the administration for consideration. o Initial research by the committee suggests there is some inconsistencies with respect to position descriptions and actual duties. Also, the processes and tools associated with position analysis and evaluation vary across campus markedly. The committee determined that job descriptions need to be analyzed and updated to reflect current work practices, then benchmarks for evaluation based on the job descriptions can be drafted. This process will require a unified effort across campus to accomplish, thus the team is recommending

that these HR functions become a separate Action Project to be considered by the campus as a whole. o A list of Training and Development needs was compiled by surveying campus employees. The HR Committee is currently considering how to proceed. o The team has concluded that to do a task analysis for every position would be too cumbersome, as they vary widely based on the position and are ever changing, especially those that incorporate technology. However, the Campus Wide Training and Development List can potentially address this in part. o The committee determined that although rationalization for terminating employees is highly dependent on circumstances, current protocol in decision making is consistently based on protecting GCC's Mission. o It was determined that the remaining HR functions (performance appraisal, compensation, benefits, collective bargaining, discipline, and termination) are contractual items bargained by each bargaining unit on campus and/or covered in the Board Policy Manual and thus are beyond the purview of the HR Committee. • Outcomes III & IV (development of an HR manual containing all the HR processes which will be sustainable and consistently applied across campus; place the HR manual on the website with a feedback loop) is in development. The College recognized the enormity of the project and thus provided monetary compensation for a faculty member to develop a Faculty-centered HR website, the bulk of which is complete. • Outcome V (currently respond and develop a mechanism to continuously respond in the future to feedback in a manner that indicates how much we really value people and how committed we are to continuously improving our Human Resources processes and procedures) has been addressed as follows: o The Workplace Satisfaction Survey will be conducted every Fall and will include a separate section for off-campus employees and adjunct faculty. The results will be summarized by the HR Committee and forwarded, along with any recommendations, to the College Leaders for consideration on next steps. o An agreement with Ethical Advocate, a company providing technology for anonymous incident reporting, was made. Employees can link to this system from the "About GCC" webpage or via the internet or phone in order to provide feedback when the traditional communication methods are not fruitful or are perceived to be blocked.

2: Institution Involvement

A: • Committee members were recruited as volunteers from faculty, staff, and administration. • All GCC employees were invited to take the WSS and follow up survey, as well as to give feedback to the committee on the results. • The Committee shared its findings with respect to updating HR policies with the Board of Trustees and Administration. • All GCC employees were invited to submit their training and development needs.

3: Next Steps

A: • Continue working on the campus-wide Training and Development Needs list, potentially identifying major categories for grouping and scheduling purposes. Determine and implement a means to receive input to the needs list on an annual and/or continual basis. • Develop an off-campus and an adjunct faculty section for the Workplace Satisfaction Survey and continue to administer annually. • Solicit feedback on the Faculty HR website and make efforts to continually improve its usefulness. • Determine the resources needed/available for development of the HR manual for all employees. • Consider a more formal process for soliciting feedback from new employees on the effectiveness of their orientation. • Develop an "HR To Do" list for the standing HR Committee to use as reference in order to ensure that evaluation of the processes is ongoing as the membership of the committee changes.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: • Bringing together a broad based group of individuals to review the HR policies has fostered a greater sense of communication across areas and has allowed a wide range of perspectives to be brought into discussions. • Posting summaries of each HR Committee meeting to keep the campus informed about progress in the committee, as well as to invite input from others on committee work. • Fostering a commitment to more transparency in policies, especially by making items available via the web. • Creating mechanisms for anonymous feedback has increased awareness of what we do well along with what can be improved upon. • Implementation of an employee notification system (spurred by individuals working on the HR Committee and the Safety Committee seeing a common theme in discussions between the two groups.) • Commitment by the GCC Board of Trustees to review sections of the Board Policy Manual on an annual basis. • Creation of a GCC Faculty Mentoring Program for new faculty (separate committee started by a couple of the HR Committee members) so new faculty feel valued from day one. • Developing consistent HR practices has helped provide the foundation for establishing a "culture of consistency" for other process arenas across campus (for example, consistent course syllabi for all sections of a course, consistent language to use with students regarding online classes).

5: Project Challenges

A: • Identifying the positions/area(s) to which to assign particular HR functions is a challenge. Even though the most logical center for the function is typically readily identifiable, it is often impractical from a resources point of view. • Determining a way to insure consistent

implementation of new employee orientation is a challenge as this process involves coordinating many different people at the start of the academic year when the HR Committee is not yet on campus. • Determining how to make updates on HR material found on multiple websites a less labor intensive process is a challenge due to apparently incompatible computer systems. • Finding the resources (human and technological) to complete a campus-wide HR manual, and then keep it up-to-date. • Ensure processes are consistently and continuously reviewed and feedback is continually solicited is a challenge as committee members change and the focus of the campus shifts. • The uniqueness of the three bargaining units and their contracts prevents development of fully consistent practices. • Several of the HR functions are too large in scope to be addressed by the current Action Project in a timely manner.

