

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM SRC OPEN SUPPORT STAFF MEETING  
HELD ON OCTOBER 19, 2000

The morale of the support staff seems quite low across campus. Are there any plans to address this situation?

Yes. Campus-wide training efforts for supervisors and staff have been offered and will continue to be offered. These training efforts have focused on developing management skills for supervisors and communication skills for all employees. With the assistance of the S.S.R.C., a new employee campus tour and welcome reception was implemented in October as a way to orient new employees to the campus and introduce them to other employees. Emily Kruse, Communications Specialist, has joined the Office of College Services. Her job is to keep the campus, as a whole, informed. The Laurel Leaf newsletter, which reports important news and happenings on campus to staff and faculty, was developed as a method to spread information to the campus.

Update:

A group of supervisors attended the Des Moines Conference for Managers and Supervisors. In April, another group of supervisors will attend the Disney Institute's Keys to Management Excellence, offered by Iowa Valley Continuing Education.

In February and March, a campus-wide training opportunity exists for Basic and Advanced Communication Skills. The presenter for this training is Susan B. Wilson from Executive Strategies, Inc, who conducted the GOMO training last semester.

Q. Are departmental management policies being reviewed by an "outside" person for suggestions to improve?

Human Resources is planning a comprehensive review of the staff handbook. This review will involve benchmarking with other facilities when necessary. Human Resources does not plan to review specific departmental policies.

Q. Is there any chance of getting "team" training and "positive attitudes" training directed to each individual department? GOMO was a start-but we have a long way to go with team, cross training, and positive support and negative consequences.

We received enthusiastic responses to Susan B. Wilson's GOMO training and plan to invite her back to campus for other training efforts. At that time, we will review the possibility of directing the training toward the individual departments. As part of the new Human Resources structure, each H.R. Generalist will be able to help determine training needs for the departments and provide assistance in planning these efforts.

Q. Can something be done to make job ads in local and regional papers grammatically correct?

Job advertisements are written in a manner that eliminates extra words because words cost money. A typical employment advertisement in the Des Moines Register is \$1,000.00 While saving costs is important, so is maintaining the integrity of the message. Human Resources is working with Jim Powers in Public Relations and Emily Kruse in College Services to create a recruitment image and message that is consistent with the Grinnell College mission.

Q. URL for online directory and for Chronicle of Higher Ed.?

The web directory can be found on the Grinnell College web site at <http://www.grinnell.edu/www/grinnell/phone/>. There is also a button titled, “Directory Search” on the home page. The web directory is updated monthly and provides you with the most efficient means of locating students, staff and faculty.

We have our own mini web site on the Chronicle of Higher Education’s web site for recruiting purposes. Check it out at <http://www.chronicle.com/jobs/profiles/>. There are some areas of this web site that do require a subscription to the Chronicle before you can access the specific information.

We now have an application form on our web site. Check it out at <http://www.grinnell.edu/HumanResources> and click on “Employment Opportunities” and then “Application for Employment”.

Q. Why does it seem support staff is responsible for more duties and no additional support staff is hired? Support Staff seems to be covering more and more for the supervisor’s lack of organization and follow through—Why?

The writer of this question has a concern specific to a departmental situation. Without more information, I can not answer this question. It is likely, however, that the course of business and responsibilities has changed the nature of the work relationship within this department. I encourage the writer to contact me so we can discuss this further.

Q. Wellness Blood Screening. Are spouses covered for blood screening? Yes  
-On college’s health plan. Yes  
-Not on college’s health plan. Yes

Q. The attitude of Grinnell College administration is no longer one of “caring/concern” for the union and support staff employees. Why are employees not being supported and encouraged to better themselves and being appreciated for all the effort they put into their jobs?

I am unsure why the writer of this question feels this way and without specific examples, I find this question difficult to answer.

There are many educational benefits available to employees including tuition reimbursement, tuition remission at Grinnell College, departmental staff development funds and training opportunities on campus. Human Resources is working on a system to track employee attendance at training functions. We hope to provide supervisors with employee training summaries on an annual basis so they are aware of training efforts made on the employee's behalf.

Human Resources will be planning supervisory training on ways to reward and recognize employees. The Human Resources Generalists are willing to assist the administrative department heads with the planning of recognition efforts in their departments.

Q. When did we change from a casual work place to one of a corporate atmosphere?

Dress code is determined by each administrative department head and is based upon the type of work performed within the department and the customer contact. The following was taken from the staff handbook:

### 3.15 Personal Appearance

Grinnell College wishes to present a professional image to the different individuals and constituencies visiting the campus. You are expected to exercise common sense, and dress in a manner that is in keeping with your responsibilities.

Q. Who can the support staff turn to for open communication when problems develop in their work area – without jeopardizing their employment at the College?

If the problem is between you and another co-worker, then you should speak directly with your supervisor about the situation. If the problem is your supervisor, then seek the assistance of the H.R. Generalist for your area or Kristin Lovig, H.R. Director. Depending on the situation, (sexual harassment, discrimination or the like), you should seek assistance directly from the Human Resources Department.

Q. Has anyone done statistics on the number/ratio of administration to support staff? If yes, how long ago and should this be updated to current numbers/ratios?

In 1999 (last available information), the numbers of administrative and clerical staff were compared with other institutions. Our ratios were comparable with those other colleges. However, this information included clerical staff only and is not an accurate reflection of support staff.

Is there an explanation why so many support staff changes have occurred and have questions been raised as to the reason(s) why support staff are moving to other departments?

Exit interviews are conducted for those individuals who leave the college and typically not conducted for transfer situations. Generally, most employees transfer to other departments for job enrichment, change in schedule or duties, or increase in pay if applicable. If Human Resources notices any particular trend in transfers or raises concern about employee movement, then it will be explored further. If an employee has a specific concern about their work environment, they should first contact their supervisor and then Human Resources.