

2018 December HR Partner meeting – Ideas to strengthen the HR Partner Network

The December HR Partner meeting focused on determining next steps for our professional HR Partner Network. HR staff worked collaboratively with several HR campus partners to plan a crowd sourcing activity that generated ideas in response to the following question:

If you had no limits or constraints, what bold idea do you have to strengthen our professional HR Partner network?

The ideas produced by the group were scored by our HR Partners as part of the meeting activity. A follow-up survey allowed contributions from partners who were unable to attend the December meeting. The top ideas were shared with HR Leadership for possible future action. The following report outlines all of the ideas generated by our HR Partners and highlights the top scoring ideas shared with HR Leadership.

Top scoring ideas:

- Creating/facilitating a pathway for HR partners to become HR certified; continue to offer ways to earn credits and maintain certification. Professional development beyond our own UO trainings would be nice and elevate partners to consistent certifications and create pathway for networking.
- It would be interesting to have reverse HR Partner meetings where we can learn what others around campus are doing or ways they are solving problems. They could be incorporated into current meeting times and allow for opportunity for two way communication.
- HR Partners could hire more staff in the HR Central Office so that HR issues would move more quickly and communication could flow immediately.
- Realign the website so people can find things; have an intranet where folks can share tips, questions, FAQ without having them be public outside the UO.
- Develop training and skill building program (certification) for various levels of HR practitioners. Include assessments, competencies, mentoring, coaching, leadership development, technical training, stretch assignments, job shadowing. May include partnerships with local industry HR Pros. Could be recognized for advancement opportunities. Make sure other work responsibilities are relieved so participants really get to focus on learning and practicing what they learn.
- Fund each HR Partner to attend HR Conference and share content with HR group.
- Prior to each HR Partners meeting, collect topics from HR Partners that highlight a current challenge or question. HR Leadership picks one to address at each meeting (picked based on pre-determined criteria).

- Have an online HR mentor resource-ask a question and get connected with an expert who can meet up and discuss it with you; possibly provide some training and guidance at the same time.
- Create an HR Partner library of documents, templates, best practices, etc. It would be organized by topic; Onboarding would be a great place to start.
- A comprehensive framework for career advancement for all employees. A realistic avenue for employees of all classes to advance in their field of interest. Solicit sign-ups from employees for special projects, don't just select them it excludes the majority of staff. Allow for job shadowing so an employee can explore where their talents and interests lie. A more inclusive attitude toward all employees.

All other ideas:

- One-on-one training in Mytrack.
- Add background areas of expertise to the Partner Directory. This could be a way to facilitate transfer of knowledge, i.e. if a partner had background in the private sector/industry before coming to the UO, I could ask them about developing a position description for that area.
- Mentors for specific "Help" needs. Have a go-to individual or several individuals that specialize in one or two HR processes on campus.
- Before the HR Partner meeting request HR Partners to provide particular subjects or questions to be addressed at the meeting. This would a good way to meet HR Partner needs.
- Provide more resources, templates, emails that could be forwarded directly to employees i.e. a complete email about the Employee Assistance Program with links and employee benefits.
- HR retreat or conference: include speakers, planning committee of HR partners, networking, UO specific topics, trending topics/industry topics.
- Come and eat lunch with your cross campus colleagues –free lunch the third Friday of every month open to all HR Partners. Come. Eat. Chat. Leave. Central location on campus maybe even a dining hall.
- Record the monthly meetings –for those of us in smaller departments where we wear many hats, walking across campus for one agenda item just doesn't happen. We may get the information in the end, but we miss the discussion which many times provides more than the meeting notes are able to.
- Central UO funds to bring regional HR training conferences here to campus and to fund 10-20 people (different each year) a year to go to conferences and report back.

