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Note to Libraries: Subscribers to the bi-annual CUPA-HR Journal for the 2003 calendar year should have already received the Summer 2003 issue, Vol. 54, No. 2. The second issue for the 2003 subscription year is this issue, Fall/Winter 2003, Vol. 54, No. 3. Please note that only 2002 subscribers received Vol. 54, No. 1, published as Spring 2003. Questions about the publishing schedule should be directed to Allison Miller, director of Communications, at 865-637-7673, ext. 111.
Human Resources Adding Value in Higher Education
by Albert T. Brault and Cynthia A. Beckwith

“This book should be required reading for those interested in college and university HR practices.”
Dave Ulrich
Professor, School of Business, University of Michigan

“Brault and Beckwith have produced a must read for anyone who cares about the future of higher education in America.”
Lee D. Dyer
Professor, Industrial and Labor Relations Human Resource Studies
Cornell University

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Introduction Excerpt States Purpose of Book

This book is intended to focus on outcomes human resource managers can implement to respond to the needs of the institution and its organizations and to share the generally applicable methods, processes, and philosophies that have proven effective.

Part 1, Human Resources Evolving Its Strategic Role, takes an in-depth look at the needs of a variety of human resource customers and proposes roles and competencies that HR professionals must assume to add value in their institutions. The book explores the special needs of community colleges, academic medical centers, and online educational institutions and provides several case studies on how HR is responding to their unique needs. Two universities discuss the processes and factors that contributed to successful transformations of the human resource organizations at their institutions.

In Part 2, Applications of HR Adding Value, Cynthia Beckwith draws from her in-depth knowledge and experience from managing labor relations in higher education and provides insight on factors contributing to unionization on campuses and how HR should be engaged. Amelia Tynan, chief information officer at the University of Rochester, discusses information technology (IT) in higher education and the mutual dependency of IT and HR organizations in filling their evolving roles. Finally, the book discusses the use of simple and complex metrics that can be used in human resource management to assess needs, secure support, and evaluate effectiveness.

These topics, case studies, and examples were assembled to tell the story of the needed transformation in the human resource profession in higher education. We hope this book will encourage others to share their visions and examples of success. Our goal is to stimulate academic and HR leadership to raise the bar for expected human resource contributions and involvement in the success of their colleges and universities.

— Albert T. Brault, Author

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Chapter 2: The Expanding Roles of Human Resources in Higher Education

Chapter 1: A New Calling for Human Resources in Higher Education
From the Journal
Recruiting and Hiring Practices in Higher Education

This issue of the CUPA-HR Journal explores the latest trends and issues in recruiting and hiring practices in higher education institutions. Colleges and universities strive to create a diverse and stable workforce by attracting and retaining top talent. In order to do this, institutions must constantly revisit and revise their hiring policies and practices.

R. Erik Seastedt, Classification and Compensation manager for the University of Wyoming statewide system and Human Resources manager at the University of Wyoming, in his article entitled "Bucking the System in Wyoming: Eliminating Minimum Qualifications and Converting to a 'KSA System,'" argues that recruiting and hiring based simply on minimum qualifications such as possession of a certain degree or years of experience in a given field will not produce the best candidate the majority of the time. He instead asserts that a hiring system based on knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) produces an immensely qualified, highly skilled, more diverse workforce. In the article, Seastedt shares his institution's strategy for eliminating minimum qualifications in job descriptions and switching to a system that instead focuses on KSAs.

The issue also highlights a technology feature article on a topic that is of importance to all HR professionals working in today's higher education institutions. Tracy Williams, HR product manager with Datatel, examines the important and timely topic of securing and protecting private, confidential information in her article "Data Privacy and Security in Higher Education." In today's climate of rapid technological advancement, it is becoming more and more common for hackers to infiltrate databases and computer systems. Many colleges and universities have already fallen victim to this sort of cyber attack. The author gives specific examples of such attacks that have recently occurred in higher education and outlines eight simple, proactive steps HR departments can take to protect sensitive information on their campuses. She also examines some important federal, state, and local regulations dealing with data privacy and security.

In their article entitled "The Strategic Alignment of Student Employment with Human Resources," Janet Lenaghan, Zarb School of Business faculty member, and Holly Seirup, vice president for Campus Life, both of Hofstra University, make their case for integrating student employment and human resources to form a single, centralized unit. Many institutions are wary of aligning these two departments and all but ignore the area of student employment when designing recruiting strategies. The authors explore why institutions tend to overlook student employees as a valuable source of labor and explain their rationale for aligning student employment and HR.

Because higher education institutions have to deal with spousal hiring issues more than any other industry, this issue's cover feature addresses this complex and important hiring topic in two complementing articles. First in "Meeting the Needs of Dual-Career Couples in Academia," the four authors—Michelle Fleig-Palmer, director of the Dual Career Program, and David K. Palmer, associate professor in the department of Management, both of the University of Nebraska at Kearney; Joan Murrin, director of the Dual Career Program at the University of Iowa; and Cheryl Rathert, research scientist with the National Research Corporation—share the findings of a survey they conducted of eighteen academic institutions across the United States and Canada regarding their dual-career programs. The authors share the similarities and differences of the various programs. They also explore trends that have emerged as best practices in the area of spousal hiring.

In the second cover article, Larry Hubbell, professor of Political Science, and Regina Hope Winters, graduate student in Public Administration, both of the University of Wyoming, relate their experiences with spousal hiring in "A Case Study in Spousal Hiring." The University of Wyoming has been engaging in spousal hiring for more than twenty years and the practice is quite prevalent at the institution. In fact, the authors relate that roughly 50% of all new hires at the university involve some form of spousal accommodation. The authors examine the advantages and disadvantages of spousal hiring programs in higher education institutions and share their beliefs as to why the practice has become so commonplace.

Dr. Jack Heuer, vice president of Human Resources, and Gary F. Truhlar, executive director for Human Resources, both of the University of Pennsylvania, discuss the advantages of Web-based recruiting in their article entitled "E-Recruiting: A Powerful Tool." The University of Pennsylvania processes tens of thousands of resumes annually for more than 300 hiring departments across campus. In a given year, the university fills on average between 1,000 and 2,000 positions. Until the late 1990s, the university's entire recruiting and hiring process was paper-based. The authors share how the institution moved from this time-consuming, costly, paper-based system to a centralized, cost-effective, online process. The authors relate the successes the institute has enjoyed as well as the struggles it has faced with its Web-based recruiting system.

Recruiting and hiring practices and data privacy and security are two HR areas of critical concern to higher education institutions. Creating an effective recruiting and hiring process will allow colleges and universities to attract and retain top talent. Having proper data security protections in place will leave employees and students alike feeling confident that their personal information is in safe hands. The better handle an institution has on these two issues, the smoother the ride for everyone involved.

Missy King, Editor
Bucking the System in Wyoming: Eliminating Minimum Qualifications and Converting to a ‘KSA System’

BY R. ERIK SEASTEDT

Minimum qualifications, such as possession of an academic degree and a required number of years of work experience, have long been staples of many higher education institutions’ hiring practices. However, the University of Wyoming has found that eliminating these minimum qualifications in favor of a hiring system based on knowledge, skills, and abilities has paved the way for recruiting and retaining a talented and diverse workforce.

Introduction

Job descriptions help provide an overview of expectations by listing essential functions and duties. Additionally, traditional job descriptions set the minimum qualifications needed to perform the job satisfactorily. Typically, minimum qualifications identify a knowledge level that the right candidate should possess and target the skills the right person will bring to the job. In addition, minimum qualifications may also focus on the physical, mental, and/or people abilities the proper candidate should possess.

Employers assume that the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are inherently incorporated into the requirements of college degrees and years of experience. When employers post a position that requires a bachelor’s degree plus two years’ relevant experience, they expect, often mistakenly, that all the KSAs they desire will be present in candidates who meet those minimum qualifications. Employees also often mistakenly assume that these requirements allow for an immediate screening out of those candidates who do not meet the minimum expectations and that this screening-out procedure reduces litigation liability when candidates question why they were not hired.

Ultimately, employers want to select the best person for the job and want to do so in a way that is fair and consistent. However, there is no guarantee that minimum qualifications produce the best employee or do so in a fair manner. Federal Equal Employment Opportunity law is designed to prevent “artificial barriers” to employment. An artificial barrier is one that creates hurdles that screen out applicants that are not validly tied to success in the position. One of the most common hurdles placed before an applicant is the requirement of a college degree. Typically, however, employers rely merely on assumptions rather than proof that possession of a degree is a valid predictor of success. Oftentimes, it is not.

