USAC QUESTIONS MARCH 2007 OPEN MEETING

HR REPS

What are HR Representatives; when was the position created; why weren't we notified who our department (HR) representative is?

The HR Representative positions were created approximately seven years ago to provide business officers and others in a given unit with a go-to person regarding pay, benefits, and status related transactions.

During Banner implementation it has been necessary to convert one of the HR Rep positions to support the quality and work in process data entry prior to submission to Payroll and on going data integrity, and so there has been a change of representatives for some employees. The HR web site that would have listed these changes was suspended for a time, and an improved web site in development will include this feature.

Why is an employee unable to get even the most basic information from HR without going through an HR Rep who may be out for days?

We are aware of dissatisfaction in this area and are working to make improvements. While employees could get information from other HR staff members when their rep is not available, they may not know who to contact. While general questions could be handled by other Reps or HR staff members, however, a question that requires research on pay/leave/benefit information is best handled by the HR Rep who is responsible for the area. Moreover, there are some times when all of the HR Reps are in training or payroll deadlines delay responses to questions. As an example, a few days before the March USAC meeting, all the reps were in mandatory three days Banner training. Thus, while delayed responses are sometimes unavoidable, we can do better.

BANNER

HR has "top" authority with regards to owning shared records. No problem here. However, if changes are made to a person's record, often other forms are also affected (although those forms may be only accessed on other areas – student, alumni, etc.). When shared records are updated in General Person, there needs to be a system that goes out to other area reps (designated by each are) that may share that record to that they know records have been updated and by whom, and then those other areas can check to see if other forms need to be updated as well.

We aren't clear about the intent of this question. When someone changes their address in Banner Admin, it may impact Payroll for city tax purposes. When HR changes an employee's address in Banner, it is then changed in Anthem, Delta, and Vision Service

Plan systems, as well. If this example expresses the general intent of the inquiry, we would need to know the records that need to be reported to others (and the individuals) so that HR may research the feasibility of electronic notification of changes.

It's been brought to my attention that records that are updated by HR are often not entered according to data/Banner standards established by WSU. Is this problem being addressed? To whom should it be addressed when it is discovered that a record updated by HR is not in the correct format?

Many quality improvements have been made and efforts continue between HR, the Controller's Office, and the various Banner teams to address and resolve system and data issues. We can't tell from this question whether it refers to a problem that has already been resolved or an issue that continues. Individual problems should be addressed directly to Tamara Jones, Tony Whack, or the assigned HR Rep.

I have someone in my office who has been working with us for over a year. He retired YEARS ago from WSU and we just hired him back for 18 months. If you go to the directory search on the WSU web-site, his name comes up with his old title, and campus address and phone. The only correct thing is his name, department, and e-mail. Why isn't this data current? Someone at the university needed to reach him regarding a WSU business and couldn't reach him. We heard that in the future the WSU directory is going to utilize web-site information. If that's the case, there's a lot of folks that are nervous about that as there seems to be a lot of dated or incorrect information. Is there going to be a clean-up of the on-line directory information and check for quality assurance/accuracy?

Historical data imported to Banner was limited. Data integrity and clean up is an on-going task, including the timing of large scale data uploads. While we cannot ensure 100% accuracy, we do not anticipate that developing a directory in Banner will introduce new problems.

EMPLOYEE/LABOR RELATIONS

Where are staff supposed to turn for advocacy? HR's interest seems to lie with protecting the administration.

There is first the question of advocacy for what reason(s) or issue(s). Certainly, members of USAC may be approached and bring matters and concerns to the attention of appropriate administrative staff. Moreover, HR plays many roles. While we advise all levels of supervision about how to appropriately address performance management and misconduct issues, we must also not abdicate our compliance role. All such guidance is in compliance with university policy, the Ohio Revised Code as applicable, and regulatory requirements of agencies such as the Department of Labor and Equal Opportunity Commission. HR often intervenes where employees bring to our attention issues with their supervisor. HR makes efforts to achieve an appropriate, safe, and productive work environment for our employees. Employee may also utilize the informal and formal dispute resolution process, which may be found on the Employee Relations section of the HR web site.

Why is there no process to evaluate or submit problems with a supervisor that are not being resolved with internal department efforts? Does HR always "side with" supervisors, and just expect the employee to fold or quit?