- HR Partner directory with dept. name, contact information, and specialty in HR to help collaborate and discuss issues before having to reach out to Central HR (vet specialty).
- Very detailed step by step instructions on website for various methods of hiring: classified, temps, etc.
- Central funding for HR Partners to get their SHRM-CP or SHRM-SCP. This would allow common base understanding of HR and could strengthen the network of HR professionals on campus.
- HR training tracks with certifications.
- A suite of centrally managed and developed trainings or workshops to enhance core competencies related to each of the main HR units. These could be used to further deepen or engage HR Partners in areas which they may not be familiar.
- To know who every HR Partner is and their role. Having more time and opportunities to have casual conversations and share ideas/struggles/positive experiences would strengthen the HR environment.
- Provide travel and conference funds to send groups of non-centralized staff to outside, relevant HR training.
- Develop a substantive relationship building retreat or activity to improve relationships between university HR and HR Partners, as well as, between HR Partners.
- Make the HR Partner meetings more interactive. Give opportunity for everyone to bring ideas/concerns, in a more comfortable environment. Possibly change room arrangement so participants face each other. Do introductions a couple times a year to introduce new staff, not just HR staff. Overall more open, sharing, collaborative environment would strengthen the HR Partner Network.
- Central bulletin board for posting questions when you're not sure where to obtain the answer (so others who know can answer) or to share resources you've learned of that aren't readily or immediately available on known sites.
- Include specific HR area of responsibility on the HR Partner listing (e.g. mainly responsible for X dept. or employee relations support). This will help everyone know who to refer to for what across campus.
- More robust trainings on HR topics for new HR Partners.
- Set up a classification/career path system for partners that includes outlining levels (those that do HR infrequently up to those that are focused 100%). Provide training to help go step to step and differentiate tasks by levels. Test competencies and certify moves between levels.

- Have other HR Partners (in field) share on everyday tips, practical work that we are all engaged in regularly.
- Create a system/platform for individual HR Partners to share best practices or get advice (either from each other or from Central HR staff).
- Job Exchange: have HR partners work in each HR area for 1 or 2 days; then have HR person shadow the partner.
- Have a committee of HR Partners planning meetings each month and take turns facilitating. This allows for new ideas for topics, format, etc. and increases involvement of a variety of HR Partners.
- Elect/form “committees” each month to provide feedback on a topic. The outcome could be shared at the monthly meeting. Since money is no object it would be a sit down lunch.
 - One member from Central HR
 - One member from Payroll
 - Two members from HR Partners
 - One member from ELR
- Invite departments or units to present about themselves and how HR plays a role.
- Monthly HR breakfast or lunch HR Partner Networking meet up with activities like this one where coffee and food is provided.
 - Interactive/creative activity
 - Spend time other partners across campus
- Allow HR Partners, especially those with HR certification, more autonomy to make decisions related to situations within our own units. For example, hiring a classified employee at a higher step without having to ask Central HR.
- Smaller networks or subgroups of HR Partners who you could consult with on specific problem/issues. Like a mini HR support group who could help you troubleshoot or think through problems. Assigned groups? Self-organized?
- Job Shadowing: All HR Partners have the opportunity to job shadow their fellow HR Partners and Central HR Partners.
- Create a framework of competencies and levels for HR Partners with affinity groups for those competencies. Competencies may include: Orientation, ELR, Recruiting, Position Crafting, Compensation, Performance Management, Change Management, etc. If you have one or two competencies you would be an HR Partner 1, three-four HR Partner 2, five-six HR Partner 3 etc.

- Team building – do a ropes course and infrastructure building – upgrade computer, network, and software infrastructure on campus.
- Have HR Partners serve as supervisors or trainers for certain functions in MyTrack or other system.
- Develop a mechanism where partners can post their questions and get answers about how other partners are dealing with problems they have in their HR world.
- HR walking group to meet at a designated place and time.
- Shared knowledge data base and message board.
- More one-on-one networking, meetings that deal with one HR issue, and more connection with Payroll.
- Place a fellow HR Partner from a different department on each and every search committee.
- Create an HR Partner Institute.
- HR Partner job sharing or shadowing program.
- Support HR certification for HR Partners.
- Collaborate with different departments during the monthly meetings and highlight one or two of those department's challenges and solutions.

Ideas generated from follow-up survey:

- Quicker turnaround time & transparency for reclassifications and desk audits transparency of what HR actually does for the units on campus -- it's a mystery now more focus on the needs of classified staff -- feels like meetings focus primarily on unclassified staff higher rates in the pay steps for classified staff close the campus between Christmas & New Year's holidays with pay for all employees (except student).
- Cross training Internships in different payroll departments Co-location of departmental HR employees in the HR building for rotating stints.
- Answer the phones, cross-train HR personnel and assign backup signature authorities, provide more effective and timely processing of personnel hires initiated through MyTrack, track employees better (e.g. payroll, benefits, etc. regardless of classification).

Additional thoughts from survey:

- At end of meeting, time for partners to bring up issues; invitation for questions incorporated into each presentation.
- Rotate times in each month so that people who are not able to attend on that time can also get a chance to meet colleagues.