



**Staff Compensation and Benefits Subcommittee**  
**Education Benefit Enhancement**  
**Career Advancement Strategy**  
February 27, 2009

**Introduction**

It is the vision of President Gee for Ohio State to rise from excellence to eminence. To accomplish this, several goals have been developed and will be used as we measure the success of the institution and its leadership over the next five years. **Talent and culture** are key focus areas, emerging from our desire to build a high-performance culture and to engage and reward staff and faculty in new and different ways. In addition, **outreach and collaboration** are key to developing public and private partnerships to benefit our communities and further the interests and resources of the university, the State of Ohio and beyond. To support these goals, the university needs to address two areas which staff continuously state as a need: **education benefits and career advancement.**

USAC believes these two to be inextricably linked in that access to education plays a pivotal role in staff members' ability to advance their careers in meaningful ways. Our tuition assistance benefit currently allows eligible faculty and staff to take courses at Ohio State. To further their education and personal marketability, some staff pay out-of-pocket to attend other educational institutions because of more convenient scheduling, on-line courses or program offerings elsewhere that better fit or accommodate scheduling needs. More than 50% of staff surveyed over the past four years would take advantage of the tuition benefit if full or partial tuition for other area colleges or universities were offered. Nearly 50% believe their careers would be enhanced by further education. One of the major findings in the 2008 Culture Survey was that only 30% of staff believe they have opportunities for advancement at Ohio State.

USAC recognizes that the current economic crisis has a negative impact on the university and our programs. Because of this, extreme care and consideration was taken to determine the most important issues to discuss with the university leadership as it relates to attracting, engaging and retaining top staff talent and supporting our future direction. There is no better way for Ohio State to influence a major culture change than to invest in and support its most important asset: people.

## Recommendation #1

**USAC recommends that the university expand its tuition assistance benefit to:**

1. Include courses at other Ohio public universities and colleges.
2. Expand partnerships with Columbus State Community College that could assist with an on-line curriculum to support the needs of a diverse staff population.
3. Include OSU non-credit courses and workshops.

Staff are interested in using the education assistance benefit beyond Ohio State. The Ohio Staff Council of Higher Education (OSCHE) agrees that efforts to improve the education assistance benefit for all state higher education employees should be explored. These improvements would support the University System of Ohio and its goal of enrolling an additional 230,000 adult students. In a recent meeting, Chancellor Fingerhut encouraged USAC members to invite the Board of Regents into a conversation about reciprocal agreements, agreeing that it is a valuable idea for discussion and recognizing that Regents involvement would be an important first step to exploring this efficiently.

### Proposed Benefits and Outcomes

- Improved recruitment
- Improved retention
- Career advancement for an increasingly skilled staff population
- Enhanced support for non-traditional students
- Enhanced collaboration and partnerships with the community, State of Ohio and higher education system
- Improved engagement of the growing adult learner population

### Consequences of Not Implementing

- Loss of talented staff
- Disengaged employees
- Lack of faith in the university
- Under-utilized and under-trained workforce

### Suggested Structure

As outlined below, several universities have tuition assistance programs, many of which suggest potential models for Ohio State.

## **University of Washington<sup>1</sup>**

University of Washington allows eligible employees to take classes at participating state, community and technical colleges on a “space available” basis. The UW Registrar reports that the program is successful and cited as a benefit staff consider when opting to accept a position at UW.

## **University of Illinois<sup>2</sup>**

University of Illinois civil service employees with at least a 50% appointment, and academic professionals with at least a 25% appointment, can attend nine other universities in the state system using the tuition benefit available to UI employees.

## **Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine (NEOUCOM)<sup>3</sup>**

NEOUCOM allows full-time employees to take up to 6 graduate or undergraduate credit hours per semester at any of the three consortium universities (University of Akron, Kent State University and Youngstown State University) or their branch campuses.

## **University of Toledo<sup>4</sup> and Bowling Green State University<sup>5</sup>**

These two institutions have a reciprocal tuition-waiver program in which employees are only eligible to enroll in courses not available at their respective institutions. Similarly, our proximity and relative lack of educational overlap, specifically in terms of on-line courses, with Columbus State could create a mutually beneficial relationship.

Each of these universities uses tuition assistance as a competitive advantage and sees it as a mechanism to recruit, engage and retain talented staff and faculty. As we seek new, innovative ways to grow our talent, we must support the individual’s need to grow their passions while creating strength within the Ohio State ranks. We fully recognize the challenges that lie ahead given the declining economy and also recognize a need to grow our staff so they can support Ohio State’s momentum and direction.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Washington, Human Resources, Division of Professional and Organizational Development, <http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/pod/policies/tuition-exemption.html>

<sup>2</sup> University of Illinois, Human Resources, Section of Life Events, Tuition and Service Fee Waivers, [https://nessie.uihr.uillinois.edu/cf/events/index.cfm?Item\\_id=1121](https://nessie.uihr.uillinois.edu/cf/events/index.cfm?Item_id=1121)