Beginning the Conversion

The University of Wyoming created a “Barriers Committee” that examined equivalencies for positions, making often elaborate decisions as to whether certain experience was relevant or if certain substitutions of education could be made. But could the committee actually make a valid argument that a bachelor’s degree was worth two years of experience if it was unrelated to the position, but worth four years of experience if the degree was related?

It is clear that the only way to get certain licenses or certifications is to get the degree first. So some positions do require degrees, but all positions require knowledge, skills, and abilities. By identifying what knowledge candidates need to possess, what proficiencies they need to be able to perform, and what relatively enduring attributes or capacities they must demonstrate, the committee was able to validly state that these things are a better predictor of success in a certain position. The committee could then screen in those individuals with the KSAs rather than screen out those who could not climb the artificial barriers.

Bucking a system of minimum qualifications is neither a quick nor an easy process. In fact, it can be compared to breaking a bucking horse. When faced with a bucking horse, you do not just jump on the animal and ride off into the sunset—if you did you would surely be faced with a bumpy ride. Instead, you must first train the horse. You start out slow and build your foundation of trust by doing your groundwork. Trust starts by being gentle but firm, talking constantly to the horse, and allowing it to get used to a new way of doing things. Once the time has been taken to readjust the horse to this new way of doing things, the ride will begin to transition into a smooth one.

In beginning the process of eliminating minimum qualifications at the University of Wyoming, the HR department started with what it knew would be the “smoothest ride,” Information Technology (IT). It was not unusual for excellent IT candidates to be screened out for a position due to a lack of formal college education. While these candidates could exhibit extraordinary talent with a computer, they were often informally schooled, industry trained, or self-taught and consequently could not even be considered for the position. In the institution’s minimum qualification system, there was not even a way to accurately evaluate knowledge gained through technical school training.
We have also learned that some horses just do not want to be ridden. As we bucked the system, the system bucked back. As our journey continued, we often heard arguments that we were devaluing higher education, that we were reducing our standards, and that we were somehow making our own educational product obsolete. We did not, however, let that throw us.

**Communicating the Conversion**

HR’s bottom-line communication to administration, faculty, and staff was that for some positions the department felt that indeed the best way to gain the KSAs needed to be successful was through the pursuit of an education. It was not, however, the only way. All the institution’s employees needed to hear that the university valued their life experience and the KSAs they developed along the way, no matter the venue. One way HR successfully got this point across was to give employees an abbreviated, blind copy of the resume of Bill Gates (of Microsoft fame). They were then given the minimum qualifications for a Computer Specialist requiring a bachelor’s degree and two years of relevant experience. Since Mr. Gates never completed college, the staff would not able to “hire” him for the computer position. They got the point.

Because the entire university community needed to “get the point,” HR began a series of informational meetings designed to educate the campus about the importance of KSAs and the positive effect eliminating minimum qualifications would have on recruitment, retention, and morale. HR continued to focus on the fact that the university wanted to recruit the best people for open positions and that the institution valued what the employees brought to the workplace as well as what they learned from their jobs.

To enhance these educational sessions, HR began to roll out changes, not to individual departments, but to individual job classifications across campus. This allowed time to rewrite job descriptions focusing on KSAs and gave the entire campus a taste of what was to come. After the initial IT pilot project, the process of eliminating minimum qualifications began first with custodial positions and then office positions. As departments saw that the quality of labor did not decrease and that the “walls did not come tumbling down,” HR saw a slow but steady increase in acceptance of the new system as well as a growing sense of enthusiasm and excitement.

**Implementing the Conversion**

Changing to a KSA system required revamping not only the classification system, but also the recruitment/hiring system. Even as word was getting out about the KSA conversion, HR began additional training with supervisors regarding the screening of applicants using KSAs rather than minimum qualifications. HR developed a spreadsheet format to be used by all hiring entities that listed the KSAs on which the applicant was to be screened. When developing the KSA screening list, supervisors were instructed to select those KSAs they felt were most important for their individual openings. They do not have to screen on all KSAs, but they cannot add other criteria outside those identified in the classification description.

The screening spreadsheet also allows for a more objective way to “score” candidate applications. Before screening, the supervisor (or search committee) can establish a screening score that gains the candidate an interview. For example, if twelve KSAs are selected as desirable for the position, the supervisor could decide that a candidate must have at least eight of the twelve criteria in order to be considered for an interview. If simple yes or no scoring does not sufficiently differentiate between candidates, supervisors have the freedom to determine to what extent each candidate meets the KSAs desired by establishing a numeric rating (or some other scale of their choice) of some or all of the KSAs. If, for instance, all candidates will likely possess knowledge of computer programming (as one of the desired KSAs), the supervisor could establish a rating, perhaps on a scale of one to five, indicating how much knowledge the candidates possess. After interviewing, supervisors submit a hiring summary sheet to Human Resources detailing who was interviewed and why or why not. The “whys” are as simple as stating how many of the targeted criteria each candidate met.

While this adds work to the selection process, feedback has been consistently positive from those involved in the hiring, with the most typical comment being something to the effect of “This process made me really focus on what I wanted this person to do.” Supervisors also have expressed pleasure at having a standard, objective screening system that still allows them flexibility in deciding which KSAs are the most critical to the job. This process also serves the dual purpose of giving supervisors (instead of HR) the ability to screen applications and giving HR a more objective way of communicating to candidates who ask why they were not granted an interview.

As the training of supervisors continues at the University of Wyoming, applicants are also being trained. The university’s employment application now consists of a one-page contact/summary sheet and instructions on how to submit a resume in KSA format. Since the university’s employment advertisements list the desired KSAs, most applicants tailor their resume to the information presented in the ad. The institution also takes the extra step of informing all job applicants that the university conducts its screening process based on KSAs, therefore it is up to applicants to show they possess the desired knowledge, skills, and abilities. HR has developed handouts on how to format a KSA resume and also offers in-person help as well as access to computers for those applicants who need to create a resume.

**Conclusion**

Training and communication continue as the process of eliminating minimum qualifications evolves. Reminding staff and
supervisors about KSAs is a never-ending task that HR incorporates into as many communication and training initiatives as possible. Future plans are to teach supervisors how to wrap desired KSAs into performance evaluations and establish goals that not only incorporate, but also develop, the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be a better employee. Ultimately, the goal is also to more fully use KSAs in establishing market prices for benchmarked positions.

The evolution of KSA use on campus is not the work of any one individual but is truly a team effort requiring a culture change in the campus community. At the University of Wyoming, the team consisted of HR professionals and department and college leaders who collaborated with other universities already using a KSA system.

Wyoming is unique in a lot of ways with respect to low population, perceived geographic isolation, and its single university for the entire state. It is not unique, however, in its need to recruit and retain employees, maintain and enhance employee morale, and create and deliver a quality education to its students. Institutions of higher education can make great strides toward accomplishing this goal by eliminating minimum qualifications and adopting the practice of utilizing knowledge, skills, and abilities above all else in hiring practices.
Data Privacy and Security in Higher Education

BY TRACY WILLIAMS

As institutions review and strengthen their plans to secure confidential data, what proactive role does the human resource professional play as a strategic partner? Why are employees a critical part of the solution? And how are they educated regarding their responsibilities with data security? Datatel’s HR product manager shares some thoughts on this important topic.

Introduction

Is your institution grappling with data privacy and security? Research shows that internal attacks are the most common type of data privacy violations, accounting for approximately 70 percent of all security breaches (Vamosi 2001). Knowing this, several precautions can be taken to protect confidential institutional data assets. One employee making a poor decision about his/her role with sensitive data can be costly—both financially and publicly. A recent survey by EDUCAUSE found that only 33 percent of institutions have security-awareness programs to instruct employees and students on the importance of technology security and their roles and responsibilities in this area (Carnevale 2003).

You may be thinking that this responsibility falls outside the realm of human resources (HR). However, strategic HR practitioners know that it takes a collaborative effort from all offices on campus to combat these serious threats. In fact, HR plays a critical role in data privacy issues and the prevention of security attacks and identity theft. Can the public trust your institution to secure confidential and private information maintained on employees, students, alumni, and donors? Let’s look at some actual examples of related events that have occurred in higher education:

• Without prior awareness of his background, an institution hired a convicted criminal (Smallwood 2003);
• Faculty, staff, and student e-mails were downloaded, and online banking activity was allegedly made viewable, by a student who compiled a database of personal identification information of approximately 4,800 members of the Boston College community—passwords, confidential access codes, credit card information, and Social Security numbers were published (Leyden 2003);
• A student was charged with stealing 55,000 names and Social Security numbers from a university database on training classes for staff members (Brulliard 2003);
• A contractor broke into a university computer network, causing an estimated $200,000 in damages (Read 2003).

