Final Report From the Diverse Workforce Team: Addendum to Recommendations
July, 2012

Introduction

The Diverse Workforce Team (DWT) of the HR Design Project was charged with reviewing the recommendations each of the other ten work teams of the project, and providing feedback regarding the potential impacts on workforce diversity in those recommendations. The DWT approached this charge in two steps:

1. We believed that ideally, each of the other work teams considered issues of diversity, equity, and climate as they created their recommendations, and embedded concepts and values that would enhance workforce diversity directly into their recommendations. To that end, the DWT carefully reviewed the draft recommendations of each work team, and provided feedback to each team prior to the release of final recommendations, to encourage this integration as much as possible.

2. After release of each work team’s final recommendations, the DWT again reviewed the recommendations. We reviewed the recommendations to see if (1) our earlier comments had been incorporated into the final recommendations, and (2) any new issues or concerns arose.

This addendum to the DWT’s recommendations summarizes our review of the other ten work teams of the HR Design project; we also include summaries of our own recommendations. The types of comments (both positive and negative) we have fall into five broad categories. These broad categories generally come directly from our own recommendation document; we consider them to be guiding principles that HR Design leadership should consider as they consolidate all of the recommendations into their proposal for a new Human Resources system at UW-Madison.

I. Consider “diversity” broadly

The DWT has noticed that as the HR Design process has unfolded, the word “diversity” has been used without much definition or nuance. When that happens, a default definition of “diversity” meaning only diversity of race/ethnicity (or maybe gender) is understood. In our recommendations, the DWT offered a very broad definition of diversity that encompasses the many qualities and differences that all of our employees possess. When discussing diversity as an element of the “workforce of the 21st century”, we would like the concept to be defined broadly, and to talk about issues of diversity as encompassing issues of equity and climate as well as the demographic diversity we all think about.

Furthermore, we hope to shift the conversation around “diversity” as a goal for our 21st century workforce to one that is about competencies and behavior around diversity, equity, and climate. We encourage our new HR system to recognize the importance of respectful behavior in the workplace, skills and
competencies required to manage a diverse workforce and treat people equitably, and actions that demonstrate that all employees treat everyone they come across as part of their job—students, other employees, alumni, the public—with fairness and respect.

Within the HR design recommendations, we see these issues arise in the following teams’ recommendations:

A. Benefits. The Benefits Team consistently recommends changes to the benefits structure that emphasizes equality—that everything be the same for all employees. While in most cases this emphasis is appropriate, there may be times when equity is the most important concern, rather than equality. Our team recommends equity as the goal, not equality. Some examples:

a. The Benefits Team is recommending that salaried staff report leave in one-hour increments. This is in order to make the leave reporting more equitable between salaried and hourly employees; they are not recommending equal treatment.

b. The removal of vacation cashout for some long-serving classified staff members is a situation where the Benefits Team is recommending equal treatment between groups. The DWT recommends an equity standard in this case—consider “grandfathering” the current employees who are able to cashout vacation.

c. The suggested tuition reimbursement program raises equity issues; only the highest-wage workers can take advantage of this benefit. Could a needs-based program be considered? (Also a concern for Employee Development Team recommendations around a tuition reimbursement program).

d. Parking is an issue raised by the Benefits Team; parking fees and rules are moving in a direction that disproportionally impacts our lowest-paid workers. Should we begin charging our lowest-paid workers to park at night in empty lots? Could there be a sliding scale for parking fees based on income? Should on-call employees have to pay for their own lot access when their jobs require traveling to different sites on campus to perform their job duties? Can the UW-Madison advocate for Metro bus access to outlying communities to ease the financial burden on our employees who do not live close to campus?

B. Compensation. Future wage increases should be equitable across employee groups. Increases based on a percentage of the current base pay can exacerbate inequities in the system. When pay increases are administered, consider a “floor” and “ceiling” for these adjustments (minimum and maximum dollar amounts) to adjust for this problem.

C. Competencies. The Competencies Team recommends specific, campus-wide competencies related to diversity and equity that emphasize the behaviors necessary to enhance the diversity of our workforce and ensure equity among all of our employees from varied backgrounds. By ensuring
that diversity- and equity-related competencies, tied to specific behaviors and skills, are required of all UW-Madison employees, the recommendations enhance our ideals of a broad definition of diversity.

D. Employee Development. We agree with the Employee Development Team that diversity-related training be connected to competencies around diversity and equity skills. Studies show that general “diversity training” is not effective in improving climate or increasing demographic diversity in the workforce; rather, training that is targeted to specific skills and behaviors that are shown to enhance diversity, equity, and climate can have a positive impact.