In a similar fashion to the question above, HR does not "side with" any one supervisor or person. If supervisors are following appropriate polices and processes, HR does not have authority to "manage" or "control" their actions. That would be more the responsibility of the person to whom their supervisor reports. HR often facilitates matters where between an employee and his or her supervisor, there are communication issues, differences in understandings of roles and expectations, the need to review and/or revise the job content. Unfortunately, not all issues between supervisors and employees can be addressed to a given employee's satisfaction. Ironically, perhaps, there have been many instances where supervisors have wanted HR to "fix" problems with employees who report to them, and HR similarly does not have the authority to do so.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Why is customer service time of HR so slow (on resolving questions of leave time, buying student retirement time, etc.)? It's sort of a running joke about how long it takes to get a response from HR regarding individual personnel questions, or even questions that relate to our jobs regarding the entire university. Emails and phone calls are sent-and responses (if any) are days later. Often start with the "designated" HR rep for individual personnel questions, and try the main line to try to figure out who to can answer the university question. If CaTS can field 1000 calls a day, and be excellent in the response time-what can't HR? Perhaps start with logging emails/phone calls to see about volume. If more people are needed to respond-then HR would have the data necessary to quality and quantify.

We recognize a need to improve in this area, and we are committed to improvement over time. We are down one HR Rep due to Banner implementation, which slows our responses to some extent. Also, HR responds to thousands of inquiries each month. While some questions are simple and can be addressed immediately, others involve research that can take hours or, in some instances, require information or assistance from outside HR.

HR is structured unlike any other department and direct comparisons to work load and staffing in other departments cannot reasonably be made. HR is not a one call center, and there is no one dedicated solely to problem-solving or answering questions. In addition to phone inquiries and emails, hundreds of transactions flow through HR every day. The HR staff works hard to provide customer service, however, the response time may not be in the timeframe that employees expect. While we are committed to doing a better job of supplying timely responses, there will always be some questions that can't be answered right away and some times when payroll deadlines or other factors slow response time.

What, if any, steps are being taken to improve response time and facilitate ongoing communication from HR to faculty and staff?

With the worst of system implementation behind us, HR is exploring ways to help improve communications within its modest staff resources. We will be making some changes in the first half of 2008 that should result in noticeable improvements.

Who are staff supposed to go to for help when their HR Rep is out of the office? People are told that they will need to wait until the HR Rep returns.

In some cases when there are only a few hours when a given HR Rep is out of the office, it may be best to wait for the person who has been working on a question or problem to return. In cases where an HR Rep is off on vacation or is out ill, the voice and e-mail messages direct the caller to another HR Rep who will help.

What is the best way to contact someone in HR (This year I had questions about the insurance. I emailed, waited, and did not get an answer. I called three different times and left voice mail and never had anyone call me back. So, after a few days, on my lunch hour, I ran over there to talk to someone because I needed to make some decisions. People are staffed there and answered my questions)?

First and foremost, it is never acceptable if repeated messages are not returned in a reasonably timely fashion. We know this has happened, and we apologize. In fairness, there is but one person fully dedicated to addressing benefit issues, and we are working on ways to get more assistance in this area. An efficient way of contacting HR is to email the human_resources@wright.edu email address; this also helps HR track the number of inquiries for help and to assure appropriate follow up actions.

COMPENSATION

The Peer Review Process moved me up a salary band and changed my title. Why did I not receive a 5% raise as do classified staff when they move a step up?

It was announced early on in the classification system process for unclassified staff that changes to titles and salary bands do not constitute either a promotion or a demotion. Thus pay would remain the same. When the classification system for civil service staff was developed, the same pay practices were used.

Do staff need to put in for time off if the amount is under four hours?

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), it is permissible for exempt professional employees (what we call unclassified) who are entitled to sick leave to be required to report time on an hour for hour basis for sick leave use. Under the FLSA, where exempt employees work typically in excess of forty hours weekly, and occasionally leave for short periods at the beginning or end of their work day and with the prior approval of the supervisor, the time may not be reported. In cases where employees more typically work a forty hour week, sick time should be reported on an hour for hour basis. HR does not manage individual schedules.

My salary is not correct on my W-2 form. Who do I contact?

Payroll.

I would like to get the formal job description on file of my position. What do I do?