6: AQIP Involvement

A:

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: GCC has identified a significant and very complex area for this action project. The institutional commitment to this process from the Board through to the staff demonstrates that it values people. In identifying this area as one that matters, GCC is following one of the principles of high performance organizations by reviewing a system that will eventually support the development of its entire staff and provide the services they need on a continuous, standardized basis. The committee has completed the first phase of this project and has moved into the second phase. A transparent process of communication has been designed using technology to keep the college community informed of its process, and a formative system of review is in place which has led to revisions in the anticipated plan of action.

2: Institution Involvement

A: The action project is being addressed through volunteers from across the college community and all employees have been solicited for their feedback both formally through surveys and informally to the committee. It is important that the Board is being kept in the loop throughout the process.

3: Next Steps

A: A standing committee has been established for HR to ensure the initiative is sustainable, and a plan for continuous quality review is in process. As resources are investigated for development of an HR manual, it might be useful to consider developing an operational budget for the entire initiative. This could eventually lead to the establishment of a dedicated, professional staff.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: GCC has engaged in collaboration and broad-based involvement in order to make progress on this project. These are both indicators of a high performance organization. The communication systems in place and the breakdown of silos across the college will contribute to a strong community if they are sustained over time.

5: Project Challenges

A: Moving forward it will be important to standardize and ensure consistency of the functions and processes that are being developed as much as possible. In addition, to ensure that this initiative is sustainable, resources (human, financial and technical) will most likely need to be re-allocated and aligned appropriately.

6: AQIP Involvement

A: The institution has not requested assistance with this project. (9779)

Project Outcome

1: Reason for completion

A: The Outcomes identified for the Action Project have been addressed as described below .

- Outcome I (Collection of policies, procedures, descriptions, input pertaining to HR functions to be addressed) was completed. The HR Committee completed a review of current policy manuals and contracts and identified (a) inconsistencies between various written documents, (a) inconsistencies between documents and current practices, and (c) processes and procedures that need further development.
- Outcome II (Mutually agreeable processes for each *HR function* addressed as well as a mechanism for evaluating effectiveness of each process –qual/quantitative) has been addressed as follows:
 - Suggested revisions to the Board Policy Manual, including substantial revisions to the Emeritus Policy, were forwarded to The Board of Trustees. The BOT will consider these items as they begin a cycle of reviewing sections of the Board Policy Manual annually.
 - A *Recruitment and Selection* Process flow chart was developed for new positions and for vacated positions and has been forwarded to computer services to be posted on the internal HR website. The system to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of and compliance with the process flow chart is to have committee members randomly audit searches, including seeking input from the college community on the searches.
 - A list of *Orientation* procedures for newly hired-faculty was developed and will be included on the Faculty HR website. It is believed that this list should be generally applicable to any newly hired employee, however it has not yet been finalized for all employees. An informal evaluation of the effectiveness of the orientation process for newly hired faculty is currently being done by Faculty Mentors. A more formal process for all employees may be considered.
 - As a means to assess *Employee Relations*, the HR Committee combined the Workplace Quality Inventory and Workplace Satisfaction Survey (WSS) into one survey, combining and changing items when deemed appropriate to allow for more focused feedback. The survey is administered each Fall term and the results – both the raw data and a summary – are shared with employees and placed on the internal HR website.
 - There are some inconsistencies with respect to *position descriptions* and actual duties. Also, the processes and tools associated with *position analysis and evaluation* vary across campus markedly. The committee determined that job descriptions need to be analyzed and updated to reflect current work practices, then benchmarks for evaluation based on the job descriptions can be drafted. This process will require a unified effort across campus to accomplish, thus the team is recommending that these HR functions become a separate Action Project to be considered by the campus as a whole.
 - A list of *Training and Development* needs was compiled by surveying campus employees. It was determined that the new on-campus Center for Entrepreneurship could address many of the needs. The list was forwarded to administration for follow up.
 - On *Orientation Effectiveness* survey was created and disseminated to new hires over the past three years. There was an obvious difference between what new employees in 2007 indicated was/was not covered and new employees hired in other years. This is not unexpected since the mentoring and orientation program was implemented for the 2007 new faculty hires, but became a lower priority for other years. Those that went through the orientation and were assigned a mentor indicated both were helpful; those that did not mentioned they had to figure out a lot of things by themselves. The HR Committee agreed that GCC needs to make orientation a priority by having standing orientation sessions on the calendar for the week before classes start every Fall (then if there are no new hires, sessions can be cancelled). Also, the *Mentoring* Committee put together a well defined program that should also be set as a priority by the administration for it to be effective. These recommendations were forwarded to the administration.
 - The team attempted to obtain all policies regarding *Health & Safety*, with little progress. Thus it was determined that tackling this HR function would best be handled by the Facilities, Safety, and Technology Committee as a separate Action Project. Such a recommendation was forwarded to the Chair of that committee.
 - The team has concluded that to do a *task analysis* for every position would be too cumbersome, as they vary widely based on the position and are ever changing, especially those that incorporate technology.
 - The committee determined that although *rationalization* for terminating employees is highly dependent on circumstances, current protocol in decision making is consistently based on protecting GCC's Mission.
 - It was determined that the remaining HR functions (*performance appraisal, compensation, benefits, collective bargaining, discipline, and termination*) are contractual items bargained by each bargaining unit on campus and/or

