

Staff Stakeholder Group Report

Arizona Board of Regents'
Arizona University System Redesign Project

Staff Stakeholder Group Members

The thirty-three member Staff Stakeholder Group (SSG) is representative of all university employees — other than administrators and faculty — who serve in both academic and non-academic roles at each of our State's three universities (see attached roster). More than two-thirds of the Group's membership is currently active in their respective university's staff advisory councils.

Methodology

Staff Stakeholder Group discussion began at the initial start-up meeting held last August with members of the Tri-University Classified Staff Executive Board attended by Mary Jo Waits, Staff Director, Arizona University System Redesign Project. Shortly thereafter additional university employees were invited to join SSG in order to ensure equitable representation from the various university-system job categories (i.e., academic professionals, appointed personnel, classified staff, service professionals), including representatives from each of the three universities' Human Resources departments who also became SSG members to assist with HR-related discussion topics. The SSG met again in November with Ms. Waits and Stella Galaviz, Assistant Executive Director, ABOR, and centered its discussion on the following questions:

- There has been a lot of buzz about the Redesign effort. How would you characterize/summarize the comments?
- My biggest concern is that the state university system is not prepared to address the higher education needs of _____ (answer from your family's, region's, or university's perspective).
- Do you think Arizona students have enough options for "going to college?"
- What potential benefits might transpire for staff from the Redesign?
- What might staff stand to lose as a result of the Redesign?

In addition to the SSG meetings, those members who also work directly with staff advisory groups solicited input from their constituents. Additional information about the Arizona University System Redesign Project was accessed from the Arizona Board of Regents website.

Staff Stakeholder Group Findings

The SSG agrees with the importance and need to review the university system to insure it can accommodate anticipated growth in student enrollments through the year 2020. We recognize that a system redesign can potentially offer new opportunities to university employees. We also recognize that the proposed system redesign has created much employee apprehension. By addressing all sides, we created the following lists which identify specific "opportunities" and "concerns" from our perspective.

✓ = noted by multiple SSG members

"Opportunities"

- Networking
- **More job opportunities** ✓✓✓✓✓
- Promotions / transfers
- Sharing of resources (may provide dollar savings, greater efficiency)
- Move to 21st Century work environment
- Equitable pay scale
- Better salary
- Better training opportunities
- Higher profile
- Influence college / university future

- Generate excitement / great change
- Job Growth
- **Improve rural Arizona education access ✓✓**
- Opportunities for cost savings
- Sets tone; readiness for change
- Offer broad-base education opportunities
- Non-competitive arena
- Enables diversity
- Opportunity to work closer to where employee lives
- Will find opportunities / discovery
- Negatives turned into opportunities, if encouraged
- Opportunity to become more creative
- Include Staff Stakeholder Group process
- Information-sharing through advanced technology

“Concerns”

- Less funding than necessary to accomplish reorganization
- **Increased work load ✓✓**
- Loss of uniqueness to present university identities / took years to build
- Sharing of resources (desire to maintain individual university identities)
- Confusion
- Increase in state taxes
- **Cost of implementing the system redesign/restructuring ✓✓✓✓**
- Change is difficult
- Low employee morale already
- Overworked
- Lack of resources
- Fear of unknown
- Inability to connect staff in rural locales
- Must do more with less
- Not able to move fast enough
- Autonomy
- Relocation of employees
- Funding sources
- Research opportunities
- We won't be grand enough
- Additional administrative layers
- Presenting research
- Maintain success of current distance learning sites/partnerships (i.e., NAU-Yuma & Arizona Western College)
- Adverse changes to current employee and dependent educational benefits which allow for cross-institution attendance
- Adverse changes for employees who work at more than one campus or for those who work for combined departments (i.e., DPS at ASU West)
- Safety of the students, faculty, and staff at ASU West if DPS is no longer a part of campus life
- How the proposed departure of ASU West from ASU would affect retirement and years of service
- Employee salary issues. Current benchmarking shows that NAU's salaries are far below ASU's already below market salary range
- Disregard for the West Valley's intense growth which needs a strong, well rounded higher-education institution that includes research
- Maintaining a history of credibility and integrity for ASU-West students, staff, faculty, and the West Valley community
- Potential adverse affects to ASU West's current ranking in the state

- Potential increase to taxpayers, primarily in the West Valley, to fund a proposed new institution, since ASU West currently is interdependent upon ASU Tempe for its mainframe computer, cashiering system, parking system, library system, student registration system, etc.

Staff Stakeholder Recommendations

The Staff Stakeholder Group recognizes that the diversity of our constituents offers a vast variety of career goals and objectives by many employee groups. Whether working part-time while pursuing college degrees or employed as full-time career professionals, the Staff Stakeholder Group recommends that the final proposal for a university system redesign specifically address the need for more stable and satisfying jobs for all university employees.

This objective could be accomplished in a variety of ways. One recommendation is to utilize staff to their full potential. Many staff members have advanced degrees — often earned while working for the university with which they are employed — but their talents are not being utilized in their current positions. Encourage and support the promotion of current university employees for new positions which become available in the university system — including higher level, well paid positions. Use the staff to their full potential (while helping to curb high employee turnover) through aggressive career progression programs.

One employee category of the Staff Stakeholders Group is titled "appointed personnel." This constituency forms a significant and diverse population of employees at the University of Arizona, and much smaller populations at ASU and NAU. Appointed personnel are not faculty members, but nevertheless are highly skilled and motivated contributors to the Arizona Universities System. They currently fulfill many key positions in university administration, research science, infrastructure support, athletics and numerous other fields. The number of professional, non-faculty positions with universities is on the rise within Arizona, reflecting both national and international trends. We trust that the university system re-designers will recognize the value of appointed personnel who add to the current system and consider including them within any new university institutions identified in the proposed system redesign. Furthermore, we would like to point out that the value of this skilled and flexible labor force can be maximized by designing-in the human resource infrastructure, compensation and benefits packages that properly support this unique and talented group.

Finally, the Staff Stakeholder Group recommends that the university system re-designers give full attention to our list of "Opportunities" above. By thoroughly applying the "positive possibilities" of a system redesign, we can maximize the full potential of our university system as well as its employees.

Closing Comments

The Staff Stakeholder Group is pleased to have been invited to participate in the historic process of a university system redesign. As a vital component of our State's current and future higher education system, we value your trust in our ability to identify significant issues and useful insight as university employees.

STAFF STAKEHOLDER GROUP

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