



A REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON

Professional Development and Training



Presented by
The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council
May 2016

Approved by The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council
and sent forward to the President

Prepared by The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council
Annual committee on Professional Development and Training

Chelsea Cowley, Larayne Dallas, Lynne Levinson, Adrian Rocha,
Elizabeth Krieg, Sarah Shields, Marcy Drapes, Marie Warden,
Denise Zuniga, Stephen Walker, Ana Aguilar

Executive Summary

The Professional Development and Training Committee was created to identify, promote, and propose professional development solutions and training opportunities for all staff.

This year's committee focused on furthering long term projects that were started in the previous year, as well as bringing a few new initiatives into the fold. All projects were chosen based on the demands of the university staff at large.

Prior to our retreat in July, council members collected feedback from their respective districts, asking constituents what they would like to see Staff Council work toward this year. As in previous years, there was a high demand for more professional development opportunities and better access to those opportunities that already exist. Based on this feedback, the following projects were chosen:

- Continue development of CareerSmart grant and launch application
- Continue promotion of Lynda.com
- Host resume workshops for staff
- Host professional development fair to collate information about different opportunities and make them more accessible
- Create online resource for staff to find information on their professional development options at UT.

Building on 2014-15 Projects

CareerSmart Grant

In the 2014-15 academic year, Staff Council launched a pilot program to fund individual development grants. This program, to be administered through partnership with CareerSmart — the university's gateway to professional development — would distribute grants to participants in the *Essentials for Developmental Excellence* and *Managing Beyond the Basics* programs. This pilot will address staff needs for individual career development while leveraging CareerSmart coaching and infrastructure, thereby minimizing start-up costs and administrative overhead.

Essentials for Developmental Excellence - a highly customizable experience designed specifically to help staff define and meet professional development goals. It is a program intended for employees seeking to:

- Increase their skills and competencies
- Grow in their current job
- Prepare for the future

Staff who wish to define their own professional development plan will gain access to confidential career coaching professionals who can provide both valuable experience and structure to their plans. The CareerSmart coaches will work one-on-one with the participant to craft a plan that will achieve their goals and fit best within their individual circumstances.

Managing Beyond the Basics - provides an opportunity to assess management strengths and challenges through 360° feedback facilitated by a certified coach. After the 360° feedback process is completed, participants work on three elective options that focus on their specific personal development goals.

The application for this grant was launched at the Staff Council Professional Development Fair

in March. This grant has been a long-term project for Staff Council and we are excited to see all of the work invested come to fruition. In 2015, 54 certificate programs were completed through CareerSmart and approximately 450 individuals entered a CareerSmart program. While these numbers are certainly encouraging, we believe that reducing the financial barriers to the CareerSmart programs will show an increase in the number of certificates awarded.

Lynda.com

The campus-wide launch of Lynda.com in 2014 has given university staff unprecedented access to powerful online tools for skills development, and staff are taking advantage. In its first year, the program had 9,200 total users who watched 264,288 videos and completed 2,608 certificates. From this numeric standpoint, the program's impact has been massive, and continues growing.

In 2015, the program had 11,757 active users, 3,788 new users, who watched 283,248 videos and completed 2,739 certificates. Campus is averaging 1150 hours of viewing time each month. To put this in perspective, over 143 full 8-hour days of training are accomplished in each 30 day time period thanks to Lynda.

Our goal for the current year is to expand awareness of this free opportunity. We will promote it at our Professional Development Fair and provide information and links on our online resource page.

New initiatives

Resume Workshops

We were excited to team up with the Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling and CareerSmart in the Office of Human Resources this year to host two resume writing workshops for staff. While online tutorials on this topic are already available through Lynda.com, we determined that in-person workshops would be an enhanced way to provide this resource to staff. The response we received was overwhelmingly positive. Our first workshop had 146 attendees and the second had 65 for a total of 211 attendees. The feedback from attendees was encouraging and many expressed a strong appreciation for offering this to staff. These workshops began as a pilot program to gauge interest and, based on the feedback we received, the consensus is that these workshops were incredibly successful, required minimal resources, and should be offered again. We have therefore established a standing relationship with the Vick Center and are planning another workshop in May.

