

STAFFING FOR THE NEW MISSION ACTION TEAM

Highlights* of Preliminary Recommendations

The Staffing for the New Mission Action Team was charged “to think about optimal strategies for building an excellent staff, including how to best train and develop existing staff; how to best recognize staff within the anchor institution framework; and how to best leverage the talents of staff for our institutional mission.” To thoroughly examine central staffing themes in the strategic plan, the Staffing Group formed five sub-teams, focused on the following areas: **talent management, professional development, staff recognition, communication, and staff voice**. The recommendations have been developed through study of best practices and benchmarking with other institutions of higher education (similar to RU-N in mission and size) as well as with corporations and organizations and through extensive group conversations and input from RU-N leadership team members and area-specific experts.

*The following recommendations are highlights of the Staffing for the New Mission Team’s *preliminary* report. These recommendations are subject to revision as deliberations continue. The team looks forward to feedback from *all* staff through the open forums, both online and in-person, as well as from the reports of the external reviewers, all of which will inform future deliberations.

Talent Management

- Develop a Rutgers University-Newark employer philosophy. This statement will characterize the unique attributes that Rutgers University-Newark offers to current and prospective employees; defines the work environment, values, and culture; serves as a recruitment and communication tool for acquiring and retaining talent; and identifies RU-N as a partner to the community.
- Create a volunteer policy and opportunities for staff volunteerism. The policy would permit employees to volunteer in the community without using accrued leave and community members to volunteer at the university and ensure our legal protection for those volunteers.
- Establish an advisory group, which would include members from the entire university staff community, to help ensure talent management becomes embedded within the university culture.
- Create job sharing opportunities to enhance inter-departmental collaboration and professional development.

Professional Development

- Establish a variety of training options and platforms—in-person, online, or hybrid—that would be of benefit to both employees and supervisors.
- Revamp the performance appraisal process to a 360-degree model and also include professional development plans, mid-year feedback sessions, and an end-of-cycle review. Develop a new rating scale that puts greater focus on skills and competencies rather than tasks would be created.
- Provide opportunities for Community Building (service) within the City of Newark. This would include providing release time for participation in off-campus initiatives (e.g. tutoring program, computer training) for staff to allow them to hone current skills and make a contribution to the community.

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for more information on the strategic planning process.

- Provide adequate HR staff to coordinate professional development programs and initiatives, which will foster an environment that promotes lifelong learning among all members of the university community.
- Encourage continuous training and provide support for managers and supervisors to develop and cultivate a style that is in line with the institutional mission.

Staff Recognition

- Develop and host various staff recognition events throughout the year including a fall Kick-Off (i.e. continental breakfast with remarks from the Chancellor to inform staff of what the upcoming year will bring) and an End-of-Year event in June (i.e. a major celebration to thank everyone for all of their hard work).
- Implement *Employee of The Quarter Program* where the recipient receives a range of rewards including special parking privileges, certificate, article on staff website, etc.
- Promote staff wellness through focused workshops (e.g. nutrition and fitness), a lunch series, and a “De-Stress” week for staff, featuring hand/back massages; meditation techniques, Yoga, Zumba, etc.
- Revitalize the staff awards (and awards ceremony) and focus the award categories on the strategic plan and anchor mission.

Communication

- Create a staff website and redesign the existing Newark HR website to ensure information is easily accessible.
- Establish regularly scheduled staff information sessions. This will provide an opportunity for all staff to come together to hear updates from the administration, and to provide staff input.
- Launch a staff-focused monthly periodical/bulletin for RU-N, which will be emailed to all staff and be available in PDF form. Supervisors will be encouraged to print the bulletin for all staff who do not have computer access.
- Create "headline" version of the Strategic Plan. Make a condensed (double-sided sheet) version of the plan available, and translate it into languages relevant to employees, so it can be read and understood by all staff members of RU-N.

Staff Voice

- Establish a Staff Council to represent all staff, both union and non-union. A staff council focused on the needs and concerns of RU-N staff is a concrete and potentially powerful vehicle for empowering staff and ensuring that their views are known by university leadership and the university community at large. The committee believes that the staff council should be involved in shared governance with the Student Government Association (SGA) and the Newark Faculty Council (NFC).
- Develop an annual one-day Staff Retreat/Conference that would allow staff from various departments to come together, learn from each other, collaborate, and network with one another. It could become an important instrument for breaking down silos between units and enhancing staff visibility and sense of voice at RU-N generally.
- Install a staff suggestion box, virtual and/or physical, to provide an opportunity for staff to submit their suggestions and ideas for the university anonymously.
- Establish an Office of Collaborative Problem Solving & Conflict Management (Ombuds Office).

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