You are welcome to visit HR with advance notice and review your personnel file, or contact Sharon Shaw, Compensation Manger, or Carlotta Johnson, Compensation Analyst, and ask for a copy of your job description. Anyone in HR should be able to do this, with specific questions asked of the HR staff named above.

What are the rules and regulations concerning internal promotion?

Departments are encouraged to promote from within where appropriate. A given job may be posted as an internal promotion for employees in a given department before efforts are made to post the job university wide or to recruit outside the university.

When unclassified salaried staff first submitted our PDQ documents, we were told there would be a follow-up market salary survey to determine if our salaries needed to be adjusted based on the new position descriptions. I have sent two notes to staff in HR to inquire whether this survey has taken place or is still being planned, and if individuals will be notified regarding the results as they pertain to our specific positions?

First, I wish to extend my apologies to you for the lack of a timely response. HR has updated its market data capability yet again and has been using more comprehensive and precise data when considering all special salary increases, adjustments to ranges, and other salary administration purposes. Market analysis is an ongoing process. In all cases where special salary increases are granted, or other updates or adjustments occur, employees and supervisors are notified.

We have yet to receive notification of our titles/grade band. Past inquires have indicated that we would be receiving this/a repeated mailing. What is the latest on this?

All employees were given notice individually and all affected should have by now been informed about their final titles and band placement. Any questions should be referred to Sharon Shaw.

When one disagrees with the results of a job audit, what appeal options are there? How far can one take appeals? Is there an off campus level of appeal? Is this the same for classified & faculty, if not, what options do they have?

Job audit results may be appealed up to the Provost. There is no "off campus" appeal for unclassified staff. The Ohio Revised Code (ORC) provides for dispute resolution via the State Personnel Board of Review for employees defined as classified civil service.

Faculty rank, promotion, and tenure decisions are determined in the Provost's Office and not by HR. Any questions regarding comparisons between faculty and staff procedures should be referred to Associate Provost Bill Rickert.

Are job levels based on "what one does" or "who one reports to?" It seems like it should be the former. Background: I put in a job audit many years ago, partly because I felt the Development Instructors were vastly underpaid compared to similar jobs in the public school system. During the audit process, a new position was created (Director of the Math Learning Center which was very similar to my position. That position was more than two pay levels over my own, despite the fact that I was actually doing more – even at 80% time. But because of who I reported to and who that position reported to, my level was not raised. Eventually it was, when we all became part of the Student Academic Success Center, and reported to the same person. Throughout the whole process – which took a few years, it seemed that the decisions were not based on what people were actually doing, but what some (unnamed) administrator wanted, when that (unnamed) administrator changed (their) mind, the position changed. This seems arbitrary and entirely inappropriate.

I have no information regarding how decisions were made many years ago. HR now operates under the basic philosophy that departments generally determine the job content and HR classifies and places the job in the system on an entirely consistent basis. It does not matter to HR what department the position resides in, or who the supervisor or employee might be. In fact, the main reason HR initiated the Peer Review process as part of the new system was to give transparency, provide employee participation to "demystify" the process, and to provide an impartial review of HR's assessment of job content.

EMPLOYMENT/OPERATIONS

(Request for) a list of general guide lines available on line for the employee hiring process, outlining the step-by-step forms and approval process.

The hiring process for all university positions will be automated using a software product called PeopleAdmin. This system should be in the early implementation phase early in 2008. All forms and approvals will be entirely automated. HR will be willing to respond to requests for any additional instructions that may be needed.

(Request for) a list of general guidelines available on line that lists the step-by-step process of getting a new employee situated on campus (account setups, parking, keys, and other reminders).

HR is revising the current orientation program and will recommend that all new hires be required to attend. An "on boarding" and exit check list will be provided for supervisors and employees. This new orientation program will go into effect in 2008.

BENEFITS

Are full-time WSU employees eligible for tuition reimbursement to pursue an MLS degree from Kent State University Library School?

The Wright State University Qualified Educational Assistance Program provides for an eligible employee a benefit for master's degree level classes taken at another college or university when the master's level program is not offered at Wright State. There are eligibility requirements and benefit limitations for this plan.

Is it true that the University will pay for employees to attend another state university when Wright State does not offer the courses/degree that an employee is interested in?

See above.

Who should I call regarding Ohio Deferred Compensation (supplemental retirement fund) to find out how it works and how to enroll?

