

The PRC met on March 4th. Present at the meeting were Valerie Thomas (Assoc. VP, HR), Jodi Kelber-Kaye (PSS), Kim Harris (Employment Manager, HR) and Lynn Knazik (NESS).

1. First up was a discussion of the proposed “Job Well Done Program.” This is an award program proposed several years ago by PSS. It would be less formal than the Employee of the Quarter (EoQ) Program, accomplishment-based, “awardable” at any level, including departmental, and less costly. Kim Harris manages the current EoQ program and is the most likely person to manage the “Job Well Done” program, if UMBC institutes it.

The structure of this program was discussed. How would we fold recognition under this program into other campus/USM recognition programs, i.e. EoQ, Regents’ Awards, etc. so that it became part of the larger recognition initiative? How would it benefit the university? Once structured, program information will have to be disseminated across campus so that everyone is aware of its existence. Publicity could include Insights and even the Retriever, and a committee to manage the program would have to be created. Kim noted that EoQ nominations are solicited and are good for an entire year, so that if someone doesn’t win upon nomination, they may still have more chances. This practice began because in some quarters there are no nominations so holding them over for a year deepens the pool.

Considerations raised in discussion included the following:

- Who will nominate for these awards? (Some groups are better than others.)
- What will the timeline be? (Frequency, scheduled or spontaneous, timing)
- How can it be structured to be truly inclusive? (Eliminate bias towards Exempt Staff that is inherent in many of the existing staff awards.)
- How will it be funded? (Funding was requested several years ago but nothing happened.)

Valerie provided information on two current campus award programs, the Administrative Services “Spot” Award Program and the Financial Services “Go Fish” Awards Program.

The Spot Award Program is presented periodically to employees who are identified as making an extra effort on a particular task, project or initiative, that deserves special recognition and displays one of Administrative Service’s strategic elements of: 1) being an expert resource; 2) surpassing customer expectations, and/or; 3) leveraging technology. Employees and supervisors can nominate for these awards. Judges are the Administrative Directors and AVP. Gift certificates ranging from \$50 to \$200, as determined by the judges, are awarded. Employees are limited to 2 awards a year.

The Go Fish Award Program has been in place for seven years. New employees are encouraged to read the book, “Fish” by Stephen Lundin (copies are available), which embodies the philosophy of good customer service through 4 tenets: Play, Make Their Day, Be There, and Choose Your Attitude. Awards are quarterly and every employee receives a reminder email that nominations are due. There are 3 judges (Ben Lowenthal, Valerie Thomas and Jean Donohue) and the winner receives a certificate and gift pack. The person who nominated them receives a certificate.

Jodi and Lynn will discuss the Job Well Done Program with PSS and NESS, respectively. We hope to form a work group of volunteers from both bodies to pursue this initiative.

2. Members discussed the Career/Life Balance Initiative briefly. Autumn Reed is looking for success stories from members of the campus community. The webpage is <http://careerlifebalance.umbc.edu>.

3. Alternative Work Arrangements were discussed. Two popular options for staff are teleworking and a compressed workweek. HR has some data on teleworking at UMBC because formal arrangements require a written agreement. Valerie will bring data to a future PRC meeting. Compressed workweeks cannot be tracked, other than through time sheets, so HR does not have any real information about how many such arrangements there are on campus. Compressed workweek agreements do not have to be formalized in writing.

HR has developed a program for supervisors – “What Every Chair Should Know.” It will cover such topics as alternative work arrangements, staff development opportunities, and others, which are vulnerable to changes in department chairs and/or supervisors. HR is hopeful that instituting this training will lead to more consistency for staff, particularly non-exempt staff. The initial program is two 4-hour sessions. Dean Casper from CAHSS wanted a one-hour program and HR has created both a one-hour and a two-hour program. HR will pilot the training in COEIT and then CNMS.

4. The discussion touched on other issues and announcements.

- Next fall there will be a simpler grievance procedure. There will be information on the HR and Human Relations webpage.
- Representation on the Workplace Learning and Wellness Committee was discussed. Valerie suggested Sarah Shannon from NESS. Sarah works in HR and participation on the committee would give us representation and give Sarah the opportunity to increase her font of knowledge. Jodi will follow up with Jill. (Following the meeting, we spoke with Sarah who was amenable to the idea.)
- Diversity has become a huge issue. At the request of Provost Rous, Dean Casper is working on an initiative with members of the campus community. HR is focusing on hiring practices and, among other things, will require training before any positions are searched. Microaggressions and unconscious biases are two areas of focus. This year’s Staff Development Day program is titled, “Leveraging Diversity: Creating Culturally Competent Work Environments.” HR is working to figure out what we will do and which areas we want to develop in more depth. Suggestions for surveying staff were briefly discussed. Valerie is concerned about the frequency of surveys and wants to take time to consider this carefully.
- In closing, the issue of re-classification came up. Valerie feels that HR does a good job and complies with not only the letter of the law, in this case, but the spirit. She was reportedly amazed at how often positions are reclassified on campus and agreed to provide the PRC with data on the number and types of reclassifications that have been approved. She provided us with copies of a PowerPoint presentation on Position and Wage Administration (2013) but agreed that the perception of staff, particularly non-exempt staff in clerical support positions, that reclassifications are generally not approved or only happen when someone leaves and benefit the new employee, should be addressed. The possibility of holding brown bag lunches or similar programs to discuss position and wage administration, particularly reclassification and career paths, was suggested. Valerie seemed receptive and will consider it.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is April 29th.