There are also numerous potential threats to data privacy when employees:
• share system passwords;
• download files that have viruses, worms, spyware, or other harmful programs;
• do not log out of confidential systems at the end of the work day or when they step away from their desks;
• allow access to a controlled/secured area to a stranger or another employee who does not have authorized access;
• are not familiar with their roles and responsibilities (and consequences) with federal, state, and provincial laws and institutional policies regarding data privacy and security;
• attempt to gain unauthorized access to systems and data, often times seeking payroll and personal identification information for identity theft purposes;
• send electronic messages that create a hostile work environment.

The above examples illustrate just a few of the types of problems an institution might face if adequate data security measures and practices are not in place.

Data Privacy and Security Regulations

It is important to be aware of the many federal, state, local, Canadian, and European regulations when working with confidential information. Some of the more common regulations are described below followed by a Web site reference for more information.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. HIPPAA provides several components, involving benefits eligibility, privacy, and security of a person’s protected health information, including notification requirements and privacy rules. http://www.hrsa.gov/hipaa.htm

Electronic Communications Privacy Act. This act mandates provisions for access, use, disclosure, interception, and privacy protections of various forms of wire and electronic communication. http://cio.doe.gov/Documents/ECPA.HTM

Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. This prohibits fraud and related illegal activities connected with computers. http://cio.doe.gov/Documents/CFA.HTM
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. FERPA protects the privacy of students’ education records, and applies to all institutions that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. This law does not cover employee records.

USA Patriot Act. This act grants law enforcement agencies access to previously confidential information to broaden their surveillance capabilities. http://www.lifeandliberty.gov/

Graham-Leach-Bliley Act. The Graham-Leach-Bliley Act applies to “financial institutions,” including institutions that obtain or use customer financial information and institutions that participate in financial activities, such as making federal Perkins loans or other types of “bank-like” activity with student debit cards for campus purchases.
Institutions that meet the definition of a financial institution must establish and implement a safeguard program to protect nonpublic customer “student” information. Institutions that comply with FERPA comply with part of this act, but it is important to remember that FERPA only applies to students. This act applies to all individuals that conduct business with the institution. http://www.senate.gov/~banking/conf/

Fair Credit Reporting Act. The FCRA promotes the accuracy and ensures the privacy of information used in consumer reports through consumer reporting agencies for creditors and employers. http://www.ftc.gov/os/statutes/fcra.htm

Privacy Act of 1974. This act provides safeguards against an invasion of privacy through the misuse of records by federal agencies. http://www.cftc.gov/foia/foiprivacyact.htm

Identity Theft and Assumption Deterrence Act. This law prohibits fraud in connection with identification documents made or issued by state entities. This only applies to public institution ID cards. Institutions should monitor any department that has document-making devices, and they should keep abreast of this regulation to determine applicability of this policy to the institution.
http://www.ftc.gov/os/statutes/itada/itadact.htm

Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Canada). This act supports and promotes electronic commerce by protecting personal information that is collected, used, or disclosed in certain circumstances by providing for the use of electronic means to communicate or record information or transactions.
http://www.privcom.gc.ca/legislation/02_06_01_e.asp

The Role of HR in Data Privacy and Security
How does HR become part of the solution? There are eight key areas where HR can be instrumental in protecting sensitive information: (1) employee training, (2) background checks, (3) securing records, (4) appropriate use of the Social Security number, (5) creating reasonable policies, (6) contract reviews, (7) Information Technology (IT) collaboration, and (8) systems access.

Employee Training
Employee training is a key deterrent to data attacks, making HR a logical partner in reviewing policies and consequences of noncompliance. Effective training also includes sharing with employees and independent contractors their roles in establishing safe environments. Gina Salazar, HR manager at Riverside Community College, shares that, “Our employees are already familiar with the basics, but we want to make sure they have all the tools and resources to combat threats to our data systems, so we are revamping our training.”

Most data threats come from attackers who manipulate employee systems to hack into data or avoid technology all together to obtain physical records from a “secured” area. These attackers may be “trusted” employees, consultants, or disgruntled past employees. These individuals may have a high level of trust with some institution employees who could unknowingly share enough information with them to grant entrance to data systems or offices (Hiner 2002). These hackers are usually already familiar with employer data systems and standard practices, and know the vulnerable security loopholes.

To combat this vulnerability, training should include: (1) educating employees on what types of behaviors and activities should be considered suspicious, and encouraging them to report such activity; (2) educating employees on what data or activities cannot be disclosed or conducted without consent; (3) educating employees on the consequences of failing to comply with data privacy and security policies; and (4) routinely testing employees’ knowledge regarding their roles within the realms of data privacy and security.

EDUCAUSE recently surveyed 435 institutions and found that changes in user behavior could prevent most security breaches of institutional networks (McElroy 2003). All employees should be informed about how viruses and hackers try to penetrate the institution’s systems and what they can do to prevent successful attacks.

In the end, the best defense in protecting an institution’s data is to provide employees, independent contractors, and students with proper training in data privacy and security issues.

Background Checks
Higher education tends to trust most applicants who are hired. Typically, if an institution conducts background checks at all, it
is only for certain positions, or just to contact references. This is potentially dangerous, considering that internal employees conduct most data privacy and security attacks.

Mary Poquette, executive vice president for Compliance and Product Management with Verifications, Inc., a leading provider of background check investigations for employment purposes, says, “Of the background checks conducted by our company in 2003, nearly 33 percent had some type of factual discrepancy. Education information was falsified 23 percent of the time, criminal convictions were found 18 percent of the time, and employment history contained incorrect information 19 percent of the time.”

As institutions grapple with growing security regulations, more background checks will have to be conducted to demonstrate due diligence in providing a safe and secure environment for people and institutional data.

Deirdre Honner, manager of Employment and Compensation at Calvin College, says, “Background checks are an important part of the process in keeping our institution and assets safe.”

Equally important is ensuring the expertise and background of staff that have access to confidential data and systems. For example, making a serious hiring mistake in IT, Finance, or HR can be potentially disastrous to data privacy.

**Securing Records**
All hard copy records should be in a controlled access environment, and personnel file practices should be enforced. These practices will protect the institution if a claim or lawsuit is filed. Follow record retention schedules and be sure to maintain separate records where required by law. Separate records can be helpful if an institution is audited, and they can be used to provide limited access to confidential record data.

**Appropriate Use of the Social Security Number**
The best practice is to encrypt any computer transaction that involves a Social Security number. Institutions should not use a Social Security number for identification purposes across campus. The University of Texas at Austin is now a model for best practices, and according to their Web site, they are preparing a conversion of Social Security numbers to other unique identifiers after lessons learned with a public hacking incident (University of Texas at Austin 2003). The University of Pennsylvania took similar measures in appointing its first chief privacy officer in 2002—which was one of the first hired in higher education.

**Creating Reasonable Policies**
Do not take on more responsibility than the law requires. Write policies that directly apply to the data and security measures required by applicable laws, such as the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, FERPA, and HIPPA.

**Contract Reviews**
The contract review function may reside with the legal department, purchasing department, or risk assessment office. For institutions that do not have those resources, this responsibility often falls into the HR department’s territory, or it may in some cases be decentralized, with HR only playing a role. If contract review does fall within the realm of HR at your institution, make sure each contract the institution has with third-party providers complies with data privacy and security regulations. Regulations such as the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act require that reasonable steps be taken to select and retain providers capable of maintaining appropriate safeguards for protected customer information.

At the very least, every institution should ask providers to confirm their compliance with applicable data privacy and security regulations. The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act requires that contracts entered into before June 25, 2002, must comply by May 24, 2004. Contracts activated after June 24, 2002, should have been revised by May 23, 2003.

**IT Collaboration**
It is critical that all IT members have the training and resources required to maintain data integrity and security at each institution, and that there is IT oversight for protection of the institution’s assets.

Some institutions, such as the University of Texas at Brownsville, have an internal audit director to complete a risk assessment as part of a security audit and to uncover significant areas of concern where corrective action is required. Institutions that do not have resources for an independent internal auditor can utilize the expertise of their information management solution provider to provide independent and thorough audits.

An added benefit of using system providers is that they can recommend best practices on how to use their systems to protect your data, as well as your investments in those systems. For HR, confidential data should be restricted to those who have a “need to know.”

