

Staff Development Grant Final Report

Southwest Minnesota State University

Project: Supervisory training and discussion series

Description: Each session will feature a different topic and will be designed both to educate and provide supervisors with a support network of colleagues at the university.

Project leader: Deb Almer, Director, Human Resources

Award: \$4,000

Project Re-cap

The project was to develop and implement regular supervisory training and discussion sessions to discuss contract administration and performance management issues. We had seven sessions starting in January and ending at the end of the academic year, with the last one on May 7, 2008. A total of 31 supervisors were initially invited to the first session. Twenty four supervisors attended the first session and after that a number of supervisors requested that other employees in their unit (Assistant Directors) be invited. Therefore, after the first session, a total of 39 supervisors, directors and assistant directors were invited. There was total of 31 different employees that participated in at least one of the sessions. The average attendance was 25 with the most that attended any one session being 29.

The sessions included:

1. Employee Development Philosophy, Contract Changes and Leave Administration
2. Performance Management
3. Roles and Responsibilities of a Supervisor
4. Student Payroll, Travel and Contracting
5. Employee Recognition
6. New Employee Orientation
7. Campus Safety

Three different sessions were offered to the Department Chairs. A total of thirteen different faculty, plus the deans, attended these sessions. The topics covered included: Employee Development Philosophy, Performance Management, timesheets and leave administration for AFSCME employees, worker's comp, EAP, FMLA, use of sick leave for faculty and the hiring of adjunct faculty.

Costs were as follows:

Lunches during the training: \$1840

Notebooks, handouts and resources (Conflict Management, Motivation & Retention, Performance Appraisal): \$2,160

Impact

Our objective was to provide training, communication and discussion among supervisors so that our employees would be treated somewhat consistently throughout the campus regardless of supervisor. Evaluations showed that the topics were useful and the training sessions were very well received. A number of participants stated on the evaluations that they enjoyed the time to be together with other supervisors on campus and the interaction with the different departments. At the first session, the supervisors completed a topic assessment and then again on the evaluations, I requested suggestions and/or ideas for further sessions or topics. I received a number of suggestions, so there still is a desire for further sessions.

Reflection

This was a great opportunity to provide this information to our supervisors. A number of the directors in the MSUAASF bargaining unit have not gone through any formal Supervisory Training and this was a good beginning. It was very rewarding to see the number of participants grow as the weeks went on and how much they were looking forward to the sessions. Of course, the fact that lunch was provided helped immensely with this. For me, the key question on the evaluation was “Would you attend supervisory training sessions in the future if the free lunch was not provided?” and all, but one answered yes.

I did envision more discussion among the supervisors, so was a little disappointed that more of them did not participate in discussion. I was trying to provide so much information during the time frame, plus they were eating – that discussion was hard to facilitate.