

Committee on Career Development

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Purpose

In 2012, the Council of University of California Staff Assemblies (CUCSA), commissioned a [staff engagement survey](#) with the goal of understanding the current state of employee engagement at UC Davis and identifying opportunities to improve it. Supporting career development was identified as the “strongest driver of engagement and retention” and key opportunities to address it include:

- A need for more information and resources for individual career management
- A lack of confidence that career objectives can be achieved at UC Davis

The [Campus Climate Survey](#) touched upon the same themes, but offered information on how “positionality” influences staff access to career development opportunities:

- Sixty-five percent of staff feel their supervisors provide them with resources to pursue professional development opportunities.
- Sixty-seven percent of staff feel their supervisors provide them job/career advice or guidance when needed.

Staff Assembly strongly believes that all staff should have equal access to development opportunities. By advocating and ensuring equitable opportunities for all staff, we will be making tangible strides toward improving staff engagement and realizing the Chancellor’s Vision of Excellence. This vision is a bold one measured in part by:

- Impact of faculty and staff contributions to the campus community, through participation on university and departmental committees, governance opportunities and volunteerism.
- Increases in the attraction and retention of a diverse group of faculty and staff and number of staff positions filled by internal candidates.
- Increases in the number of staff engaged in professional development and certification programs provided by the university, particularly in areas of supervision, management and leadership.
- Increases in opportunities for participation in formal and informal mentor-mentee activities.

At the Chancellor’s request, Staff Assembly formed the Committee on Career Development to address career development and career mobility concerns as well as provide the Chancellor with recommendations that her leadership team could consider implementing to increase staff engagement and retention.

Committee on Career Development Recommendations

As a learning organization, UC Davis leaders who understand the importance of career development are better able to play a central role in furthering the careers of staff. Supporting career development activities boosts morale, productivity and retention - all of which help ensure staff have the ability to reach their full potential, and contribute to the continued success of UC Davis.

The Committee on Career Development's recommendations aim to improve staff engagement and retention by assisting staff in their pursuit of professional and personal development at UC Davis. These recommendations also serve to improve the abilities of staff, thereby creating a talented pool of individuals capable of filling the expected gap in future leadership positions.

The committee's recommendations include:

- Encourage staff to seek out career-enhancing opportunities to develop transferable skills.
 - Human Resources should develop a statement that defines UC Davis' professional development goals and values, and share this widely.
 - Promote a culture of shared responsibility between the employee and supervisor for professional development. Roles include:
 - i. **University Leadership** - review policies and practices to ensure any barriers to professional development opportunities are removed. Include career development and volunteer activities in annual performance evaluations. Specifically, supervisors should be accountable for supporting the career development of their staff. A review of a supervisor's actions with respect to granting release time, demonstrating flexibility with staff workloads, and engaging with staff in two-way dialogue about career development, are areas that can be examined when evaluating supervisors.
 - ii. **Supervisors** – receive training on ways to take the lead in developing staff, which may include creating Individual Development Plans (IDP) and personally participating in professional development opportunities.
 - iii. **Staff** – should regularly engage in assessment and reflection of their skills and set goals for continuous improvement. This includes pursuing career and other activities that will benefit their personal and professional growth, and discussing their goals with supervisors. One tool staff can access is attending the complimentary career counselling sessions offered through Staff Development & Professional Services (SDPS).

→ Action Items

- Investigate the barriers to voluntary staff participation in training and development activities such as workload; course offerings that aren't engaging; lack of release time; courses not conveniently scheduled (or not available online); and pursue solutions that afford all staff the flexibility and motivation to participate¹.
- Incentivize staff volunteerism for campus projects and organizations, including leadership roles on advisory committees, and assisting with events like TGFS.

¹ According to the 2014 SD&PS customer survey, staff respondents identified the following barriers to attending SD&PS courses – **workload** (49%, n=216), **release time** (9.55%, n=42), n/a (15.91%, n=70).

- **Justification** - Ensuring all staff enjoy equal access and can take advantage of volunteer opportunities may require a designated time allocation in position descriptions and be a measurable performance item in annual evaluations. Volunteerism creates networking opportunities and is a cost-effective tool for realizing many campus projects and initiatives.
- Create new opportunities for staff to acquire skills by instituting formalized mentorship, internship, and job-shadowing programs.
- Develop resource lists that staff can use to connect with mentors or identify and undertake intern projects.
- Expand the availability and breadth of talent development programs like Administrative Officers for the Future and other opportunities that prepare staff for upward mobility.
- Develop and fund events to showcase career development resources that empower staff to manage and further their own careers.
- Appropriate annual funding for a staff Career Development Expo to be organized by Human Resources, with the assistance of groups like Staff Assembly and other stakeholders.
- Develop materials that clearly identify paths staff may take to achieve upward mobility within all job titles.
 - **Justification** - Offering standardized guidelines that outline the skills, knowledge and abilities needed to successfully advance within a job series could empower staff to take the initiative for their career advancement. Consistent with UC Davis' commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity, staff should be aware that all employees in similar job classifications have equal access to training and work experience. These materials should also clearly outline steps staff can take to initiate the reclassification process.
- Increase staff participation in career counseling and expand access to the Career Management Academy and programs offered through SD&PS.
 - **Justification** - These programs are beneficial, but are currently utilized by a small percentage of staff. For example, participation in the Career Management Academy is limited because it is only offered a few times annually.
- Evaluate the efficacy of Staff Development and Professional Services courses.
 - **Justification** - According to SD&PS' 2014 customer survey, 65 percent of respondents participated in training and professional development programs to "enhance [their] opportunities for promotion or a new career." However, do we know if managers recognize SD&PS certificates or whether attending training provides staff any marked improvement in their skills? As the campus' central training provider, staff members need to understand how effective SD&PS courses are for realizing upward mobility. Offering training is a wonderful employment benefit, but it's far more important to have metrics that show courses offer value to both the university and employees.
- Expand opportunities for administrative and management training programs to increase the diversity of the administrative and management applicant pools.

Conclusion

According to the 2014 SD&PS customer survey, 91 percent of staff respondents participate in professional development "to enhance [job] performance and effectiveness in [their] current job." Similarly, almost 93 percent of managers/supervisor respondents indicated that they provide release time for trainings they "determine will enhance [their] employees' performance and effectiveness in their current jobs," as well as

release time for “training proposed by employees that is related to their current jobs.” This suggests supervisors, managers and staff are interested in development opportunities that improve staff performance. Unfortunately, the workload issue continues to be an impediment for many staff.

Without allowing some workload flexibility for staff to attend courses, or enacting a policy that connects development activities to performance evaluations, we may not see positive outcomes for those staff that either don't seek development due to workload, or simply don't pursue development opportunities. Engaging these individuals is critical to ensuring that a culture of excellence is infused throughout our campus community.