II. Ensure accountability

One issue that arises repeatedly when discussing diversity, equity, and climate issues is that of accountability. Who is responsible for making sure we have a diverse workforce, that all of our employees are treated equitably, and that all have a positive and inclusive working climate? The DWT believes that such accountability must emanate from the top leadership at the UW-Madison. From the Chancellor down, leadership at UW-Madison must put these issues foremost on their agendas, and continually emphasize these goals. Furthermore, there should be rewards for good behaviors around diversity, and consequences for bad behaviors or practices.

Increased monitoring for bias and inequity enhances our ability to hold leaders accountable for diversity, equity, and climate. We currently only monitor the crudest of measures—headcounts of employees from various groups, some salary studies for faculty based on gender, some climate surveys for some groups of employees or units. There are other areas where equity and discrimination could be a concern. For example, how do we ensure that all employees have equitable access to professional development? How do we monitor performance reviews for bias? Who is granted flexibility in their work and who is not? More resources need to be allocated to monitor different aspects of diversity, equity and climate in the workplace. And the resulting data must be used (i.e., people are held accountable), not result in reports that collect dust on a shelf.

Within the HR design recommendations, we see these issues arise in the following teams’ recommendations:

A. Benefits. The Benefits Team briefly mentioned parking as a benefit. Because parking is often assigned by work unit, access to the “best” (closest, most affordable) parking is often a climate issue. We recommend a study of who has access to the most desirable lots and parking rates, and that leaders consider equity and climate when determining parking lot priority.

B. Competencies. The Competencies Team recommends monitoring competency definitions for bias; we concur.
C. **Compensation.** The Compensation Team insists that there should be oversight of the compensation plan, and we concur. The office charged with oversight must have the resources, expertise, and authority to ensure equitable compensation practices and to remedy situations where inequities arise. Equity among demographic groups (women and men, different racial/ethnic groups, etc.) should be an explicit mission of this oversight group, including mediation of comparable worth issues where they arise (that is, ensure that men and women receive equal pay when they perform work that involves comparable skills and responsibility.) This group also should consider differences between “rich” and “poor” divisions and the ability of some divisions to pay more for the same position than others. The compensation analysts must have transparent processes for determining market wages, and this office must be well-resourced so it can do its job well.

D. **Diverse Workforce.** The DWT produced two recommendations that fall directly into the “Accountability” category. First, we recommend that top leadership at UW-Madison has a responsibility to provide a coordinated and systematic effort to improve the diversity and climate of the workforce. Second, we recommend that the UW-Madison expand the funding and personnel required to support the training, measurement, and climate improvement activities we outline. However, see also our recommendations about campus climate; we have woven issues of accountability directly into those recommendations as well (section III-C below).

E. **Employee Categories.** Removing the requirement of having a degree to be in the “academic staff” category supports diversity in our workforce. However, individual discretion of hiring managers to determine which positions require degrees could be problematic. We recommend an unbiased review at a centralized campus level when degree requirements are imposed when the title itself does not require a degree.

F. **Performance Management.** The Performance Management system must be monitored to ensure there is no bias against employees in particular demographic groups, units, educational levels, language abilities, etc. The Performance Management Team raised the idea of statistically monitoring the ratings by supervisors, and this could work for large units. However, many units are very small and thus statistics cannot detect group differences. Aggregating may not adequately distinguish among differences in job duties, thus the comparison of ratings might not be appropriate. Other ways to monitor for bias in performance reviews (e.g., careful review by HR professionals or next-line supervisors/managers) might be needed.

G. **Recruitment & Assessment.** Many accountability and monitoring issues arise in the Recruitment & Assessment Team’s recommendations.
   a. The Recruitment & Assessment Team’s plan to allow internal and direct hires requires monitoring. When a position is determined to be underutilized for women or minorities but is not an open recruitment, some central campus-level office must review that decision. Internal recruitments within a division similarly should be monitored at a campus level.
b. The newly-proposed Applicant Tracking System (ATS) must include a well-developed plan for collecting demographic data of applicants. Stakeholders, such as the Office for Equity & Diversity (OED) must participate in this process. Data must be confidential (not available to search committees for individuals in the applicant pool), and yet be made available in aggregate to hiring committees so that they can determine whether the diversity in their applicant pools is ideal. The ATS must be used by all units on campus; if some do not participate, then applicant pool demographic data will be incomplete.

c. The additional oversight of internal and direct recruitments, and improvements in collection of demographic data of applicants will likely require an increase in resources for offices that perform these functions.

