Northwestern University Library Organizational Culture Change Initiative

Recommendations for Northwestern University Library Organizational Culture Change Initiative

May 15, 2014

The new Northwestern University Library (NUL) culture of “Team Library” as embodied in the NUL Shared Vision Statement:

- Includes everyone.
- Is focused on the goals of the organization as a whole.
- Has a shared sense of purpose, priorities, and mission amongst staff.
- Is user focused.
- Works in a team-based and collaborative environment.
- Is flexible and responsive to change.
- Holds staff accountable.
- Ensures that staff are empowered and trust each other.
- Is aligned with University goals and policies.

In order to create this new culture, the following systems must be addressed. For each system, the ideal state is defined and action items are listed. Tools, resources, and delivery methods are included when applicable. “Immediate Actions” are designed for immediate implementation.

The Administrative Committee will establish an implementation team that will be responsible for ensuring that these recommendations are achieved. The implementation team will identify the concrete steps necessary to achieving the recommendations, prioritize the stages of implementation, develop action plans, and form subgroups as necessary. The implementation team will be responsible for updating the recommendations as conditions, options, and technologies change. The implementation team will be a small group and include representation from the Administrative Committee and the Culture Change Steering Committee.

Communication Process

Communication is open, respectful, transparent, and constructive.

- Staff speaks openly about concerns without fear of retaliation.
- Information is shared freely and appropriately.
- Staff know what is happening in the organization and have access to the information they need.

1 “Staff” is defined as all individuals across all units of the University Library.
• When confronted with rumors, we seek the truth.
• Administration, managers, committees, and other groups share information.

We will:
• Research and implement best practices for communication.
• Communicate effectively, succinctly, and timely with each other and within teams.
• Establish guidelines and employ a system for sharing and storing information.
• Keep information up to date and accessible.
• Be accountable for reading and responding to information when it is shared.
• Establish regular, open forums for staff to ask questions/dissolve rumors.
• Provide open channels of communication between all employees and departments.
• Include relevant stakeholders in discussions.

Immediate Actions:
• Respond to communication in a timely manner.
• Log into Lync/Outlook at the start of every workday.
• Take responsibility for reading and responding to information when it is shared.
• Think “Who else needs to know” – a guiding principle for the sharing of relevant information.
• Recognize the power of “hello”

Tools/Resources
• NU Behaviors
• StrengthsFinder
• Staff Intranet Working Group
• Quarterly All-Staff Meetings
• Best practices

Delivery Methods
• Peer training
• Crucial Conversations
• HRD326- Windows Outlook 2010: Email, Calendar, Tasks & OWA
• HRD328 Outlook 2010: Connecting with Collaboration Services
• HRD620 Effective Meetings
• HRD520 Writing Difficult Messages

Decision-making
Decision-making is an iterative process and feedback is on-going and timely. It is an inclusive process where all stakeholders have opportunity to participate.

• There are no flawless decisions. Although consensus is ideal, it’s not always achievable.
• Staff are free to criticize decisions constructively.
• Staff avoid negative attitudes to previous decisions.
• The organization engages in ongoing assessment of decisions and the decision-making processes.
• Empowered staff make decisions at point of contact or need with the affected programs, activities, or users.

We will:
• Value the input and ideas of staff at all levels.
• Communicate plans, progress, and achievements to all staff.
• Identify decision-makers and project goals early in the process.
• Follow through with plans, setting goals and timelines.
• Be open to adjusting plans, goals, or timelines as necessary.
• Seek input from users affected by a decision whenever needed through surveys, focus groups, and research.
• Keep future users and their changing needs in mind when making decisions.
• Create decision-making guidelines for use across the organization.

Immediate Actions:
• Recognize and celebrate project milestones.
• Share stories of successful decision making.

Tools/Resources
• StrengthsFinder
• Decision-making guidelines (AC)
• Project Management, Agile
• Shared communication platforms (Staffweb, SharePoint?)
• Staff Intranet Working Group

Delivery Methods
• Train the Trainer
• Peer Learning
• SCRUM
• Post-project review (Hot Wash)

Management and Leadership Practices
Administration leads by example, encouraging a culture of respect and open communication. Managers stand up for what they believe, holding staff and one another accountable. All staff are encouraged to take on leadership roles.

• Our managers define what should be accomplished and staff determine how to achieve those results.
• Leaders facilitate discussion and courses of action.
• The organization supports leaders throughout the organization that work towards the goals of "Team Library" rather than the goals of "Division/Department/Unit"
• Decisions and interpretation of policies are consistent across the organization.

We will:
• Be leaders.
• Focus on achievement of mission and goals.
• Involve appropriate staff in planning and decision making.
• Develop a mentoring program for staff focusing on the transfer of leadership expertise.
• Define a pathway through professional development offerings appropriate for developing effective leaders.
• Create and implement a shared set of management practices and procedures in order to create a more effective managerial environment.
• Acknowledge exemplary leadership through consistent and ongoing staff recognition.

Immediate Actions:
• Commit to professional development that focuses on leadership.
• Define leadership skills that are required of all staff.

Tools/Resources       Delivery Methods
• StrengthsFinder for Leaders
• Investigate best practices for management and leadership
• Hot Wash
• SCRUM
• Project Management courses
• NUHR "Managing Up" course
• Leadership "Retreats"
• NUHR Leadership series
• Webinars (through LLAMA, other)

Organizational Structure
The structure of our organization is designed around processes to achieve library goals. The structure is intended to encourage cooperation and collaboration.

