

Better Place to Work Findings

UAF Staff Council

Staff Affairs Committee

July, 2014

UAF Staff Council asked staff for their ideas on how to make UAF a better place to work, with a focus on near-term solutions that can be implemented at or below the level of the Chancellor. The ideas fell into six major themes:

1. Appreciation and Communication
2. Hours/Schedules/Leave
3. Health and Environment
4. HR/Education/Training
5. Facilities
6. Social

The Staff Affairs committee condensed the feedback and compiled a few ideas in each category that seem relatively easy to implement, or were heavily requested.

1. Appreciation and Communication

- A bi-annual reminder to supervisors to thank their employees for their hard work. That personal communication would go a long way!
- A thank you message from the University on an employee's anniversary date.
- A second, smaller version of Staff Appreciation Day at a different time of year.
- "Less red tape and more fun," like a "Happy" video made by senior admins and shared with staff: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w74HMrHkNtM&feature=youtu.be>
- Informal meetings with the Chancellor and different staff groups, explaining his vision and asking about their work culture, projects, concerns; once or twice a year with each group.
- During busy times of year, have senior administrators spend an hour or two in key customer service areas. Staff feel that this would increase UAF leaders' understanding and appreciation of the work being done, and would also really help with morale.

2. Hours/Schedules/Leave

- In keeping with the recommendations from the Planning and Budget Committee, employees are interested in exploring alternative work schedules (moving to part-time while keeping benefits, shorter work weeks in the summer, moving to a 37.5 hour work week in lieu of compensation increases).
- In summer months, allow for flex schedules (four ten-hour days, for example).
- Facilitate the ability to work remotely, whether on a regular or ad-hoc basis. Clarify policy and provide tools for employees and supervisors to implement more easily.

3. Health and Environment

- Better access to good drinking water
- More healthy food options across campus, especially in the summer. Invite local food trucks onto campus during the lunch hour- staff can get outside, mingle, and get healthy local food.
- Free lunchtime health/physical activity classes, like those provided by WIN.
- Better air quality in buildings, especially during construction, fire and allergy season.
- Offer incentives or lower rates for employees at the SRC.

4. HR/Education/Training

- Make sure employees know what is available to them- many of the suggestions received were for programs or facilities that are already in place (lactation rooms, passes at the SRC, etc.)
- “Alternative service” where employees spend a short period of time each year working in a different department. This allows employees to learn about other areas at the university they find interesting, as well as break down silos and the “us vs. them” mentality.
- Provide an option for evaluation of supervisors and administrators.
- Encourage 15-minute breaks to refresh employees during the workday.
- Improved training, including a clear road map of trainings an employee should/could take throughout their career path. Note: Staff Council will be working with the Administrative Services Training Process Improvement team to implement this recommendation.

5. Facilities

- Improve bicycle-friendliness of campus (additional signs, bike lanes where possible).
- Expand on-site childcare
- Where/if space is available, identify staff lounge areas. Make simple exercise equipment available (stationary bike, treadmill).
- Improve the parking process (allow employees to renew a pass, rather than purchase new each year, consider reducing or eliminating Gold Lots as an additional cost).

6. Social

- “TV Tuesdays,” where a popular program is shown during lunch once a week.