

January 2005

STUDENT AFFAIRS UNIT HEADS

SUBJECT: Student Affairs Staff Support and New Initiatives

Thank you for your ongoing good work in leading our departments and staff. As we proceed to incorporate into our daily practices what we have learned from the Staff@Work Survey, the staff table discussions at the Fall Meeting, and additional input from all of you through a rather extensive consultative process, I believe we now have a consensus as to the actions that can and should be taken now for the benefit of all Student Affairs staff. Because these initiatives arise directly from the *Primary Opportunities* in the Survey, I believe they will be highly valued by our staff and will result in significant improvements in their morale if we implement them with energy and enthusiasm in every department. We will assess the impact of our efforts when Student Affairs participates, as planned, in the annual [Staff@Work](#) Survey in 2006. Although many of you are already taking some of these actions, our goal is to make them a regular part of our practice in Student Affairs.

In addition to improving our communication and staff support efforts, we are increasing the flexibility of our practices and procedures regarding salary adjustments, salary savings and staff development. These new practices and procedures, as well as the agreed upon improvements in our communication and staff support approaches, are outlined below. They are effective as of February 1, 2005 and will be revised as additional experience is gained.

Communicate with Staff Frequently and Thoroughly

- Hold regular meetings to keep staff informed; include information from Strategic Plan Team, Council or Unit Heads meetings as appropriate.
- Provide staff with the “big picture,” as well as ongoing operational needs.
- Prepare staff for stressful periods – notify staff of peak workload periods and upcoming challenges.
- Use email, paper and oral communication methods.
- Ensure that annual performance evaluations are completed (as required by systemwide policy) with emphasis on development.
- Encourage staff to accept invitations to attend lunch meetings hosted by the VCSA to foster free exchange with and among Student Affairs employees.

Help Keep Staff Healthy and Productive

- Provide staff release time and encourage them to attend campus events sponsored by Student Affairs and to interact with students, e.g., Welcome Week, Fall Festival on the Green, UnOlympics, Student Affairs All-Staff meetings, and Student Affairs and campus “Sharecase” events.
- If office coverage is an issue, permit employees to attend these events in shifts or close the office for the minimum time needed.
- Ensure that staff take their lunch break, and encourage rest periods in accordance with policy.
- Encourage interested staff to participate in the “2-for-1 Recreation Card Program” which will be funded for the second year by the VCSA in 2005-06.
- Encourage staff to participate in health and wellness activities, allowing for flexible schedules to make this possible.
- Encourage staff to take earned vacation.

Provide Recognition of Work Well Done

- Give staff ongoing oral feedback on their performance, remembering to thank and praise staff for positive performance for tasks both small and large.
- Have periodic work-related meetings and, where appropriate, provide refreshments in accordance with campus guidelines and unit budget limitations.
- Encourage peer-to-peer recognition and peer-to-supervisor recognition.
- Encourage staff to nominate at least one employee from your department for the annual campuswide Exemplary Employee Awards program.
- Encourage staff to submit proposals to the Professional Development Fund financed by the VCSA. The initial procedures and criteria for this program will be finalized and distributed in the near future.

Promote Staff Development and Career Advancement

- Use the annual performance appraisal process to discuss skill and knowledge development and to plan for further staff development actions.

- Encourage employees to develop their skills and careers through participation in: (a) position-related programs to improve performance; (b) career-related programs, including cross-training for other positions within the department; and (c) career-related programs that develop new skills that expand the capabilities of the employee and the department (*UC and UCSD Personnel Policy 50 - Professional Development* contains procedures and guidelines.)
- As appropriate, provide release time or a flexible work schedule to permit staff to participate in development activities. Release time may be granted for position-related or career-related programs consistent with University policy and union contracts.

Salary Adjustments and Salary Savings

- In response to staff and departments requesting flexibility with salary adjustments, exceptions to the 5% salary adjustment guideline will be permitted on a more liberal basis. The exception criteria are attached.
- Effective January 1, 2005, salary savings, at the minimum of grade/step, will remain within departments. Units are no longer required to submit a request for salary savings. In addition, departments may now utilize these salary savings as needed and carry the funds forward into future fiscal years. Units will be responsible for recruitment, moving, and stipend costs. Units will be requested to submit year-end financial and carry forward reports. Over the next several years, these procedures will be revised to better reflect steady-state enrollments and budgets.

Incentive Award Program

- For the 2004-05 Incentive Award Program, the VCSA will again provide funds to augment departments' 2004-05 awards. We will also provide guidelines for the funding allocations made to each unit.

The VCSA's Resource Administration office will be scheduling a meeting with Student Affairs business officers to review the above new initiatives and provide specific instructions for processing salary saving transfers and IAP allocations.

Please continue to do all the positive things you already do for staff and fully utilize the new practices, procedures and programs described above. Again, I am confident that, with all of us engaged, the impact on our staff will be very positive, as well as measurable. Such an impact will undoubtedly result in improved services to our students and enhanced satisfaction on their part as well.

We will continue to work on long-term actions to further assist staff. I look forward to your continued strong support of our efforts to improve our work environment and operating procedures, and to your comments and suggestions as we move forward.

Joseph W. Watson
Vice Chancellor