H. Titling. We are concerned about the loss of a 5-year trigger for review for promotion between levels. Some people tend to be overlooked for promotion; without this trigger, they may be held in rank beyond the time they should. This is an equity issue. Even if annual performance reviews are implemented fairly and equitably, it still is a good check in the system to ensure that employees are not left behind. Furthermore, the process of reviewing for promotion to the next level should be streamlined and made more efficient; it’s too onerous. An easy and efficient process will be used more often and effectively.

I. Transition & Succession. Although the Transition & Succession Team emphasizes the use of skills and competencies when making decisions about which employees should be retained in a situation where layoffs must be made, the DWT notes that bias can still enter decisions even when looking at these “objective” criteria. Thus, monitoring of layoffs to guard against bias and discrimination must continue at the campus level.

J. Workplace Flexibility. We agree that when there are disputes about workplace flexibility requests, there should be a way to resolve those disputes without the situation rising to the level of a formal complaint. The Workplace Flexibility Team recommends a new panel to resolve those conflicts; the DWT simply recommends that some panel, committee, or office be available to make unbiased assessments of these issues, both from the point of view of the employee/requestor, and the supervisor/manager. We want to note that “work rules” should be up for review in these disputes. Work rules are not in-and-of-themselves objective criteria for ensuring proper workplace functioning. They could be in place due to conditions that are no longer true, or could have been made for the convenience of a particular supervisor or employee without regard for the actual requirements of the unit. These work rules can often be at conflict with flexibility goals, and therefore should be under the purview of any type of review panel around these issues.

III. Consider issues of unit and campus “climate”

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The DWT was charged with ensuring that the UW-Madison workforce be diverse. We recognized immediately that this goal cannot be accomplished if the workplace is not respectful to all employees, ensuring that each employee can do their best work and reach their full potential while promoting the mission of the UW-Madison. Thus, the DWT has paid particular attention to issues of workplace “climate”—that is, employees’ feelings of respect, value, trust, inclusion, and satisfaction in the workplace. Within the HR design recommendations, we see these issues arise in the following teams’ recommendations:

A. **Benefits.** The idea of a “leave donation” bank is a wonderful way to promote campus community.

B. **Compensation.** How a new, market-based compensation system is implemented will be critical to its success. If only new hires are using the new market-based pay ranges and adjustments are not made to the existing employees in the unit, salary compression (and thus climate and morale problems) can result.

C. **Diverse Workforce.** The DWT provided three climate-related recommendations in our report:
   a. Ensure that new employees at the UW-Madison are appropriately welcomed into their new units;
   b. Ensure that all individual employees have a responsibility for the climate in their units, by treating their co-workers with respect and consideration, and valuing their contributions to the workplace. Employees should be held accountable for upholding this responsibility; and
   c. In addition to a personal responsibility to treat others with respect, employees who direct the work of others have an additional responsibility to ensure that their units have positive climate. These directors/supervisors/managers/PIs should be held accountable for upholding this responsibility.

D. **Employee Categories.** The issue of “climate” appeared very strongly in the recommendations from the Employee Categories Team. The Team was particularly concerned about the mistrust and perceived inequities between Classified Staff and Academic Staff. Their initial recommendation to combine both categories into one “Academic Staff” category was designed largely to address this important climate issue. The final recommendation that exempt employees are included as “Academic Staff” and non-exempt employees as some new category they are calling “University Staff” keeps a hierarchical system in place. To reduce these continued divisions, we recommend:
   a. The new category name for non-exempt employees should be decided on by employees in this category—not by the Employee Categories team, or HR, or the Provost. Perhaps this new non-exempt group could be asked what they would like to be called (via survey or some
other participatory method?) This would improve climate by including these employees directly in the new change.

b. We support the recommendation that the new non-exempt staff group be included in campus governance, if not through legislative change, certainly through changes in campus policies.

c. We support similarities in compensation structure, benefits, competencies, performance management, etc. as much as is possible.

E. Employee Development. The suggestion that a tuition reimbursement program be funded from a centralized pool of funds rather than by individual units promotes positive climate, as discrepancies between “rich” and “poor” units are less-likely to develop.

F. Performance Management. To promote use of a widespread Performance Management system across campus, campus leadership might consider creating some recognition or rewards as a way to promote the practice across campus. In a climate where adding this responsibility to supervisors’ or faculty members’ workloads may lead to a negative backlash, providing positive recognition and rewards to actively promote the positive aspects of the change could improve climate around this new expectation.