**Systems Access**
Exiting employees should lose access to the employer’s systems immediately upon termination. Regardless of the reason for separation, this important step should be standardized to demonstrate due diligence in protecting the institution’s assets. Make sure IT, HR, Physical Plant, ID Office, and other appropriate departments terminate all access immediately, instead of when it is “convenient.”
Conclusion

HR’s role in safeguarding employees and data should be a collaborative effort. HR is instrumental in strategic initiatives on campus that impact employees, customers, and the community. Minimizing the security loopholes will demonstrate due diligence and provide for a safer and more secure work environment that allows for strategic work to continue to accomplish the core mission of academic institutions, instead of spending time reacting to serious data privacy violations.

Alice Moore, manager of Administrative Systems at Wabash College, sums it up concisely: “Our campus balances these solutions and regulations with a collaborative approach between HR, IT, the Business Office, Financial Aid, and the Registrar’s Office. It is critical that our HR team is proactive in our efforts to reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic event regarding data privacy and security from an employee perspective.”

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The Strategic Alignment of Student Employment with Human Resources

BY JANET LENAGHAN AND HOLLY SEIRUP

Why is it that many higher education institutions choose to disregard the student body as one of their most reliable and significant sources of labor? Why do institutions insist on keeping separate the departments of student employment and human resources? How can aligning these two areas improve organizational development and increase labor diversity and recruitment and retention goals? Two HR professionals from Hofstra University explore these questions.

Introduction

Human resource professionals understand that any organizational strategy is just words unless embraced by the organization’s employees. It is the people of the institution that drive the success of the organization. The foundation, therefore, of all human resource activities arguably is the recruitment and selection of qualified workers. To that end, human resource professionals spend countless hours examining and planning for changes in the labor force.

One such current predictor is the expected continued “skill shortage” over the next five to ten years. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the United States projects that over the 2000–2010 period, total employment is projected to increase by 15 percent with the swiftest growth, on average, for occupations generally requiring higher education and skill (Hecker 2001). Yet, many college and university human resource professionals overlook or underestimate a significant pool of skilled workers, namely their own student body. Why is it that the recruitment strategies for most institutions, although innovative and complex, completely ignore a significant source of labor?

The Great Divide

On many campuses, student employment is viewed as an oxymoron. Student and employment are two completely separate areas—the notion of student employment is meant to reflect some on-campus means of achieving financial assistance in order to support the real purpose of the student role. Student employment is not perceived as a meaningful part of the labor force, thus, it is not considered to fall within the purview of the area charged with the employment responsibility—human resources. It is merely referred to as student employment to distinguish it from other student-focused departments.

In a study recently conducted of a randomly selected representative sample of universities in the Northeast, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding both structural design and philosophical belief regarding the interaction of student employment with human resources. The interviews were conducted via telephone with a HR staff representative.

Of the thirteen respondents, all reported that student employment was an independent function from that of human resources. In all cases, HR and student employment had different department heads and reporting lines. Interestingly, the last question in the survey asked if the college or university had ever discussed combining the two functions and the response repeated most often was, “No, never!” This incredulous response reflects the embedded belief that students do not provide an important source of labor, and therefore cannot be considered productive contributors in the university’s workforce.

Rationale for the Alignment of HR and Student Employment

Student employees can do more than provide “sneaker power”—the errand running and urgent deliveries that all too often comprise the majority of the student role. The diversity that higher education institutions strive for in admission goals is inherently reflected in the student body and, as such, in this viable source of labor. For example, it is a common belief that today’s students possess enhanced technological skills. Yet in a quick search through job boards one can find a plethora of openings for technical-skilled jobs. Moreover, in an effort to meet labor diversity goals, the student body provides a unique source of labor that is not merely reflective of the employment recruitment area but is more globally representative.

Meaningful student positions can also help support admission goals. Many higher education admissions professionals report that applicants question not only the availability of student jobs on campus, but also the types of positions students

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are encouraged to assume. Certainly, it is not news that many students have financial needs that require them to seek employment, but the latter part of the inquiry clearly reflects the growing belief that work experience helps prepare the student for a future career.

A study of corporate views on workplace competencies for graduating college students conducted by the nonprofit RAND Institute on Education and Training found that corporate representatives as well as academics listed prior work experience as one of the top seven factors contributing to successful work performance (Bikson and Law 1994). The organizational culture which embraces the notion that student employees are just like other employees is one which values and recognizes that the learning and development occurring beyond the classroom are instrumental to the success of its graduates.

Moreover, the literature suggests that there are benefits to students who maintain gainful employment. These benefits include degree attainment, self-reported cognitive growth, increased academic performance, and probability of enrolling in graduate or professional school (Astin 1993; Hood, Craig, and Ferguson 1992; Ehrenberg and Sherman 1987).

It is not enough for colleges and universities to merely provide jobs that yield a paycheck. Institutions should also be tapping into this talent pool to provide meaningful work experiences for their students while, at the same time, increasing overall labor productivity. This is one of those rare, but achievable, win-win solutions.

Factors That Can Help Alignment

As with any change in organizational culture, top management support is imperative. In fact, without genuine “buy-in” from the institution’s leaders, true change will not occur. It cannot simply be a directive from the president without the support of the vice president(s) and the lower management levels. Although the president may be able to logistically orchestrate the change, operationally it just will not work without the commitment of all levels of management.

For example, at one medium-sized university in the Northeast, the president announced the alignment of student employment with human resources and supported this alignment by altering the organizational structure to reflect the change. The student employment and HR departments merged, physically relocating to a shared space, with one department head reporting to a designated vice president. But the vice president was a nonbeliever and this ultimately led to the two departments remaining separate functions within a shared space. No policies were actually changed and the day-to-day operations continued with little reflection of the new philosophy. The president did not actually witness the implementation of the strategy until the human resource department, including the area formerly known as student employment, reported to the vice president for Campus Life—a newly created position.

It was then that the strategy actually came to life and was embraced both philosophically and operationally. Organizational development efforts can only truly begin when top management is fully behind the effort to streamline HR and student employment. (If the campus is unionized, it is important to communicate with the leadership as to the change and the impact on the collective bargaining agreements.)

Interventions such as team building for the staffs of the human resource and student employment departments and supervisory training for the personnel charged with managing student positions must be implemented. Efforts should be made to perform a thorough job design and analysis to ensure the re-creation of the student function in all departments. The philosophy of considering student employees as “kids” must be changed by infusing into the campus culture the notion that anyone who receives a paycheck is an employee. Granted, there may be different classifications, but nonetheless, each employee performs an important role in achieving organizational success. The classification of student employee is no different than a full-time employee that takes advantage of tuition reimbursement—both groups are employees and students. This must be reinforced through all communications, both written and verbal.

Dealing With Opposition

Opposition to the strategy from human resource professionals generally focuses on the additional work. To an already over-loaded department, the alignment of student employment is sometimes viewed as the consumption of more work rather than the benefit of access to an enriched talent pool. Similarly, the student employment staff may become defensive over territorial issues. It may be viewed as a means to eliminate their jobs by having the function absorbed into human resources.

Thus, as in all organizational change, communication is the key to success. Steps should be taken to ensure that all those affected by the change engage in training and focus groups to allow opportunity to voice their opinions and satisfy their needs. It is important to communicate to all employees how this change will affect each personally and how they can expect to gain from it. Opposition to change, generally speaking, usually stems from fear. To the extent that you can allay the fears and answer the basic motivational questions of “what’s in it for me?” the better positioned the staff will be for success.

The most difficult part of the process will be the conversion of the nonbelievers and the change avoiders. The former are those employees who do not “buy-in” to the concept that student employment is a part of human resources and not a student function, per se. Typically, these individuals view students as “kids,” thus assuming the parental role rather than the coworker or supervisor role. It is more comfortable for them to allow the student worker to study while on the clock than to actually require them to perform a work-related task.
The latter (“change avoiders”) are omnipresent in all organizations—they are the employees that shun any change. It is imperative that the organization utilizes basic organizational development techniques in getting these individuals to divorce their old way of doing things and embrace the new. It is not easy, but with commitment and solid reinforcement mechanisms it is achievable. The key is to reinforce desired behaviors.

The commitment to this strategy needs to be continuous and not viewed as a short-term issue. In order to affect the change, one needs to measure the outcome and prove the value to the organization. Goal attainment can be measured by utilizing productivity measures such as absenteeism and tardiness, as well as by other metrics like attitude surveys, budgetary impact, applicant perceptions, and student employee participation in organizational training.

Conclusion

The alignment of student employment with human resources is an essential resource for sustaining competitive advantage. Higher education institutions are not exempt from the skill shortage predicted in the labor market, but instead are at a considerable disadvantage in the competition for top talent as a result of recent reductions in fringe benefits that provided an incentive for prospective employees to apply.

