



MUSSA REPORT | Board of Regents Meeting | January 11, 2018 | Helena

INTRODUCTION

As a follow up to our presentation on May 25, 2017, please find below data and reports from each campus regarding turnover rates, benchmarking data information, as well as a brief synopsis of what is happening at each campus.

TURNOVER

To ascertain possible factors contributing to turnover rates, the Regents requested campuses reach out to their Human Resources departments to collect turnover and/or separation data. Campuses were then asked to report back to the Regents regarding the factors contributing to the turnover rates as well as the impacts on workload and the cost of hiring and training new employees. Obtaining the requested data proved more difficult than expected. Kevin McRae, Deputy Commissioner, Communications & Human Resources, underscored this sentiment in noting "...there is a limited amount of information that we'll be able to provide from both a legal perspective and a resource perspective. I'm sure you understand that our excellent payroll staff members have only so much time and resource to devote to responsibilities beyond making sure our tremendous faculty, staff, professional, administrative, and student workers get paid on time and in compliance with all wage-and-hour regulations. We might not have all the information requested by MUSSA representatives, but we'll do our best".

Due to the inability to obtain fundamental data related to this issue, MUSSA would urge the Regents to support the development of consistent data reporting regarding turnover and/or separation.

Below is the limited data campuses were able to obtain:

Montana State University Campuses:

- **Bozeman:** total number of employees: 3,087
total number of employees who left during FY17: 331, with 202 (61%) noting their reason for leaving as "resignation".
- **Billings:** total number of employees: 651
total number of employees who left during FY17: 49, with 34 (70%) noting their reason for leaving as "resignation".
- **Great Falls:** total number of employees: 228
total number of employees who left during FY17: 21, with 12 (57%) noting their reason for leaving as "resignation".
- **Havre:** total number of employees: 215
total number of employees who left during FY17: 18, with 11 (61%) noting their reason for leaving as "resignation".



University of Montana campuses:

- **Butte:** Turnover data not available at this time.
- **Helena:** total number of employees: 193
total number of employees who left during FY17: 74, with 13 noting “better pay” and 16 noting “career growth” (40% total) as the reason for leaving.
- **Missoula:** Turnover data not available at this time.

BENCHMARKING DATA SOURCES

The Regents requested MUSSA include benchmarking data in its reports. MUSSA has since found few sources which have studied the impact of staff on Higher Education including staff impact on student retention, recruitment, admission, engagement, and graduation rates. MUSSA found the Ellucian/Cornerstone report, *Empowering Employees: the state of employee engagement and retention in higher education*, useful and relevant. MUSSA members also examined the Montana Department of Labor and Industry statistical database. While the data gathered was specific to Montana, it proved to not be beneficial to our needs because the data sets encompassed data from grade school all the way up to higher education, as well as public and private institutions.

MUSSA will continue to explore benchmarking data to include in its reports.

MUSSA CAMPUS REPORTS

Montana State University campuses:

- **Bozeman’s Staff Senate**
Bozeman has been busy reviewing and identifying themes found in the MUSSA Satisfaction Survey. Several themes have since emerged from the survey and seven direct impact points were identified that Staff Senate could be responsible for and/or play a direct role in. Said themes include: 1) MUS health benefits, 2) Trust in OCHE, and 3) Opportunities for advancement.
In regard to MUS health benefits, most responses were positive, noting Staff Senate does have a representative that is a member of the Inter-Units Benefits Committee. Many chose ‘neutral’ regarding whether or not there was an environment of trust in OCHE. Staff Senate believes it should take an active role in helping Bozeman staff members understand the roles of both OCHE and the Board of Regents, as well as understand the goals and metrics of the MUS Strategic Plan. To this effort four Regents (Robert Nystuen, Martha Sheehy, Casey Lozar, and Chase Greenfield), as well as the Commissioner, recently meet with representatives from Staff Senate and Professional Council to discuss these matters. The meeting proved to be informative



with most attendees gaining a better understanding of the Regents' and Commissioners' duties, responsibilities, and mission.

Opportunities for advancement scored poorly on the survey. It is noted benefits, such as tuition waivers, Professional Development and Training sessions, and the newly implemented Staff Senate MSU Staff Scholarship Program, are offered in order to improve knowledge and skills which can lead to advancement. Developing the human capital of the university system is key in employee engagement, student retention, and recruitment of the highest caliber students, faculty, and staff.

- **Billings Staff Senate**

Billings has reviewed and prioritized the lowest ranked results from the Staff Satisfaction Survey from spring 2016 and shared with the BOR in May 2016. They have focused on finding data related to high staff turnover per campus. Working with MUSSA and HR, they will complete their report and submit it at the May 2018 BOR meeting. Given that MSUB is in administration search mode for vice chancellor and chancellor positions, they find it is challenging to address concerning issues with leadership and trust, as was noted in their campus report from the staff satisfaction survey. The new administration hires will be key in moving them forward; creating a culture of trust, leadership, transparency, and support.

MSUB's Staff Senate is working in tandem with the new Jacket Proud committee, addressing campus engagement, poor morale, the onboarding process, improving communication, and community involvement. There has been discussion on professional development for staff, lack of incentives for involvement and staff positions taking more on. Some advancement opportunities exist for staff, but the greater issue is a lack of support by supervisors, as well as appreciation being shown, and of course, the chronic low wage situation.

Billings would like to see a restructure in the staff position hiring system including reviewing and updating what is currently old and antiquated. Consideration of what staff hires bring to a position as far as education, degree, experience, and knowledge, should be factored into their pay. This is in line with hiring other positions such as faculty, directors, and supervisors and key to retaining quality staff. The pay should reflect what the people bring to the table.