G. Titling. The DWT feels that a new titling system could significantly impact diversity and equity on campus during the design and implementation phase. Care must be taken to ensure there are no unintended impacts on diversity & equity of our workforce as a result of titling changes; specifically, climate could be severely impacted when the titles and/or duties of employees change. We should not disproportionately affect certain groups during titling changes, especially if some changes result in a perceived lowering of title status.

H. Workplace Flexibility. The Workplace Flexibility Team specifically mentioned that employees must advocate for themselves when requesting flexibility. We add that this is a requirement that is highly dependent on the climate in a unit; supervisors must be open to these requests and employees must not fear making them for this process to work. How can we ensure that supervisors are sensitive to the requests of employees, and appreciate how hard it can be to ask for flexibilities?

IV. Training is important (but it can’t solve everything)

Many, if not all, of the work team recommendations (including our own) call for improved training for all employees—workers, supervisors and faculty alike. We think it is important to note that, while important, improved training and education around these new HR processes is important, it cannot by itself address problems in the system. We want to especially point out that “training” cannot be a one-time event; it must be ongoing, through continued education, coaching, mentoring, etc. For example, OHRD sponsors numerous study groups and communities of practice. These are models that we recommend when new training is implemented around the HR Design project. Within the HR design
recommendations, we see these issues arise in the following teams’ recommendations:

A. **Compensation.** The Compensation Team’s plan relies heavily on the skills and abilities of managers to implement this compensation system fairly and equitably. For this system to work to enhance the diversity of our employees, and provide all employees with fair and equitable compensation, managers MUST have the training and skills necessary to implement this system.

B. **Diverse Workforce.** The DWT recommends that the UW-Madison expand and promote campus resources that provide diversity- and equity-related training and expertise, so that UW-Madison employees can accomplish new climate-related work expectations outlined in their recommendations (see III-C above).

C. **Employee Development.** Basic computer skills are becoming more important to all employees, and yet access to training is often limited. UW-Madison has a responsibility to ensure that all employees have the skills to access University communications.

D. **Performance Management.** Although the Performance Management team recommends training for supervisors around the new performance management systems, the DWT emphasizes that this training needs to be ongoing (not a one-time course), and that coaching must be available for supervisors. The Performance Management Team briefly suggested a mentoring program around issues of performance management; this might be a vehicle for the ongoing training we recommend.

E. **Recruitment & Assessment.** The DWT identified several training needs resulting from the Recruitment & Assessment Team’s recommendations. They include:
   a. Information about the meaning of and rules around utilization should be included in any training for hiring managers and committees.
   b. Hiring managers have a great deal of discretion when making direct hires, or deciding on an internal hire. Manager & supervisor training must address these issues to ensure that these types of limited recruitment situations are done appropriately and legally.
   c. Training and coaching around hiring issues must be available in a just-in-time manner.
   d. Not only does training need to reach hiring managers, it must reach all employees so they understand how to take advantage of internal recruitment processes.
   e. Ensure that some of the recruitment toolkit “tools” include education about unconscious bias and its implications for the review of job candidates.

F. **Workplace Flexibility.** We highlight the recommendations from the Workplace Flexibility Team that employees need support of management to participate in training and professional development. Supervisors must prioritize this for employees, including the allowance of time to attend such trainings.
V. All HR-related information must be accessible to all

Almost every HR Design work team calls for a website, toolkit, or other online resource. While this will meet the needs of most of our employees, there will still be a significant portion of our employees who cannot access online information for a variety of reasons. This lack of access will limit career opportunities for these employees. Within the HR design recommendations, we see these issues arise in the following teams’ recommendations:

A. Recruitment & Assessment. Two issues arise around the recommendations of the Recruitment & Assessment Team:
   a. Ensure that all assessment documents and processes are fully accessible (language, disability, etc.) to all potential applicants.
   b. As the UW revamps its job application websites, this is an opportunity to promote diversity and show a welcoming and inclusive face to our potential employees; we should take advantage of it.

B. Employee Development. Employees should have access to a computer for a minimum amount of time (Daily? Weekly?) defined at the campus level and not subject to the whims of supervisors.

C. Performance Management. The issue of access to computers/competence around computers is important, as so much of the performance management system will be online. For Performance Management Team recommendations having to do with training and participation of all employees in their own performance evaluations, consideration of access issues must be paramount (computer access, computer skills, accessibility issues for disabled employees, language barriers). In addition, some supervisors may not have the computer skills necessary to fully utilize a completely online performance management system.

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2 Lack of English language skills, lack of access to computers, lack of computer skills, websites that are not accessible to those with disabilities, lack of internet access off campus, etc.