<sup>3</sup> Northeastern Ohio Universities Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy, Human Resources, Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, <http://www.neoucom.edu/DEPTS/HRES/PolProc/educationbenefitspolicy.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> University of Toledo, Human Resources, Benefits, Payment of Education Fees/Fee Waivers, [http://www.utoledo.edu/depts/hr/main/benefits/fee\\_waivers.html](http://www.utoledo.edu/depts/hr/main/benefits/fee_waivers.html)

<sup>5</sup> Bowling Green State University, Human Resources, Benefits, Waiver for Full-Time Employees, <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/benefits/page12550.html>

## Recommendation #2:

**USAC recommends that the university commit to career development and advancement, supported by clear career paths and options, to help grow its talent. To do this, we propose these approaches:**

1. Develop and implement an up-to-date, market-based classification system with clearly defined job families, competencies and career pathways.
2. Re-establish a centralized, comprehensive Career Development Office to provide fundamental and essential career support and assistance to staff.

Meaningful, well-defined and competency-based career pathways are currently a feature that many of our benchmark institutions have, or are implementing, as they look to engage and retain the best of their staff talent. **Career pathing** refers to the process by which organizations identify the typical movement and career progression of employees within the organization.<sup>6</sup>

If Ohio State is to recruit staff interested in “careers” versus “jobs” we must find ways to actively partner with staff on their growth and development. We consistently hear feedback from staff that our current classification structure is difficult to understand and navigate, and that there are limited resources available to support one’s development interests and advancement options. Data from the 2008 Culture Survey indicate that over 44% of staff feel that there are not clearly defined career paths and opportunities for promotion. The past four USAC surveys support this finding. The most recent USAC survey conducted in 2007 indicated that 52% of respondents did not feel that promotional opportunities were available to them, an increase of 3% from the 2006 survey.

### Proposed Benefits and Outcomes

- Increased ability to recruit, engage and retain high-potential staff talent
- Increased employee career ownership
- Accelerated culture transformation process and development of a high performance culture
- Increased staff satisfaction and ability to recruit people looking for a career, instead of a job
- Improved succession planning and leadership development
- Improved community by bringing more people to the Central Ohio area as Ohio State builds and maintains a knowledgeable and highly competent workforce

### Consequences of Not Implementing

- Loss of high-potential talent in an extremely competitive market
- Dissatisfaction and disengagement due to lack of advancement opportunities
- Organizational growth is negatively impacted

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<sup>6</sup> Corporate Leadership Council Newsletter. *Career Pathing Processes and Tools*. p. 1. December 2006.

## Benchmark Data

Ohio State lags behind our peers in the area of career development and advancement support. Of those we received information from or researched, the University of Michigan has done the most as it relates to defining clear career pathways for staff and complementing this work with a career development office.

### University of Michigan

At Michigan, the Compensation and Classification Department has developed and established a classification system that includes well defined pathways in every job family. The responsibilities, competencies and other qualifications needed for each job title are thoroughly described. They implemented Career Path Navigator in 2008, an online tool that allows staff to navigate through different job families, research available options and identify development needs to help advance their careers.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to career pathways and the Career Path Navigator tool, Human Resources Development provides Career Development Services for staff. This office provides automated and in-person guidance to staff in the areas of self-assessment, job search preparation, career exploration and professional development.<sup>8</sup>

Other benchmark universities that were investigated include University of Arizona, University of Illinois, Michigan State University, University of Texas at Austin and Pennsylvania State University. Below are examples of their programs.

### University of Arizona

(Benchmark Status: Excellent) Arizona has established two individual programs specifically related to career development: a Center for Professional Development<sup>9</sup> and Employee and Career Advising Services.<sup>10</sup> Both websites provide extensive information and tools staff can use, as well as a dedicated team of career advisors for private, individual counseling.

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<sup>7</sup> University of Michigan, Human Resources, Classification and Compensation, Career Path Navigator, <http://careernavigator.umjobs.org/>

<sup>8</sup> University of Michigan, Human Resources, Career Development Services, <http://www.hr.umich.edu/career/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> University of Arizona, Human Resources, Career Development Center for Professional Development, [http://www.hr.arizona.edu/08\\_o/development3/](http://www.hr.arizona.edu/08_o/development3/)

<sup>10</sup> University of Arizona, Human Resources, Career Development, Employee and Career Advising Resources, [http://www.hr.arizona.edu/08\\_o/consult/ecAdvising/](http://www.hr.arizona.edu/08_o/consult/ecAdvising/)

Arizona’s classification and compensation unit has developed a well-defined list of all titles using titles that allow groupings by job family. This helps staff members see what a career ladder may be within a job family.<sup>11</sup>

## **University of Texas at Austin**

(Benchmark Status: Excellent) Texas’ comprehensive performance management system is described as “an ongoing dialogue between you (the manager) and your employees that links expectations, data gathering, ongoing feedback, development planning, performance evaluations, and follow-up.”<sup>12</sup> It is used to provide year-round performance feedback and planning of professional development for staff. Managers and supervisors are trained and expected to provide effective and valuable performance management reviews. It is worthy to note that the University of Texas considers performance management such a vital facet of engaging and retaining their staff that it has been made a dedicated and separate service unit for managers within the Human Resources Career Management Office.

