

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

University of St. Francis

Project Details			
Title	Recognize value of employees through fair and competitive wages.	Status	COMPLETED
Category	4-Valuing People	Updated	08-02-2011
Timeline		Reviewed	09-26-2011
	Planned Project Kickoff 01-01-2008	Created	11-24-2009
	Actual Completion 08-01-2011	Version	4

1: Project Goal

A: The goal of this project is to develop and implement a comprehensive compensation strategy with processes that include: ensuring that all positions have accurate position descriptions; analyzing all position descriptions for salary grading; reviewing and revising the existing salary grading scale to reflect internal equity and external competitiveness.

2: Reasons For Project

A: This has been identified as one of the objectives of our five year strategic plan based on feedback from our employees and upon review of compensation survey data. The university will also have to adjust the wage scale in response to passage of the federal law increasing the minimum wage level over the next few years.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: The primary responsibility falls on the Department of Human Resources, in the division of Administration and Finance. However, the entire university community will be affected and, therefore, involved through committee structures.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Wage Setting Process – new positions: hiring wage rate ranges for each position will be better defined, making it easier to determine fair, yet attractive, offers for new positions. Process for Awarding Pay Increases: historically, employees have received across-the-board increases, regardless of performance. When wage ranges are better defined, employees will understand the expectations required to increase their wage rate within their range and have more control over their personal compensation.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: A project plan has been developed which outlines clearly the target dates of completion for each step (attached). Review of internal data, collection of external data, and decision making and implementation will take the full year's cycle to complete.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: The project plan will identify targets, with dates and measurements. The AQIP oversight committee will hold the project team accountable to these targets.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: A current position description for each position, graded for salary range. A salary grade structure which reflects internal equity and external competitiveness. Plan of action to correct any current salary inequities.

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

- A: Completed Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) for 106 of 145 position titles (some of the 39 without JAQs are new positions, and efforts to complete JAQ for each will continue)
- Current external market salary data for 70% of the positions (efforts continue to obtain market comparisons on the remaining positions)
 - Salary structure based on combination of JAQ and market data, in which the median of each position's range of all but 10 positions fall between the 90th – 110th percentile of the market median
 - Identification of two departments in need of salary structure review and probable corrective action needed (security and library)
 - Revised, updated Compensation Policy, Philosophy and Procedures
 - In comparing employees' actual salaries to the salary structure, 10% fall outside of their position range, requiring review and possible adjustment
 - All remaining employees' salaries will be analyzed in conjunction with their years of service in current position to identify those in need of further review

Pending a review of this Action Project we will be closing it as these procedures have been institutionalized.

2: Institution Involvement

- A:
- A committee was assembled to develop the Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) tool.
 - All employees were afforded the opportunity to provide input into the project through completion of the JAQs.
 - Senior leadership reviewed the results and will be communicating to the employees throughout each division.

3: Next Steps

- A:
- Upon Executive Council approval, a Policy and new Salary Structure will be published.
 - Analysis of salary and seniority against position within grade will be conducted to compute minimum salaries by employee. Plan of corrective action will be developed and presented for budget approval.
 - All remaining employees' salaries will be analyzed in conjunction with their years of service in current position to identify those in need of further review.

As mention in 1:, above, this Action Project will be retired.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

- A: Communication between employees and their supervisors regarding position responsibilities and performance expectations was improved throughout the completion and approval of the JAQ tools.

5: Project Challenges

- A: Limited resources still pose challenges to the final closing of this project, but the momentum near the end will push this through to completion. While positions may merit salary upgrades, finding the resources to implement them can become problematic.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

- A: There has been steady progress on this project and the University has a clear picture of its accomplishments and of the work remaining to be done. The Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) has been a useful tool for engaging (and valuing) employees and gathering accurate descriptions of each position. The project has been well thought out, taking into account years of service, employee feedback about the positions themselves, market salary data, salaries across departments, etc. Creating and maintaining an

equitable compensation program is not easy and the University can be proud of their work in this area. (Category 4 Valuing People)

2: Institution Involvement

A: The project engaged employees throughout the institution in developing and using the JAQ tool. Having the position descriptions in place gives the University agility to handle budget cuts, for example, knowing specifically what work would be impacted if a position were cut. The project has consistently promoted good communication throughout the organization. (Category 4, Valuing People, and the HLC Principle of Agility and Responsiveness to Change)

3: Next Steps

A: The project has been well-managed and this continues. The University is aware of its need to develop job descriptions for remaining positions (some new) as well as the items listed here and has established processes for doing so. When the steps above are reasonably complete, the school may want to consider a public celebration or some form of recognition of these praiseworthy achievements.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Given the success of the JAQ tools, including a shared understanding of duties, the school may want to consider how it will use or adapt the JAQ to communicate about job duties and expectations outside the framework of creating a position description.

5: Project Challenges

A: The University has done a wonderful job with this project and deserves to complete it. If resources for salary upgrades are not available, the University might consider how it could recompense these employees in other ways, e.g. additional vacation time or some other benefit until funds are available; or when funds are available, the upgrades are retroactive. Challenges from difficult economic times can sometimes be mitigated or even overcome using creativity and ingenuity--qualities the University has demonstrated throughout this project.

Project Outcome

1: Reason for completion

A: The research has been completed, positions have been graded, and areas in need of corrective action have been identified. Funding for this corrective action will be requested and approved through the institution's Budget and Planning process. A plan for maintaining the salary grade structure has been developed and will be implemented annually.

2: Success Factors

A:

- The support from senior leadership was essential to the successful completion of the project.
- The use of an external consultant to guide the process proved beneficial in obtaining buy-in across the university and in allocating resources to the project.
- The availability of market data from peer institutions and local businesses was plentiful, making that part of the project flow quickly.

3: Unsuccessful Factors

A: The largest obstacle was communicating the overall goal of the project. Because the project dealt directly with employee earnings, employees didn't always hear or understand the larger purpose of the project; they usually just wanted to know how this would affect them personally. Until the project was completed, there was no answer to that burning question. Another challenge involved the completion of the Job Analysis Questionnaires (JAQs). Each employee completed a JAQ for their position based on the responsibilities of the position, not on their personal set of skills and abilities. Supervisors reviewed and

approved them for scoring. Like most rating tools, it was difficult to ensure consistency across all positions when multiple supervisors were reviewing and trying to be objective.