

## **Staff Development Grant Final Report**

### **Bemidji State University / Northwest Technical College**

*Project:* Employee engagement leadership council retreat

*Description:* Employee engagement has been noted as an area for improvement, and this retreat will give leaders the tools to improve engagement in their respective organizations (BSU and NTC and departments).

*Project leader:* Linda Gilsrud, Director, Human Resources

*Award:* \$7,250 (\$2,053 for Leadership Council Retreat; reserved \$5,197 for late August training sessions for Deans, Directors, Managers, and Supervisors)

### **Project Re-cap**

Bemidji State University and its affiliate, Northwest Technical College, hired Barb Krantz Taylor, Bailey Consulting Group, to meet and work with the BSU/NTC Leadership Council on March 20, 2008. Ms. Krantz Taylor introduced Leadership Council members to the concept, initiated discussion, and worked on defining “next steps” to involve BSU and NTC first-line supervisors, and later, BSU/NTC faculty and staff.

### **Impact**

Leadership Council members engaged in a very comprehensive strategic dialog with Ms. Krantz-Taylor as facilitator. The Leadership Council determined an engagement vision to assist in shaping how directors, managers, supervisors, deans, faculty and staff accept and trust an engagement focus and why an engagement focus is critical. Council members worked on strategies for engaging their own direct reports and identifying methods to communicate their strategy to BSU/NTC faculty and staff. The Council set in place ways to encourage faculty/staff to embrace engagement as an initiative, recognized concerns that may arise, and prepared guidelines for other stakeholders.

### **Reflections**

A number of Leadership Council members remarked that they have never had an opportunity to learn, listen, and discuss leadership concepts as a group. The discussion also provided a welcome chance to get to know one another’s leadership styles.

The Council committed to the *Engagement Survey*, an assessment tool which will measure faculty and staff engagement levels. Repeating the survey over a number of years will allow BSU and NTC to compare results from year to year. Bailey Consulting Group will use BSU/NTC as a beta testing sight for the survey. The survey results will provide assistance in the evaluation portion of the engagement initiative.

Prior to fall semester, Deans, Directors, Managers, and Supervisors will be asked to participate in one of two scheduled full day training sessions to learn critical communication skills, learn “dos and don’ts” on initiating, conducting, and assessing “engaging” conversations, and devising additional action steps.