As a result, the alignment of all employees under human resources and the resulting culture change will provide a unique advantage for colleges and universities to win the war for top talent. They need to look no further than their classrooms to find the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to successfully fill many positions. In the current environment of shrinking budgets and increasing workloads, the student body can, and should, be used to supplement and enhance the labor pool.

References


Meeting the Needs of Dual-Career Couples in Academia

BY MICHELLE FLEIG-PALMER, JOAN MURRIN, DAVID K. PALMER, AND CHERYL RATHERT

It is no secret that higher education is a highly competitive labor market. Colleges and universities are in constant competition to attract and retain top talent. One way some institutions are gaining an edge is by offering career services to partners of relocating new hires. These services can range from résumé critiquing to community networking to placing the partner in a position at the university if the partner is in academia. The authors of this article polled a number of institutions across the United States and Canada to learn what types of dual-career program services are being offered, to whom they are being offered, and how they are being marketed.

Introduction

A critical issue facing many organizations is the recruitment and retention of qualified employees. Work and family concerns, specifically dual-career considerations, influence people’s decisions when searching for a job. Increasingly, both partners in a marriage or relationship are pursuing careers. As a result, when one partner is offered a job involving relocation, the other partner often has concerns regarding the opportunity to continue his or her career after the move.

The decision to accept a job often becomes contingent upon an offer of job search assistance for the accompanying partner. Organizations that recognize this need and take steps to facilitate partner relocation and career continuation may have an advantage in highly competitive labor markets. By offering job search assistance to accompanying partners, organizations increase the likelihood of hiring their first-choice candidates.

A survey determined that 80% of faculty members have partners who are employed professionals (Didion 1996). In academic settings, recruiting top faculty is increasingly dependent on assisting partners with their employment needs. As Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, and Rice state, “Academic couples face an extremely difficult task, namely finding two positions that will permit both partners to live in the same geographic region, to address their professional goals, and to meet the day-to-day needs of running a household which, in many cases, includes caring for children or elderly parents” (2000).

To address this need, many institutions have developed formal programs to assist dual-career couples with their relocation needs. However, minimal research has been done on the specific components of dual-career programs at academic institutions (Wolf-Wendel, et al. 2000).

This study attempts to address this gap in research by investigating the similarities and differences between dual-career programs within academia. The purpose of the survey was twofold. First, it was designed to provide a comprehensive benchmark of the existing services offered to dual-career couples at academic institutions. Second, the information about current policies and practices provides a framework to higher education institutions seeking to establish dual-career programs.

Terminology

The term dual-career couple, in this article, includes any two persons in a committed relationship—whether married or unmarried, heterosexual or homosexual—that are both pursuing careers. The term dual-faculty couple refers to two persons in a committed relationship who both have a terminal degree in their respective field of study and who are both pursuing academic positions. The term relocating partner is used to define the person receiving services from a dual-career program. Most programs referenced in this article offer dual-career services to partners of new employees, regardless of their marital status or sexual orientation.

Method

For this study, a questionnaire was distributed to various universities with dual-career programs. Many initial survey recipients

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forwarded the survey to others who had expressed interest in dual-career programs, and other contacts were made through informal networking. Eighteen academic institutions from the United States and Canada completed the survey. In an attempt to learn as much as possible about the different dual-career services offered by academic institutions, the survey included mostly open-ended questions.

Results
The following section presents survey results including size of the participating institutions, types of employees eligible for dual-career program services, types of services and the medium through which they are offered, internal and external marketing efforts, and employee information.

Size of Participating Academic Institutions
Of the eighteen academic institutions that completed the survey, 39% enroll fewer than 20,000 students; 39% enroll 20,000 to 40,000 students; and 22% enroll more than 40,000 students. Seventeen percent of the institutions surveyed employ fewer than 1,000 faculty members, 50% employ between 1,000 and 3,000 faculty members, 22% employ more than 3,000 faculty members, and 11% of institutions did not respond to the question.

Employee Eligibility
Of the eighteen responding institutions, seventeen offer dual-career program services to relocating partners. Only one university restricts services to spouses only, while another university’s policy also offers services to all family members including children.

While the universities in this study mostly agree that trailing partners need assistance, they differ on which types of employees at the institution are eligible for this benefit. Only three universities provide services to the relocating partners of all employees. Five respondents indicate that dual-career services are offered only to the relocating partners of faculty. Seven institutions also provide these services to the relocating partners of administrators and four provide the assistance to staff as well.

In anecdotal comments on the survey, some institutions indicated that special qualifications were needed for relocating partners of candidates for administrative or staff positions. One university commented that their dual-career program is for "... [relocating partners] of key administrative positions as determined by a dean or higher."

The amount of time for which institutions offer dual-career services to relocating partners varies. Six percent of the institutions polled provide services for less than one year after the relocation, 33% provide services for up to one year, 11% offer assistance for up to two years, 22% have no time limit on dual-career services, 11% assist relocating partners until they find a job, and 17% of institutions polled did not respond to the question.

An additional criterion used for eligibility is the length of time the relocating partner has lived in the new location. According to the survey, three universities allow relocating partners to receive services if they have lived in the same area as the university less than two years, and one university provides services if the relocating partner has lived in the area for less than one year. One university notes that some relocating partners focus on family concerns initially after the move; therefore, providing the relocating partners with a two-year window reassures them that their career is viewed as important and they can address their job search at a time appropriate to them.

Services and How They Are Offered
Academic institutions offer a broad range of dual-career program services via a variety of program materials. The average number of different types of services offered is seven and the minimum number that all respondents reported offering is four.

All institutions surveyed offer résumé/curriculum vita critiques. Seventeen institutions offer cover letter assistance and community/networking resources. Sixteen institutions offer coaching on interviewing techniques and fourteen provide a lending library of job search resource materials. Thirteen institutions provide career coaching and twelve write internal letters of support on behalf of the relocating partner. Nine institutions provide coaching in salary negotiation and four of the universities polled sponsor a social event for relocating partners to network with each other and key decision-makers from the community. Eight institutions offer "other" types of program services (see Table 1).

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Table 1. Frequency of Services Offered

Types of Services

- Résumé/curriculum vita critiques
- Community networking resources
- Cover letter assistance
- Coaching on interviewing techniques
- Job search resources
- Career counseling
- Internal letters of support
- Coaching on salary negotiation
- Social event networking
- Other
Some universities also provide relocation assistance for families in the form of community information. One dual-career administrator writes "I provide information on real estate, schools, childcare, [and] volunteer opportunities." Another notes that relocation assistance includes help with "housing, childcare, eldercare, transportation, diversity/cultural amenities, spiritual communities, recreation, entertainment, etc."

The survey also provides insight into the medium through which the dual-career program services are offered to a relocating partner (see Table 2). The most common program materials offered are brochures (83%), Web sites (83%), informational packets (50%), directories of area employers (28%), and community resource information (28%). Other materials provided to dual-career couples include folders with information about job-search assistance and relocation, reprints of articles about dual-career programs, and information about local companies.

Table 2. Frequency of Materials Offered

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<th>TYPES OF MATERIALS</th>
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<td>Brochure</td>
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<td>Web Site</td>
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<td>Informational Packets</td>
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<td>Directory of Area Employers</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Resource Information</td>
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<td>Article Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information on Job Opportunities</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching and Relocation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reprints of Articles</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing, Childcare, Elder Care, Transportation, Diversity/Cultural Amenities, Spiritual Communities, Recreation, Entertainment, etc.</td>
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Internal and External Marketing Efforts
To ensure that search committees, faculty and staff, and administrators are aware of the existence of dual-career programs on campuses, universities market their programs internally. Internal public relations efforts are directed primarily at department chairs (56%) and deans (50%), but also at faculty (11%) and staff (17%).

The institutions polled detailed the various methods they utilize to market dual-career program services on campus. The tools frequently used to publicize dual-career programs to the campus community are Web sites (67%), word-of-mouth/on-campus meetings (61%), brochures (44%), e-mail messages (39%), and in-house publications (33%). Twenty-eight percent of the institutions send out letters and attend new employee orientations. Twenty-eight percent of the institutions surveyed target candidates for positions by sending either acknowledgement letters and/or recruiting packets. Fifty percent of the respondents use between one and four different methods for their internal marketing efforts while 33% offer between six and nine.