• The structure is focused on coordination of work within a limited hierarchy.
• The structure of the organization is understood and navigated easily by staff.
• The structure of the organization encourages staff mobility and rewards flexibility, matching the skills of all staff to organizational needs.

We will:
• Adopt a “Team Library” attitude.
• Identify and adopt team-building best practices.
• Examine the current organizational structure for efficient practices.
• Consult staff to learn how our structure may be changed to improve our work.
• Research the emerging trends in organizational structure as demonstrated in other libraries and organizations.
• Practice continual assessment and remain open to ongoing structural changes.
• Implement small-scale changes immediately.

Immediate Actions:
• Solicit staff assessment on successful and unsuccessful current practices
**Tools/Resources**

- Staff
- Use outside Consultant
- Public Services Re-Org
- Technical Services Re-Org
- 80/20 innovation model

**Delivery Methods**

**Performance Management**

We have a consistent, fair, honest, and efficient evaluation process for all staff based on best practices. We provide opportunities for feedback and improvement for staff at all levels.

- Regular feedback sessions take the form of informal coaching sessions in addition to a once-a-year formal review.
- Performance management includes self-assessment and preparation of an individual learning and development plan.

**We Will:**

- Research performance management practices of organizations, including but not limited to other ARL libraries.
- Celebrate achievements and promote feelings of appreciation throughout the year.
- Address areas for improvement and development.
- Continually assess methods of workflows and project management.

**Immediate Actions:**

- Form a committee to analyze the Performance Excellence process in the Library.

**Tools/Resources**

- PESA Assessment Committee findings

**Delivery Methods**

- Performance Excellence Training (in house and NUHR)
- PESA Training

**Recognition and Rewards Program**

We value and recognize the contributions of our staff in a meaningful way.

- Recognition is provided regularly for recent contributions and performance achievements.
- Rewards and recognition are achieved through a variety of methods and approaches.

**We Will:**

- Establish a set of rewards and recognition programs that are meaningful to staff.
- Research management practices for employee engagement & recognition.
- Empower staff at all levels to recognize day-to-day efforts and achievements.
Immediate Actions:

- Recognize the power of “thank you” in person, email, and public forums.
- Report out on staff achievements in mediums such as StaffWeb or email.

Tools/Resources

- NU Employee recognition
- Best Practices with other ARL libraries
- StrengthsFinder
- [http://library.rice.edu/about/employment/staff-resources/staff-rewards-recognition/owlet-appreciation-program](http://library.rice.edu/about/employment/staff-resources/staff-rewards-recognition/owlet-appreciation-program)
- Thanks.com ([https://www.thanks.com/NU/preCart.jsp?pattern=way&conditionId=null&productId=prod22090015&_requestid=135896](https://www.thanks.com/NU/preCart.jsp?pattern=way&conditionId=null&productId=prod22090015&_requestid=135896))

Recruitment and Retention

Streamlined and transparent process that is understood by those involved. We recruit to create an environment that fosters a collegial, positive, diverse, and inclusive workplace.

- We recruit to the organization, Team Library, not just to a specific position.
- We seek to provide advancement opportunities where possible. Can a need be met by someone already within the organization?
- We recognize the importance of recruiting and hiring staff from outside the organization.
- We seek to attract and retain talent and develop potential.
- We understand that candidates will be selecting our organization even as we are selecting them.

We will:

- Implement University and Library best practices for recruitment and hiring across the organization.
- Develop and follow a recruitment plan that will result in the broadest pool possible.
- Develop the structure and goals for a mentorship program.

Immediate Actions:

- Form a committee to address concerns of recruitment and search committee processes.

Tools/Resources

- ARL Institutions best practices

Delivery Methods

- Career Development Courses from NUHR
- NUHR “Hiring Great Staff” course
**Staff Skills**
Existing personnel will be expected to retool for new duties that reflect new demands and opportunities within the library. Training will be consistent and ongoing and focused on perpetuating the new vision for the library created through the Culture Change Initiative.

**We Will**
- Review and implement Staff Skills Grid.
- Establish opportunities for staff to learn and practice skills including, and in addition to, what is outlined in the Staff Skills Grid.
- Create a comprehensive inventory of staff skills.
- Recognize ongoing professional development as a valuable use of staff time.
- Match staff with project needs based on staff interest, aptitude and willingness to learn without regard to department/division. This may be self-selected or in concert with supervisor recommendation.
- Receive training in basic reference skills, customer service skills, FAQ, basic library services and basic functions of each department and overview of University structure.
- Equip staff for mentoring and peer training.

**Immediate Actions:**
- Reframe weekly department tours as beneficial to all staff, not just new employees
- Focus departmental tours on current/recent projects – what are people doing/what is going on in addition to where everyone sits.

**Tools/Resources**
- Staff Skills grid
- ARL Internships
- Assessment Committee

**Delivery Methods**
- Department Tours
- NULSA General Meetings
- Webinars
- Conference Attendance
- SDC Workshops
- HR Courses
- NUL Meetings/Workshops hosted by other groups (RIS, ISTF, discussion groups)
- “Take your coworker to work day”
- “Internal Internship”
- Cross-training