Information is available about the above referenced plan by calling the Benefits Section of Human Resources Department (775.2567), by calling OPEDCP at 877.644.6457, or by going to the OPEDCP web site at www.ohio457.org. Enrollment must be made with an OPEDCP representative.

Many doctors are now charging patients to complete the forms necessary to designate FMLA leave. Why are these forms required, and why should an employee pay to have the forms competed.

FMLA certification forms are a requirement of the Federal government. Wright State has no control over the billing practices of providers.

Why is joint property ownership a requirement in order to obtain Domestic Partner benefits?

When introducing domestic partner benefits, Wright State modeled the procedures and requirements at the University of Toledo. After a year's experience with Domestic Partner Benefits, the program and its requirements will be reviewed in 2008.

What, if any, benefits are available to couples who might not jointly own a home in spite of having a long-standing relationship?

Currently, Domestic Partner Benefits are only provided to those individuals that meet the requirements defined in the Affidavit of Domestic Partnership, but we are exploring alternative means of confirming the partnership.

I have always been very pleased with customer service from HR until recently, when I called and left a message stating I had a question about health coverage for a dependent. No one ever returned my call. That was at least two weeks ago.

No response is completely unacceptable. Should that happen, employees are welcome to call me directly and any customer service issues will be addressed promptly.

TELECOMMUTING

What is the University's policy on telecommuting-particularly now that we are a Unified Digital Campus (Banner term?) HR's official statement is that it is not allowed, however, CaTS does it.

HR is drafting several Wright Way policy revisions and will proposing new ones, including a telecommuting policy. There are several significant risk management/ liability issues related to a formal telecommuting policy, which allows an employee to work with little if any presence on campus. Absent a policy, HR discourages such arrangements, at least until the liability issues (e.g., worker's compensation, blanket liability, environmental health and safety issues) have been addressed. In the meantime, questions should be referred to Gayle Berry, Allan Boggs, Emily Hamman, or Tamara Jones.

What is the University's policy on unclassified staff working from home one day a week?

Similar to the question above, certain liability/risk management issues are related to working at home. There is no University policy that allows or precludes employees from **occasionally** working from home. This is being addressed, but in the meantime, questions should be referred to Gayle Berry, Allan Boggs, Emily Hamman, or Tamara Jones.

MISCELLANEOUS

I was recently moved from an office space to the general office area due to new faculty arriving and lack of space. Everyone else who is unclassified in our college has an office and I was wondering what are the "rules" on such things.

HR has no say in these matters. In the way of general information, the entire university is experiencing a space shortage. Each unit must determine its own needs and priorities for space. There are standards and guidelines for space, depending on the position, and these are considered when space is renovated. In general, many organizations use cubicle space for all employees, including officer level staff.

Why is it that some departments won't allow their employees to attend a meeting or workshops on campus?

This has been a general complaint for some time, yet there have been no specific examples brought to the attention of HR or the Provost's Office. The Provost has written memos supporting staff development programs. Still, student services and employee support must be maintained during all operating hours for a given unit. Staff Council continues working with HR and the Provost's Office to address these general complaints, and we invite anyone who can to identify departments that deny employees these opportunities.

Why is it that some departments allow their employees to go home early on days before holidays and get paid for it. Isn't that lying?

A previous answer addresses the schedules for unclassified staff. If there are concerns that there are abuses, the facts and circumstances should be reported to the appropriate supervisory "chain of command." HR can then advise whether the scheduling practices are problematical.

Maybe it will different this year-maybe it was due to Banner. Last year, I tried to find someone from HR who would sign-off on my tax form (Montgomery County). I don't live in the city of Dayton and therefore am due a rebate for weekends, vacation, sick, professional meetings, etc. where I am not in the city of Dayton (we're charged for 365 days). First, finding out "who" is the person to off on those things was a challenge. Then I was told by that person that would not be able to sign off on that (even if supplied the information off WINGS calendar) showing days gone. I was out $100, If HR isn't able to help with this-should my supervisor or other departmental rep sign off?

Neither HR nor unit supervisors have authority to "sign off" on any tax matter. Tax issues are addressed entirely by the Controller's Office through the Payroll Department. Payroll has for many years provided employees with information and assistance with such matters. Any questions about policies, practices, or procedure should be referred to Linda Sykes, Payroll Manager.