Because the main goal of dual-career programs is to assist relocating partners in their job searches, the ability to network with organizations in the community is crucial. The institutions polled report utilizing a number of marketing efforts to reach the external community. Seven institutions attend local networking meetings, with all but one having professional memberships with the sponsoring organization. Seven institutions establish external Web sites on their dual career program services and five report going to local businesses and visiting with managers. One respondent says, "Hit the bricks! We regularly call on businesses, especially new businesses, to convince them that it’s good business to do business with us." Two institutions work with the local media and have had articles about their dual-career programs published in local newspapers. Eight institutions employ from one to three different tools for external marketing and three institutions use four to five external marketing tools.

Employee Information
Four academic institutions report hiring full-time administrators for the dual-career programs; all others hire part-time administrators. One institution employs two full-time administrators and four institutions employ two part-time administrators. Seven institutions report part-time support staffers assist the administrators. Half of the administrators have worked in the dual-career programs between four and nine years, with the average length of service being four years and the median being 3.5 years. The dual-career programs in this survey have been in existence for 1.5 to sixteen years and eleven institutions have operated programs for five years or more.

Discussion of Results
This survey furthers many studies done by other researchers on dual-career programs and provides more insight into dual-career issues. An examination of the eighteen academic institutions that participated in this survey shows that most are either top research institutions and/or are located in rural areas where job opportunities are limited. This reflects the study by Wolf-Wendel et al. (2000), which found that research universities were most likely to see the importance of responding to the needs of dual-career couples. In addition, Wolf-Wendel et al. reported that academic institutions in areas with limited career options also viewed dual-career couple assistance as important. The results from this survey also mirror those from Wolf-Wendel et al. in regards to the issue of eligibility for dual-career assistance in that in both surveys, the partners of faculty were...
given highest priority. This survey also reveals that dual-career administrators work with candidates in the recruitment stage as well as employees who have already accepted a formal job offer.

In most instances, it is more common for organizations to offer logistical assistance than family-related assistance. The top four relocation services identified by Eby and Allen (1998) met logistical needs (i.e., home-selling assistance, real estate assistance, cost-of-living adjustments, and visits to the new area). They ranked spousal employment assistance and educational information fifth. Since most universities cannot compete on the first four relocation services, it behooves these institutions to seriously address the employment needs of relocating partners.

The overriding goal of the dual-career programs surveyed is to facilitate the job search process for relocating partners. The specific services provided through these programs address that goal in a number of ways, from résumé critiquing to sponsoring networking events to career coaching and much more. Regardless of how assistance is offered to relocating partners, it is certainly deemed important by the institutions surveyed and can be the deciding factor for potential employees in their decision to accept or pass up a job offer at a certain institution.

Conclusion

Acknowledging the concerns of relocating partners is one way organizations can attempt to influence recruitment and retention decisions. The programs at the universities surveyed utilize a number of techniques to deal with these issues. Each program is tailored to the circumstances facing each campus. Despite differences in time frames, contexts, and proposed methods, general themes emerged that are applicable to a wide variety of situations. Furthermore, many of the services identified can be applied in industries other than just higher education. Greater recognition of dual-career concerns and greater willingness to intervene can have a positive impact for all types of organizations. Additionally, by dealing with this fundamental concern at the work/family interface, institutions can have a positive impact on couples and families, thus creating a positive, dynamic workplace.

References


A Case Study
in Spousal Hiring

BY LARRY HUBBELL AND REGINA HOPE WINTERS

Spousal hiring in higher education institutions is becoming a common practice in this day and age. Sought-after faculty members often base their decision to accept a position at a certain college or university on whether or not their spouse or partner can be accommodated at the same institution. Colleges and universities need to take note of this emerging trend if they want to continue to be on the competitive edge of recruiting and retaining top-tier employees.

This case study examines the background of spousal hiring, the pros and cons of such a program, and how one university deals with the issue.

Introduction

We first became interested in the issue of spousal hiring when a department in our college was asked by the dean to consider hiring the trailing spouse of a faculty member who was hired by another department. Although most members of the department in question relished the idea of bringing on board an additional faculty member, they also felt ambivalent about the situation.

They asked several questions. Would the trailing spouse’s qualifications, in this instance, meet the standards that they normally set when making hiring decisions? If they chose not to accept this offer, would they as a department be less likely to expect other departments to cooperate with them if they also had the need to place a trailing spouse in the future? Finally, if they chose to accept the trailing spouse, would the dean at a later date deny them permission to conduct job searches for other vacancies that from their perspective are more critical?

This article explores some of the questions that HR practitioners working in higher education and other academics should ask when they are thinking of engaging in spousal hiring. In the process of preparing this article, we conducted interviews with fifteen academic administrators, including department chairs, deans, university lawyers, and the academic vice president. All of the interviews were conducted at the University of Wyoming, a relatively remote research university, which engages heavily in spousal hiring. In addition, we reviewed the academic literature on the subject and examined policies on spousal hiring at a variety of academic institutions.

Background

Spousal hiring in academia is a relatively new phenomenon. The practice of hiring spouses was such a novelty in the early 1980s that Money magazine featured an article about our institution’s first case of spousal hiring (Loeb 1982). Since then, spousal hiring at the University of Wyoming has become very commonplace. Indeed, one dean estimated that roughly 50% of all new hires at the institution involved some form of spousal accommodation. Nationwide, 45% of all research universities and 20% of liberal arts colleges have spousal hiring policies (Brown 2002).

We believe the practice of spousal hiring is a response to two disparate phenomena: the rise of females in the workplace and the tendency for the founders of colleges and universities to locate many institutions in rural areas.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, the nation’s workforce has seen a tremendous influx of female professionals. Academia has been a leader in welcoming women into the workforce. In 1975, 27.4% of all faculty members were female (Lomperis 1990). That share increased to 36.3% by the mid-1980s and continued to grow until reaching a high of 42.5% in 1993. By 1999, the number of women faculty members declined slightly to 42.4% (Statistical Abstracts of the United States 2000). Furthermore, a 1997 survey in The Chronicle of Higher Education noted that 35% of male faculty and 40% of female faculty had partners who also worked in academia (Ferber and Loeb 1997). Given the increase of women working in higher education, the increase in the number of academic couples, and the relative scarcity of tenured and tenure-track jobs available, one can see why spousal hiring is becoming a growing concern on many campuses. So much so, that 50% of all commuter marriages are academic couples (Bruce and Reed 1991).

In the nineteenth century, many colleges and universities, including the University of Wyoming, were established in rural areas. Many of the founders of these institutions did so to keep students away from the "corrupting" influence of the "big city" (Lewis 1983). This is the case with the University of Wyoming, which is located in the small, college town of Laramie, Wyoming. Students make up an estimated 38% of the city’s population of a little more than 26,000. Academic spouses hired by the University of Wyoming have relatively few employment opportunities in the city. The options usually are: (1) the spouse works at home, (2) the spouse is employed by the university in
some capacity, or (3) the spouse makes a 50-mile daily commute to Cheyenne, the state capital.

Spousal hiring seems to be most widely utilized at institutions that are: (1) in a rural location, (2) less prestigious than other comparable institutions, and (3) located in college towns with relatively few job opportunities.

Advantages of Spousal Hiring
There are a number of reasons a college or university might want to consider engaging in spousal hiring.

Making Up for Pay Disparities
The State of Wyoming is heavily dependent upon revenues from the mining industry. Compared to other states, Wyoming has relatively few services and relatively low taxes, including no state income tax. Thus, state revenues are subject to the boom and bust cyclical nature of commodity prices. Likewise, state government salaries, including the salaries of University of Wyoming faculty, have dropped relative to salaries in other states and similar educational institutions. Among doctoral institutions in 2002, the average salary of a full professor at our institution was $67,800, ranked 203 out of 214 institutions. Its standing among assistant professors was somewhat better, with an average pay of $49,600, ranking 161 out of 215 (The Chronicle of Higher Education 2002).

Given this pay disparity, an active spousal hiring policy can sometimes serve as a powerful recruiting tool, particularly in relatively high salary fields, such as business, engineering, and the natural sciences, where the pay disparity between the University of Wyoming and other institutions is large. When hiring a trailing spouse is part of an employment offer, the University of Wyoming becomes more attractive compared to other institutions that make no such offer.

Increasing Retention
It is rare for an academic institution to have two, tenured-track positions open for an academic couple. However, academic couples are less likely to search for jobs elsewhere if they are able to secure positions with the same university (McNeil & Sher 1999).

In response to the growth of commuting academic couples and growing retention concerns, many colleges and universities have adopted spousal hiring programs to entice finalists in faculty searches to choose their institution over another. Some colleges and universities have even adopted a more proactive approach to spousal hiring. For example, a consortium of three liberal arts colleges located in close proximity to each other in Maine announced in The Chronicle of Higher Education that they were actively seeking academic couples and listed all of the positions available at their institutions (The Chronicle of Higher Education 2002). At Oregon State University, faculty fellowships ranging from $6,000 to $8,000 are provided for the spouses of tenure-track faculty members. In addition, Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts provides career information to academic spouses and offers career workshops (Smart 1990).

