

Task Force Report on Faculty/Staff Partnership

Executive Summary

The Task Force on Faculty/Staff Partnership was formed jointly in January 1999 by the Council of University of California Staff Assemblies (CUCSA) and the Academic Council of the systemwide Academic Senate. Its charge was to identify and share campus best practices that foster positive communications and cooperation between faculty and staff; to identify training opportunities for faculty and staff that support relationship building and partnership; and to describe the resources available to both faculty and staff for resolving conflicts.

The Task Force report offers ideas for enhanced partnership in consideration of the mutual obligation of both faculty and staff to create a positive work environment.

These ideas include:

- Increase the visibility of best practices that support collaboration by developing a faculty/staff partnership website;
- Build awareness of the avenues available to faculty and staff to resolve conflicts through campus Ombuds Programs, Mediation Service and other mechanisms;
- Foster open and inclusive communications at the department level among faculty and staff members;
- Recognize that there are differences in roles, but that both faculty and staff bring value to the University, and equally share responsibility for creating and sustaining a positive work environment;
- Expand knowledge through training and development opportunities already available to include discussions on faculty-staff relations; and
- Reexamine APM 015 Faculty Conduct and Administration of Discipline to address faculty and staff relations, workplace conduct, and the administrative and supervisory responsibilities of faculty.

The Task Force's identification of best practices was based upon consideration of those exemplary efforts that reflect leadership in addressing issues of faculty/staff partnership; demonstrate staff/faculty collaboration; celebrate faculty and staff recognition and achievement, and offer professional development. It is the intent of the Task Force that each campus and Laboratory review this sampling of best practices, along with many other fine examples that exist at the locations, to further enhance a sense of community. These best practices provide opportunities to share information and, in the process, build upon efforts that encourage ongoing collaboration.

The Task Force identified campus Ombuds Programs and Mediation Services as important resources available to faculty and staff to help resolve issues of conflict before they reach the critical stage. Department Chair Workshops and New Faculty Orientation Programs were also identified in the report as providing excellent avenues to further the discussion on issues of faculty and staff relations and on the role of faculty in creating a supportive work environment. Supervisors, who include both faculty and staff members, should encourage staff participation in training and development workshops, when appropriate.

These programs provide for the acquisition of skills and knowledge to meet the current and future challenges of relationship building, team interaction, and partnership that are necessary to uphold University values.

The Faculty/Staff Partnership Task Force marks an important collaborative achievement in that University faculty and staff formed a partnership to discuss ways in which to foster and sustain positive faculty and staff relations through mutual trust, respect, and civility. The Task Force's commitment towards creating a positive work environment is expressed in the Partnership Statement, developed by the Task Force, to further communicate the University's deeply rooted commitment to value the contribution of each of its members.

Partnership Statement

"The greatness of the University of California follows from the excellence of its people – its faculty, staff and students; however, a mere collection of outstanding individuals will not advance the University. Our ability to excel in our missions depends on collaborations and collegial environments. A collegial atmosphere can only come about through strong partnerships based on mutual trust and respect. Therefore, in support of the University's missions, the faculty and staff of the University of California affirm their responsibility and commitment to creating and fostering a cooperative and professional working environment."