covered in the Board Policy Manual and thus are beyond the purview of the HR Committee.

- Outcomes III & IV (development of an HR manual containing all the HR processes which will be sustainable and consistently applied across campus; place the HR manual on the website with a feedback loop) have seen progress. A Faculty-centered HR website is nearing completion and will serve as the foundation for an All Employee HR when resources are available to complete the project. Feedback was solicited from employees on the structure and content of the website. Future efforts to develop, complete and maintain an HR webpage must actively involve representatives from all areas of the college, not just members of the HR committee.
- Outcome V (currently respond and develop a mechanism to continuously respond in the future to feedback in a manner that indicates how much we really value people and how committed we are to continuously improving our Human Resources processes and procedures) has been addressed as follows:
 - The Workplace Satisfaction Survey will be conducted every Fall and will include a separate section for off-campus employees and adjunct faculty. The results will be summarized by the HR Committee and forwarded, along with any recommendations, to the College Leaders for consideration on next steps.
 - An agreement with Ethical Advocate, a company providing technology for anonymous incident reporting, was made. Employees can link to this system from the "About GCC" webpage or via the internet or phone in order to provide feedback when the traditional communication methods are not fruitful or are perceived to be blocked.
 - A survey is in development to evaluate how the hiring process compares to the hiring flow chart. It is slated to be administered in Fall 2010
 - An annual HR TO DO list/calendar is on the agenda to be created.

2: Success Factors

- A:
- The HRAP Committee met regularly to address/accomplish the stated outcomes of the Action Project. Posting summaries of each HR Committee meeting served to keep the AP on track, as well as to keep the campus informed about progress and invite input from others.
 - It is a great accomplishment that procedures were developed and/or documented to streamline and evaluate several HR functions when few processes were previously available in written form. The Employee Satisfaction Survey has proven to be a valuable tool for soliciting anonymous feedback from employees in order to increase awareness of what we do well along with what can be improved upon. Creation of a GCC Faculty Orientation and Faculty Mentoring Programs will help new hires to feel valued from day one. The Recruitment and Selection Flow chart will allow all members of a hiring committee understand the various points in the process so that consistency in hiring practices can be maintained. Compiling an employee-generated list of Training and Development needs will allow the administration to better address professional development.
 - Bringing together a broad based group of individuals to review the HR policies has fostered a greater sense of communication across areas and has allowed a wide range of perspectives to be brought into discussions.
 - Fostering a commitment to more transparency in policies, especially by making items available via the web. Also, obtaining a commitment by the GCC Board of Trustees to review sections of the Board Policy Manual on an annual basis.
 - Developing consistent HR practices has helped provide the foundation for establishing a "culture of consistency" for other process arenas across campus (for example, consistent course syllabi for all sections of a course, consistent language to use with students regarding online classes).

3: Unsuccessful Factors

- A:
- Several of the HR functions were too large in scope to be addressed by the current Action Project in a timely manner. Also, the uniqueness of the three bargaining units and their contracts prevents development of fully consistent practices.
 - Identifying the positions/area(s) to which to assign particular HR functions is a challenge. Even though the most logical center for the function is typically readily identifiable, it is often impractical from a resources point of view.
 - It is in doubt whether the AP was able to gain campus-wide 'buy-in' for a long term commitment to HR functions. Ensuring processes are consistently and continuously practiced, reviewed and feedback is continually solicited is a challenge as the focus and priorities of both the HR committee and the campus as a whole shifts.