

**“Enhancing the Staff Experience”**  
***Project submitted for Rutgers Leadership Academy***  
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***“Enhancing the Staff Experience”***

“A happy worker is a productive worker”



## ***“Enhancing the Staff Experience”***

# **Project Overview**

School of Communication and Information Strategic Plan (2014-2017) outlined an effort to *“create and implement an internal staff development program to promote an even higher level of service excellence.”*

Much literature around job satisfaction and employee morale in higher education, but mainly focused on faculty and individuals in teaching roles. There is a growing body of literature focused on staff and administration.

Factors contributing to increased job satisfaction and increased intentions to stay.

- Staff who feel recognized and appreciated and that their work is - important to the organization.
- Staff who feel they have influence and input in their work environment.
- Staff who feel they have an opportunity for upward mobility.
- Staff who feel they have a good connection to the constituents of the organization.

## **“Enhancing the Staff Experience” Project Overview (cont)**

There are some positive models and practices that can come out of the types of staff relationships we see in Student Affairs. Staff appear to be:

- More team-oriented
- Have more collaborative work projects
- Have more opportunities for community and collegial engagement

*Ultimately, this project involves giving administrative, non-teaching staff the opportunity to engage with other administrative staff in non-work related activities involving social experiences, professional development experiences, and personal development experiences. I believe that spending time together outside of their daily responsibilities will foster more communication, more collaboration, and ultimately increase job satisfaction, job morale, and staff intention to stay.*

***Because we all know, “a happy worker makes a productive worker”.***

## “*Enhancing the Staff Experience*”

# Goals

Primary goal of this project is to facilitate a positive *staff* experience by:

- Increasing staff opportunity to interact with other staff.
- Increasing staff opportunity to have input in organization decisions about personal and professional development.

By doing so, we hope that we can see positive changes in

- Job satisfaction
- Job morale
- Staff turnover

## “*Enhancing the Staff Experience*”

# Benchmarking

Examination of some of the literature around *job satisfaction*, *employee morale*, and *intention to stay* often focuses on staff in teaching roles. Fewer research programs have focused on staff in administrative non-teaching roles. One of those early research programs was led by Sandy Staples and Christopher Higgins.

### Staples and Higgins (1998)

- Job satisfaction positively correlated with intention to stay
- Employees more satisfied when they feel
  - Their personal growth is emphasized in the workplace
  - They are involved in decision making
  - The organization supports them.

# *“Enhancing the Staff Experience”*

## **Survey**

*Asked non-teaching administrative staff the following questions.*

1. How interested are you in participating in activities or programs that are not work related? (1 = Very, 5 Not Very)
2. What types of activities or programs would you be interested in attending?
  - *Social activities*
  - *Professional development activities*
  - *Personal development activities*
3. How likely would you participate in social/professional/personal activities that occur outside of traditional work hours?
4. How likely are you willing to help plan and organize any of these social/professional/personal development activities.

## “Enhancing the Staff Experience”

# Results

1. How interested are you in participating in activities or programs that are not work related? (mean = 2.76)
2. What types of activities or programs would you be interested in attending?
  - *Social activities (frequency – 11)*
  - *Professional development activities (frequency – 7)*
  - *Personal development activities (frequency – 7)*
3. How likely would you participate in social/professional/personal activities that occur outside of traditional work hours?
4. How likely are you willing to help plan and organize any of these social/professional/personal development activities.

	Social Activities	Professional Activities	Personal Activities
Participate	2.94	2.75	3
Help Organize	3.19	3.19	3.38



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## **Timeline and Next steps**

Fall 2016

- Distribute surveys
- Identify volunteers

Spring 2017

- Form committees for activity group(s)
- Plan, schedule, organize, execute events
- Survey attendees

Summer 2017 / Fall 2017

- Update and re-distribute survey
- Plan, schedule, organize, execute events
- Examine next phase for formal staff development plan

## *“Enhancing the Staff Experience”*

# Implications for Leadership

Servant-leadership (Greenleaf 1970): where the employee's well-being is placed over the leader's self-interest. Characteristics of servant-leadership include work environments in which:

- The people (i.e. the employees) are valued
- Community connections are built amongst members
- People have an opportunity for development and growth
- Authenticity is displayed
- Leadership is shared

Servant-leadership is just one example of an evolving approach to management and supervision that has positive outcomes on administrative staff job satisfaction, staff morale, and staff intention to stay.

# *“Enhancing the Staff Experience”*

## **Implications for Leadership**

Across the University, we can model leadership styles – both in academic affairs and student affairs – that aim to foster better communication, engagement, and that promote positive staff outcomes.

- Leaders must be responsible for maintaining healthy work environment.
- Leaders commit to incentives for professional development and growth.
- Leaders engage in succession planning.