This kind of proactive approach to spousal hiring undoubtedly provides these institutions with a decided advantage in terms of recruitment and retention. Not only is proactively engaging in spousal hiring a potentially successful marketing tool in recruiting academic couples, but also it provides academic couples with job stability at one institution.

Disadvantages of Spousal Hiring
Although the reasons to engage in spousal hiring are very compelling, there are also a number of pitfalls one might encounter when hiring trailing spouses.

Maintaining Merit
The American public regards being hired on the basis of merit as one of the most important aspects of conducting fair job searches. For example, when students in the University of Wyoming’s Public Personnel Management class were asked, "On what basis should a person be hired?" students typically responded: "The person who is best qualified." Although determining who is "best qualified" for a position is often highly problematic, most Americans apparently think they "know merit when they see it." Evidence of this concern for merit is manifest in the number of academic institutions that in the past have had, and in many cases still have, anti-nepotism policies in place, even though these policies are becoming harder to enforce (Werbel and Hames 1996).

More often than not, the trailing spouse of an academic spousal partnership may not be as highly qualified as the leading spouse, and the trailing spouse may feel stigmatized. In a study of several academic couples, the respondents reported varying reactions to their status within the department. One couple reported, "The single most distressing phenomenon we regularly encountered was inseparability of our identities, a stereotype held by even our most enlightened colleagues." Another couple wanted to be perceived as an academic couple by their profession. Still another academic couple involving the marriage of an older, female associate professor to a younger, male graduate student, wanted to keep their professional lives completely separate from their personal lives (Adler et. al 2001).

Additionally, spousal hiring may cause interdepartmental problems when the spouses are members of different disciplines. For example, although the department asked to consider a trailing spouse may feel it is in some ways benefiting by receiving an additional faculty member, it also may feel that: (1) the person they are being asked to accept is not the person that they would have hired, if conducting a formal search; (2) the trailing spouse may not meet the needs of their department; and/or (3) if they appoint the trailing spouse, they may be less likely to fill additional vacancies in the future.
Hiring Couples Within the Same Department

The problems of hiring a spousal pair are compounded when both spouses represent the same discipline. At the University of Wyoming, this circumstance is becoming more common. In fact, one department actually employs four academic couples.

There are several reasons why deans and department members might balk at this arrangement: (1) department members may fear that in some instances the spousal couple might form a voting bloc; (2) interpersonal relations within the department may become quite difficult if one spouse turns out to be a superstar while the other is only mediocre or worse; (3) if one of the members becomes the department chair, there would seem to be an inevitable conflict of interest; and (4) if the couple divorces or experiences marital problems, their interpersonal problems could cause infighting within the department.

Becoming More Vulnerable to Lawsuits

Most spousal hiring policies that we examined from academic institutions throughout the country were quite vague. Almost universally, they provide maximum latitude for departments and deans willing to engage in spousal hiring. Unfortunately, with maximum latitude also comes inconsistency and the potentially litigious question, "Why did you choose to accommodate that person's spouse, but not mine?" Do institutions that engage in spousal hiring make themselves more vulnerable to charges of discrimination? Perhaps so—and often when the rules are malleable and subject to discretion, their application may be more subject to question.

In our interviews of management at the University of Wyoming, no one reported having encountered lawsuits related to spousal hiring. Management is often protected against possible litigation by its claim that virtually every spousal hiring arrangement is unique, thus precluding a discernible pattern of behavior, discriminatory or otherwise. One university dean stated, "Legally, the best way to keep out of trouble is to treat individuals separately and to negotiate packages independently." Another manager noted, "Lawsuits are not a concern because the deals are honest and forthright. They are made out of real needs and opportunities based on available funds and real priorities. The best defense against lawsuits is that university positions are unique and need the best matches. No situation can be the same." Another dean put it this way, "The idea is to run until tackled. Conflicting law says nothing, so spousal hiring policies should be designed to do the right thing until someone tells them definitely not to."

There are numerous types of spousal accommodations including: (1) hiring one spouse into a tenure-track appointment and another as an adjunct; (2) providing both spouses, at least initially, part-time appointments; (3) hiring one spouse and making a good faith effort, but not a promise, to hire the other spouse; and (4) providing the trailing spouse with job counseling assistance.

De-emphasizing Equal Employment Opportunity

Participating in one kind of hiring initiative usually results in the dissolve of another hiring initiative. An institution's hiring priorities are a zero sum game. Sometimes one hiring priority becomes a little more pressing than another hiring priority. Often this is the relationship between an active spousal hiring program and equal employment opportunity (EEO) initiatives. One dean confessed, "EEO and spousal hiring are sometimes in competition with one another. Although I have never broken EEO in method or spirit, I admit that I have come close to the gray area."

One Example of How to Approach a Spousal Hiring Decision

In the example described in the "Introduction" of this article, the department in question did end up hiring the trailing spouse. First, however, the department members had a lengthy discussion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of this hire. The questions the department considered were very similar to ones considered by other departments throughout the university. After the discussion, the question of whether or not to hire the trailing spouse was decided by a vote. Although the majority of department members voted to make the hire, the decision was not unanimous.

The central question the faculty members discussed in this instance was "If the department failed to cooperate in this instance, would other departments cooperate with us if we found ourselves in a similar position in the future?" The department members who voted for the appointment also believed this spousal hire could eventually replace another faculty member who would retire soon and had a similar background. Furthermore, given our university's often-limited resources, they felt that if they did not take advantage of this hiring opportunity, the department could possibly lose the position when the current faculty member retired.

Those faculty members who voted against the appointment believed that the candidate did not meet the research and teaching standards of the department. They believed that if the department had conducted a search for this position that this candidate would not have made the cut.
Conclusion

Higher education institutions should carefully consider the implications of their spousal hiring policies. Are managers able to function within the policy’s constraints? Does the policy conflict with other campus initiatives? Is the policy clear enough for deans, department heads, and others involved in the hiring process? Lastly, is the policy proactive or reactive? For managers, the greatest gifts are knowledge and foresight. For most institutions, in the case of spousal hiring, it is enough that they begin to think through the policy, its possible implications, and the values it promotes and from that evaluation create policies that match the institution’s goals. This can result in spousal hiring programs that truly reflect an institution’s needs as well as the needs of the growing population of academic couples.

References


E-Recruiting:
A Powerful Tool

BY DR. JACK HEUER AND GARY F. TRUHLAR

In recent years, the process of recruiting and hiring in a number of higher education institutions has shifted from the traditional paper process to an online procedure. This transformation has allowed countless institutions to save time, labor, money, and resources. This article explains how one institution realized the need for change in its applicant management process and came to the decision to utilize the Web in its recruitment and hiring practices.

Introduction

Struggling to manage a heavy applicant base with a recruiting process that was rapidly becoming outdated, the Division of Human Resources at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) knew it was time for a change. Penn's recruiting process was a manual, time-consuming effort, which had far-reaching effects on matters such as communication, affirmative action planning, and the efficient sourcing of qualified candidates. In its search for a functional, cost-effective solution, Penn discovered the benefits of e-recruiting.

The E-Recruiting Advantage

Colleges and universities across the nation are dealing with growing concerns about a lack of available talent and a shrinking labor pool. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 22 million jobs are expected to be added to the economy between 2000 and 2010, while the labor force will only increase by 17 million during this same period. If current trends in retirement rates, labor force participation rates, new entries into the workforce, and job growth continue, these statistics can lead to the inference that we are headed toward a labor shortage. Combine this with a shift into a high-skilled, information-based economy, and higher education may find itself facing a significant talent gap in the next five to ten years. In the face of these concerns, institutions must find ways to effectively and efficiently manage their recruitment processes.

For the University of Pennsylvania, it is no different. It is essential to the fulfillment of Penn's mission of education, research, and service to recruit and retain an elite, talented workforce. A designated “Employer of Choice” by a local magazine as well as the largest private employer in Philadelphia, the university's recruitment office processes 30,000 resumes for staff positions annually. However, this must be accomplished with a comparatively undersized recruitment department and within a highly decentralized university setting.

In the 2002–03 fiscal year, Penn successfully filled more than 2,200 positions. The recruitment staff worked with more than 300 different hiring departments across the university. As resumes continued to pour in and resources were stretched to the limit, it became more and more evident to HR leadership that the existing applicant management process was in dire need of an overhaul in order to better serve the university’s needs. The existing process was cumbersome and inefficient, and was not using available technology to its full advantage. Penn needed a well-designed recruitment process that would allow the institution to better serve its clients as well as ensure efficient operation and continued growth for the university.