Professional Development Fair

When our committee first began work at our July retreat, we reviewed the feedback from our constituents regarding their desires for professional development related opportunities. In discussing many of these, it became apparent that the university already offers many resources to staff to further their professional careers and gain valuable skills to enhance their work. Therefore, our mission was to gather those resources into an easy to access place so that staff could be more aware of what is already available. We discussed holding a brown bag luncheon, but this quickly evolved into the idea of a fair. We would have booths manned by representatives from various groups that could share their unique forms of professional development. We worked collaboratively to reach out to any group we were aware of, and those that accepted were added to the fair's agenda. In addition, The Division of Housing and Food Services generously provided cookies for our attendees. The event was a great success, with approximately 268 attendees and 17 professional development resources represented.

Survey results after the fair revealed that a vast majority of attendees had a good or excellent experience and many expressed a strong sense of satisfaction in the range of resources represented. Our primary challenge with this event, which became apparent very early on, was that attendance far exceeded our expectations and our location was much too crowded. While we see this as a good problem to have, we now know to plan for a larger audience next time. We hope to seek out a larger room with a more robust supply of refreshments.

We also used this fair as a launching pad for the CareerSmart grant application, which has generated quite a bit of interest. To apply, staff members must first meet with a career counselor to determine if the certificate is right for them. We expect to see the first applications completed in the coming weeks and are excited to see how this pilot grant program unfolds over the course of the next year.

Professional development resources represented:

Staff Education Benefit

UTSC Professional Development Grant

Texas Executive Education

Workshops @ PCL

HR Career Smart

Center for Lifelong Engineering Education

Lynda.com

Association of Professionals in Student Affairs (APSA)

iForty (network of administrative professionals)

Hispanic Faculty/Staff Association (HFSA)

Center for Professional Excellence

Staff Ombuds

Toastmasters

Online Resource (subsite of Staff Council website)

Staff Council has put together a compilation of the resources represented at our fair, which

are now available to view on our website:

<http://staffcouncil.utexas.edu/category/professional-development-resources/>

While we feel this is a good start, we would like to continue with this project in the coming year and perhaps find a more permanent and accessible home for this valuable information. A partnership with the University of Texas Human Resources office has been suggested, and we plan to look into the possibility of this as a future project.

Relationships/Collaborations:

One of the central roles of Staff Council is to form relationships on and beyond campus, as this is what allows us to provide a vehicle for communication of interests, concerns, and issues that affect staff. As a team, our committee has worked diligently to build bridges by reaching out to new groups and to strengthen our current relationships that have served us and the university community so well. One of the more fortunate effects of hosting the Professional Development Fair is that it gave us an opportunity to discover new organizations that can meet staff needs in unique ways. Through the process of planning and marketing the fair, we continued to learn of new groups who wanted to be involved. Through meeting with these groups and discussing our goals, it became apparent that we had tapped into a vast network of talent that extended much further than we had originally imagined. Likewise, these groups became familiar with the UT Staff Council name and we were excited to see the beginnings of these new relationships form, each with its own perspective to offer to our diverse university population. Forming and maintaining strong networks is what allows Staff Council to be a central resource for university staff members. A key aspect of our mission is to educate and inform our community about the rich culture that our workplace provides and, through the creation and strengthening of our relationships, we are better positioned to serve our constituents' needs for personal and professional enrichment.

Challenges:

A survey was sent to those who attended the fair, and we inquired as to what challenges staff members face when it comes to gaining professional development. Affordability and/or lack of financial resources was the top challenge, followed closely by time constraints. Some staff members also expressed that they did not feel they had adequate support from their supervisors to pursue development options. These issues are not easy to address, but we remain committed to working with university leadership and within the university community to find solutions to enhance the quality of our workforce.

We felt that the first step to facing these challenges was to bring awareness to the community as to what options are already available. Based on attendance and feedback, we

believe our Professional Development Fair was a success in this regard. Survey results revealed that many of our attendees learned about organizations and opportunities they did not know existed before, and we are hopeful this will lead to an increase of staff members utilizing these resources.

Our Ask:

Our request is simply for a commitment to continued support in the area of professional development for staff. We have found that staff members are more likely to take advantage of available resources if they have the support of their community, both from supervisors and peers. A culture that encourages professional growth is important to increasing morale and retention, and provides staff with unique opportunities to gain skills and perspectives they may not find in their day to day work. This leads to a more robust, well rounded workforce and ensures that our students and clients continue to receive the best quality of service. It is our goal as a committee to work with university leadership to foster an environment where staff feel encouraged to pursue new opportunities and professional challenges.