Texas also has a well-developed, thorough compensation website that provides information related to job families, career ladders and full job descriptions with clearly defined competencies needed to function in a particular job title.<sup>13</sup>

## **University of Washington**

(Benchmark Status: Eminent) Washington’s Job Title Lists for both classified and professional staff have clearly defined career ladders within a job family with market-based job titles.<sup>14</sup>

The University of Washington demonstrated the importance of professional and organizational development by developing a website that has extensive information, professional development tools and other resources to support staff at all levels with career advancement, as well as tools for managers to assist and mentor their employees.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> University of Arizona, Human Resources, Compensation, Compensation Tools, [http://www.hr.arizona.edu/compensation\\_tools](http://www.hr.arizona.edu/compensation_tools)

<sup>12</sup> University of Texas at Austin, Human Resources Services, Performance Management, <http://www.utexas.edu/hr/manager/pm/overview.html>

<sup>13</sup> University of Texas at Austin, Human Resources Services, Compensation, <http://utdirect.utexas.edu/pnjd/index.WBX>

<sup>14</sup> University of Washington, Human Resources, Division of Compensation, <http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/ocpsp/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> University of Washington, Human Resources, Division of Professional and Organizational Development, <http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/pod/leaders/ee-careerdev/index.html>

Tools include a 26-page publication entitled: *U-PLAN – University of Washington, Career Development Planning Guide*.<sup>16</sup>

## University of California, Los Angeles

(Benchmark Status: Eminent) UCLA’s job classification specifications provide a wealth of information. Navigating through their classification site provides evidence of clearly defined job family series and career pathways within those series. The specifications provide detailed information of the series concept, examples of assignments, and well-defined qualifications for job titles within each series.<sup>17</sup>

UCLA offers two separate programs for career development; one for entry level staff and one for professional staff.

Professional Development Program: A one-year leadership development program that provides participants in specified classifications opportunities to enhance professional and management skills, build professional networks, and learn about the structure and culture of the university. Program components include a 2½ day off-site retreat, monthly seminars, buddy program, brown bag sessions, structured mentorships, team projects, 360-degree assessment and career coaching<sup>18</sup>.

Staff Enrichment Program: A one-year program offering entry-level employees vocational and professional development and a career path toward professional opportunities. Program components include monthly seminars, team projects, career coaching, department presentations and creation of a professional portfolio. A stipend of \$500 is allocated to program members for educational opportunities.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> U-PLAN, University of Washington Career Development Planning Guide, University of Washington, <http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/pod/staff/careerdev/docs/uplanindiv.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> University of California, Los Angeles, Campus Services, Human Resources, HR Administration, Compensation and Classification, <http://map.ais.ucla.edu/portal/site/UCLA/menuitem.789d0eb6c76e7ef0d66b02ddf848344a/?vgnextoid=f0bd78733c414010VgnVCM100000db6643a4RCRD>

<sup>18</sup> University of California, Los Angeles, Campus Services, Human Resources, Training and Development, <http://map.ais.ucla.edu/portal/site/UCLA/menuitem.789d0eb6c76e7ef0d66b02ddf848344a/?vgnextoid=ef20955bfe7d1010VgnVCM1000008f8443a4RCRD>

<sup>19</sup> University of California, Los Angeles, Campus Services, Human Resources, Training and Development, <http://map.ais.ucla.edu/portal/site/UCLA/menuitem.789d0eb6c76e7ef0d66b02ddf848344a/?vgnextoid=2850955bfe7d1010VgnVCM1000008f8443a4RCRD>

## Suggested Implementation Strategy

### Developing Career Pathways

Recognizing the enormity of a complete evaluation and overhaul of our classification system, USAC recommends that the university consider working with a human resource consulting firm to evaluate and redesign the current classification system. The new structure should consist of well-defined career paths within job families, with expectations of the required education, experience, skills and competencies necessary for success in each job title.

### Career Development

Based on our research, a comprehensive career development office might include:

- Self-assessment strategies
- Personalized career counseling
- Mentoring and career coaching
- Competency gap identification and development
- Professional development resources
- Resume critique
- Job search assistance
- Interview coaching

We suggest a task force be charged with further investigation of a centralized Career Development Office. This task force should research and make suggestions around necessary resources (space, personnel and budget), structure, services, and appropriate measurements to evaluate impact, among other things. The task force could include representatives from the Office of Human Resources, USAC, President's Council on Women, Fisher College of Business, Office of Continuing Education and other identified groups who could demonstrate expertise in this area.

In closing, USAC would like to thank President Gee and Mr. Larry Lewellen for their time and thoughtful consideration of these proposals. We understand that fiscal resources to develop these programs may be difficult to budget at this time. However, it is critical that the momentum to launch the processes of developing a leading edge classification system and an innovative Career Development Office not be further delayed. Task forces should be appointed in the next fiscal year to embark on more thorough and detailed study and discussions. USAC believes that implementation of these essential programs will greatly enhance Ohio State's movement towards eminency and becoming a Top 100 Employer of Choice.

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