What was the solution? HR discovered that an automated online recruitment process would provide a cost-effective means to improve organizational effectiveness and maintain a high caliber workforce.

Early Steps

Penn was an early proponent of using Web tools for recruitment. Until the late 1990s, the entire recruitment process was paper-based. Job openings were published as a brochure—which was outdated as soon as it was printed—and manually distributed across campus. External advertising was accomplished by placing ads in local newspapers. Applicants sent paper resumes, which recruiters had to copy and manually distribute to the hiring managers. Recognizing that this manual, paper-based process was costly and time-consuming, HR began looking at the alternatives that were available as new technologies were developed. Penn partnered with a local firm to initiate a Web posting and resume management system. The Web-based system created a job-posting site on the institution's existing HR Web site, and included the capacity for applicants to submit resumes online.

Utilizing the Web in this way provided several advantages over the previous paper-based process. Listing available jobs on the Web significantly enhanced the cost-effectiveness of advertising. Web postings allowed the institution to reach a much more extensive pool of candidates, allowing Penn to focus its efforts on attracting the most qualified candidates for its positions.
larger audience while simultaneously decreasing print advertising costs. In addition, the postings on the Web reflected immediately up-to-date information.

The online resume submission process saved both time and money. Rather than spending time and money copying and distributing paper resumes to hundreds of hiring departments across campus, recruiters could now view and source resumes online and e-mail them directly to the hiring officers.

Opportunities to Do More

While this was a step in the right direction, the recruitment process was still operating at a very basic level. It lacked a great deal of functionality that could elevate Penn’s recruiting capabilities.

One of the biggest issues was the absence of a centralized database accessible to both HR and the hiring managers, which resulted in coordination and communication problems on several fronts. Hiring managers were not able to access resumes on their own, so recruiters had to e-mail resumes individually for each position—making for a particularly cumbersome process for positions with a large number of applicants. In addition, with resumes being sent out on an individual basis in the decentralized Penn environment, the same resume could be sent to multiple hiring managers for different positions. This led to the possibility of internal offer competition and salary escalation. The lack of a centralized database also precluded easy applicant tracking. With no systematic way for hiring managers to notify HR of the skills or hiring status of applicants, HR was unable to effectively communicate with the applicants or develop an internal record of particularly strong or weak candidates.

The system at this point lacked several other capabilities that prevented the recruitment process from being as effective as it could be. It did not provide for systematic screening of resumes for minimum qualifications, so each resume had to be manually screened by recruiters, which proved to be a time-consuming process. Also missing was a systematic way to capture affirmative action data. Indicative data was only gathered if an applicant made it to the interviewing stage, at which point the hiring manager visually established the applicant’s ethnicity.

Identifying a Solution

Effective recruiting is a pivotal task for any university. Therefore, as deficiencies with Penn’s system became more and more apparent, it was obvious that the recruiting process needed to be moved to a higher level.

The first step in doing so was to formally identify the current situation and issues, and create a problem statement. Based on this information, HR then researched alternative methods that could help the university accomplish its goals and resolve current issues. The solution that was recognized as the most practical and advantageous was a comprehensive Web-based recruiting system.

Once the desired solution was identified, an interdisciplinary team of HR generalists was created to evaluate potential vendor partners. This team included representatives from several schools and centers in order to better ensure a decision that would meet the diverse needs of the multitude of departments across the university, large and small, with a wide range of internal cultures and technical architectures.

Several vendors were invited to submit proposals. The project team evaluated each vendor based on key system deliverables, risks, and cost. A system was needed that would resolve the identified issues and function well within Penn’s decentralized environment—all at a price that was within budget. One vendor in particular stood out in the crowd, offering the capabilities the university was looking for at a much lower price than its competitors. Once the vendor was chosen, the institution quickly went to work to implement the e-recruiting system.

Immediate Improvements

HR employees worked with the selected vendor to customize the e-recruiting system to address the unique needs of the higher education employment process. Most of the other e-recruiting systems were designed to work within a centralized environment, where workflows and processes are consistent across the company. While uniformity may be the norm in nonacademic settings, the varied nature of higher education institutions makes centralization and consistency difficult. The system Penn selected was designed to handle a decentralized hiring process, variable workflows across schools and centers, and multiple processes. It also offered a substantial cost savings and reduction in manual effort while simultaneously improving the service level to applicants and hiring managers.

Thanks to a quick implementation timeline, Penn’s new online recruiting tool debuted in April 2003. With this new system, the university now has a well-designed process that places focus on the value-added activities of the search process. The university has enjoyed an immediate improvement in its efficiency and effectiveness in the hiring process.

All applicant materials (tailored applications, resumes, cover letters, and self-identification forms) are now collected through one centralized online system. Via a Web interface, hiring managers can review all positions they are responsible for and easily see all of the applicants and corresponding materials. They can update an applicant’s hiring status on this online system, constantly keeping HR in the loop.

The system allows for automated applicant screening. HR is able to screen applicants automatically, using job-specific questions to qualify, disqualify, and rank applicants as soon as they apply. Screening questions can be developed based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed in generic job descriptions or they can be specifically created for a particular job posting. Applicant responses are then used to rank or qualify candidates,
greatly reducing the time to find the best candidates in large groups (some of which consist of more than 300 applicants).

In addition, there has been a vast improvement in applicant communication. Applicants receive immediate notification that their applications have been received, and whether or not they meet stated minimum qualifications. During the search process, they also receive updates online and via e-mail regarding the status of their application. In addition, applicants can complete a “Perfect Job Profile” of their skills and interests. By doing so, applicants will receive automatic notification when new positions become available that match information included in their profile.

The online recruiting system has also helped improve Penn’s affirmative action planning. It includes an optional self-identification feature, which between 80 and 90 percent of applicants choose to utilize. This is a significant improvement over the previous process in which hiring officers made a visual identification of candidates at the interviewing stage. Now recruiters can constantly monitor the diversity of applicant pools as they develop. If a pool lacks diversity, special effort searches can be initiated before any applicant is interviewed.

An added benefit has been a reduction in advertising expense. As part of the application process, applicants are asked how they learned about the position, which helps Penn to better manage advertising expenses by identifying the most strategic and effective advertising vehicles. In addition, the “Perfect Job Profile” feature allows the institution to advertise positions directly to qualified candidates who have already expressed an interest in working at the university.

Some Concerns
The benefits of moving to an online applicant management system have been numerous. However, Penn did have to address some key concerns related to a Web-based recruiting system during this project.

Obviously, for a Web-based recruiting system to work, applicants must have ready access to the Internet. While Internet connectivity is increasing, Web access is not readily available at the job site or at home for a small portion of the Penn community. The institution also had to consider an unknown number of external applicants who may have access issues. To address these concerns, employee kiosks were established at key locations across campus and public access to computer workstations in the university libraries was granted.

An additional concern about a Web-based process dealt with platform and browser compatibility. Penn supports a widely varied technical infrastructure including various releases of Windows-based PCs, Macintoshes, high-end workstations, and Web browsers. However, vendors typically do not find it cost-effective to extensively test for compatibility with non-Microsoft platforms. Therefore, Penn resolved to work closely with the selected service provider to minimize any compatibility issues.

A concern specific to Penn’s selected vendor was the fact that it is a relatively new company supported by venture capital. This brought an extra element of financial risk to the partnership. To minimize the risk of partnering with a start-up company, the system software and Penn-specific data are being held in escrow by a third party and would be made available to the university at no cost in the event of service discontinuation.

The E-Recruiting Solution
In just a few short months, Penn’s recruiting process has undergone a remarkable transformation. The added capabilities of e-recruiting provide the university with the opportunity to think and act more strategically. Recruiters are no longer bogged down in the day-to-day manual tasks that used to take so much of their time. HR’s relationships with both hiring managers and applicants have improved as communication has improved. Applicant screening helps HR to quickly find the best candidates and weed out those who do not meet the qualifications.

As with any process, there is room for further improvement. For example, Penn is currently working with its vendor to upgrade the system’s management-level reporting capabilities. The university also continues to seek other ways to develop and enhance its recruitment process. In the meantime, the strides the University of Pennsylvania has already made have enabled the institution to better focus on the task at hand—recruiting and retaining a qualified, diverse workforce.

To examine the University of Pennsylvania’s online recruiting Web site, please visit http://www.hr.upenn.edu/jobs/.

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