- **Great Falls College Staff Senate Association (GFCSSA)**

Great Falls College is in the process of creating an official Staff Senate. They have created a constitution and bylaws for governance of the association. On December 19th, they held their first meeting and are in the process of holding a special election for their first senators. One of their first issues to tackle with the newly created Great Falls College Staff Senate Association, is the state-wide concern with turnover. They have collected data from the past 3 years in regards to turnover due to resignation. They plan to implement 2 new processes over the next year to reduce the number of resignations and increase employee morale. They will monitor resignation numbers yearly and will consider success with a reduction in the percentage of turnover due to



resignation. Additionally, they will be brainstorming ways to inform their staff about staff senate, BOR, and OCHE.

- **Havre - Northern's Classified Staff Union (AFSCME)**

Havre met in September to discuss which questions from the MUSSA Survey they would like brought forth to ask of the classified staff. From the many questions on the MUSSA Survey, 15 were thought to be most important. Areas of concern included job satisfaction, work safety, being well informed regarding issues that concern Northern, and having a say in the decisions that are being made. Retention is always on their minds and how they, as a collective, can bring fourth ideas and gain working knowledge from other campuses where things seem to be working better in this area. The Chancellor's Office is having "Turf Meetings" with each of the departments to see what can be done do to keep students from fall into spring. They will be looking at different angles from each department to come up with a possible solution that would work best for the student, staff, and faculty. AFSCME Free College for members of AFSCME and their family is being offered through Eastern Gateway Community College. The Union has negotiated an agreement that is designed exclusively for members in good standing. This is an associate degree that can lead to a bachelor or master degree later.

University of Montana campuses:

- **Butte - Montana Tech Staff Senate**

Butte is focusing on areas in need of improvement as identified by the MUSSA satisfaction Survey, such as increased on-boarding and offboarding procedures and staff recognition. In addition to providing staff with a welcome and informational packet when hired and a mug at 6-month anniversaries, the senate hopes to begin recognition for 3 years, 5 years, and 10 years at an annual ceremony, which currently honors those employees working over 15 years.

Due to campus communication and training scoring poorly on the survey, Staff Senate will continue a Luncheon Learning series with topics that benefit all employees, such as retirement, technology use, marketing, student employment, and wellness.

In addition to focusing on survey data, the senate has worked with the Professional & Technical Communications and Environmental Safety departments to create emergency evacuation videos for the entire campus. These videos are complete and will soon be shared campus-wide. Through a quarterly electronic newsletter, Staff Senate continues notifying faculty and staff of events, newly hired staff, issues, addressing staff questions, and highlighting individual staff and department accomplishments. Staff Senate has also completed several ongoing community service activities such as a multi-day summer Adopt a Street cleanup, a very successful supply drive for Butte homeless, and gift wrapping for the Circle K Holiday Care program.



- **Helena- Helena College Staff**

Helena has identified areas in which they are excelling, including a high job satisfaction/enjoyment of work, sense of personal accomplishment, high satisfaction with health benefits and retirement, and an overall feeling that campus departments are working as a team and have created a trusting environment. There were areas in need of improvement identified in the MUSSA survey which included dissatisfaction with wages (about half of respondents must supplement their income by working overtime or use assistance), lack of opportunities for advancement, lack of job training, and a moderate lack of trust towards administrators/OCHE.

It is their goal to educate their staff on the role and activities of OCHE, improve campus communication-especially top-down, welcome new employees and support the work the staff does by acknowledging time served and contributions, and consider ways to support staff members who may be struggling financially, such as food pantries.

- **Missoula**

Missoula was not able to create a campus report and has issued the following statement:

We recently implemented a staff Voluntary Severance Offer (VSO). As of January 1st, a total of 84 staff members voluntarily left the University of Montana. They won't be replaced. We're working with the administration to ensure that the staff who remain working on campus will continue to offer quality customer service. Our colleagues need support as they take on extra work and brainstorm creative solutions to keep things running smoothly all over campus. We are prioritizing that process to the detriment of other tasks (including, unfortunately, full participation in MUSSA). Additionally, we no longer have administrative support for Staff Senate nor do we have a professional development program. UM's Staff Senate Administrative Associate retired in mid-August and was not replaced. The person who oversaw staff professional development as one portion of her job, discontinued that work as of July 1, 2017. She, too, is no longer working at UM. We've had to make tough decisions about where to direct our energy and time in the wake of these personnel changes.

CONCLUSION

Since our last meeting with you on May 25, 2017, MUSSA has switched the leadership from UM to MSU and has elected a new Chair person, Priscilla Azure of Great Falls, and Vice Chair, Ramie Pederson of Bozeman. The Bozeman Staff Senate Program Coordinator, who also provided



administration support for MUSSA when MSU is in the leadership role, retired the beginning of January and Lisa Hespen of Bozeman will be fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of said position.

MUSSA will continue its efforts on exploring actionable options for the May meeting. In the meantime, MUSSA requests the Regents consider amending the BOR strategic plan to expand the current two short sentences regarding faculty and staff. At present the only reference to Faculty and Staff is point 10 in Appendix A: Success Agenda:

10. Faculty and Staff Support

- Provide compensation and professional development adequate for recruiting and retaining the faculty and staff necessary to achieve success
- Provide faculty and staff a meaningful role in institutional and system decision making

Additionally, MUSSA urges the Regents to support the development of consistent data reporting regarding turnover and/or separations. We look forward to working collaboratively with you and OCHE to reexamine the MUS staff classification and compensation structure along with related factors such as workload, minimum job requirements, and rank hierarchy to improve faculty and staff retention.

Thank you for your continued support.