

Human Resource Processes

NIU Leadership Forum
April 9, 2019



Northern Illinois University
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Agenda

- Charge & Process
- Context
- Survey Results
- Action Steps

Charge

Members were charged to:

- Conduct an analysis of our current HR processes and policies regarding hiring, classification and compensation, including how they are enacted and communicated
- Recommend potential improvements to those processes and policies
- Bring a “trustee mentality” to the role, respecting the different perspectives involved in human resource processes and offering analysis that best serves the mission and reflects the values of the institution.



Charge

- Focused on the hiring process for faculty, UPI instructors and staff (both SPS and Civil Service)
- Examined the entirety of the hiring process, not just the role of Human Resource Services (HRS)
- Considered hiring from the point of view of hiring officials in the divisions (e.g. hiring managers, chairs & directors, business managers, division leads) and HR professionals in Affirmative Action and Human Resource Services

Task Force Members

Laura Alexander

Senior Associate Vice President for Human Resource Services

Celeste Latham

Associate Vice President, Administration and Human Resource Services

Dara Little

Assistant Vice President, Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships

Jennice O'Brien

Senior Director, Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing & Communications

William Pitney

Associate Dean of Research, Resources & Innovation, College of Education

Pulchratia Smith

Director, Employee Services, Human Resource Services

Roslyn Snell

Executive Director, Academic Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Michael Stang

Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs

Mary Strub

Assistant Director, Center for Governmental Studies

Kurt Thurmaier

Chair, Department of Public Administration

Process

The working group went through the following steps:

- Identifying the various personnel processes used by the university, and the distinctive employee populations
- Focused on hiring of faculty, staff and instructors
- Mapped the steps involved in those hiring processes
- Constructed, distributed and analyzed a survey of participants in the hiring process.
- Developed recommendations

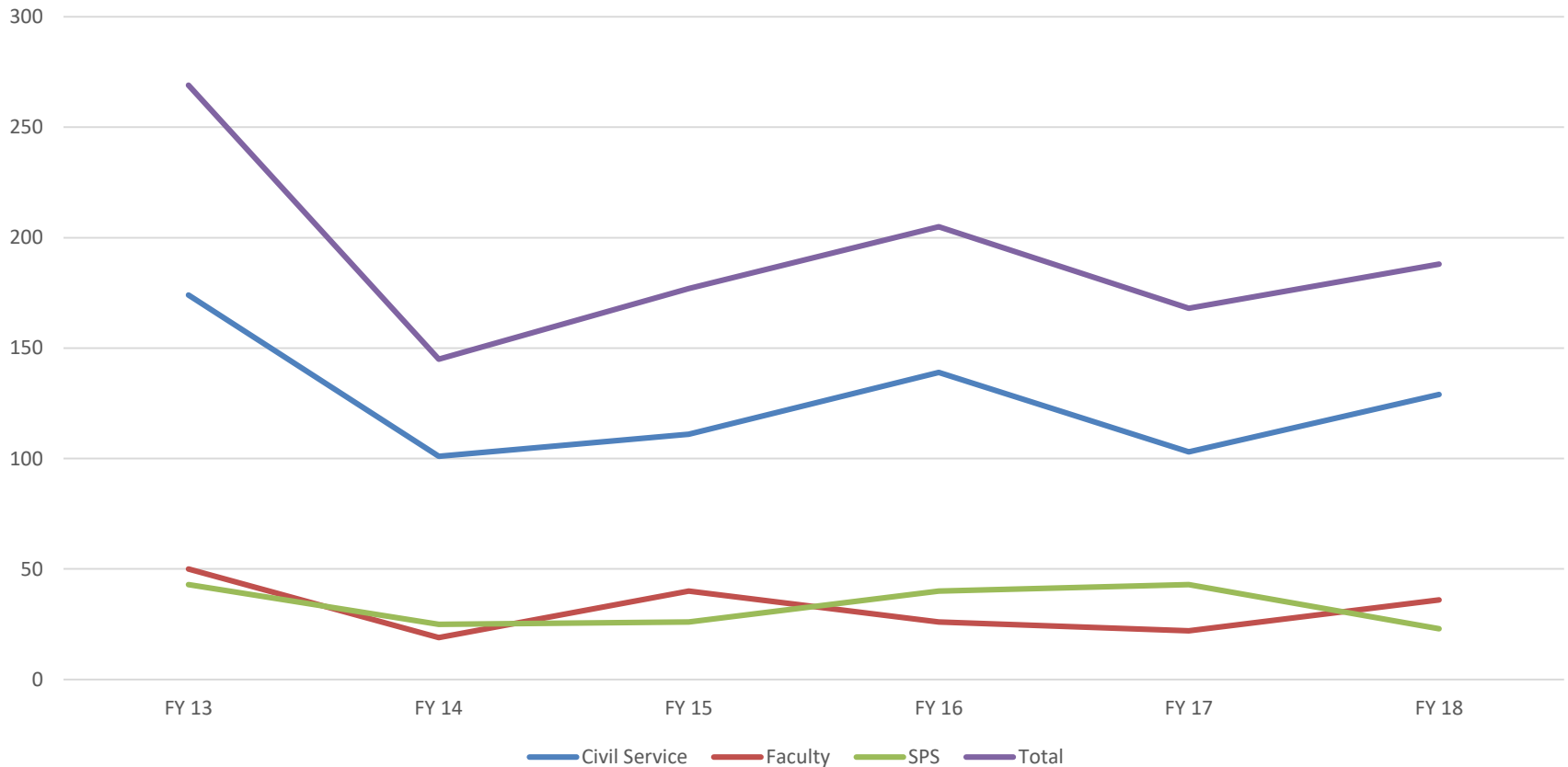
Context: A Dynamic Environment

Events at the local, state and federal level in the past four years have destabilized NIU's hiring environment:

- Departures in HR-related staff have meant
 - Fewer and newer people available to process hiring
 - Informal networks have been disrupted
- Process changes such as Applicant Tracking have required adaption
- New AFSCME contract, new state requirements have caused increased volume of HR-related activities
- Budget constraints and changes in state & federal requirements have narrowed our options

Context: Hiring Trends

Hiring Trends: Regular Employees



Context: HR Staffing at Illinois Public Universities

University	Total Univ. Staff	# of HRS Class/ Comp Staff	Average # of positions assigned
NIU	2197	4.6	478
CSU	371	1	371
ISU	2181	7.5	291
NEIU	726	2.5	290
EIU	668	2.5	267
GSU	381	1.5	254
WIU	940	4	235
State Ave.	1066	3.4	316



Survey

- Distributed to hiring officials, Affirmative Action, HRS
- Segmented the hiring process into 3 employee groups & 5 phases, which were broken down into individual steps
- Survey questions included:
 - Perceived difficulty associated with each step
 - Perceived timeliness of managing each step
 - Perceived clarity, consistency and responsiveness of offices in providing information
 - Open-ended comments
- Received approximately 250 responses out of 500 surveys

Hiring Process

Stages in the Hiring Process

- **Search Authorization:**
from initial request to authorization to advertise
- **Search:**
from advertising to identifying interview candidates
- **Final Interview:**
from scheduling interviews to candidate selection
- **Negotiations/Offer:**
from candidate selection to offer acceptance
- **Onboarding:**
from offer acceptance to start of employment

Survey Results: Perceived Difficulty

Strongest sense of difficulty centered on:

- The Search Authorization phase for staff
- The Negotiations/Offer phase for staff
- The Search Authorization phase for faculty
- The Onboarding phase for instructors

Survey Results: Greatest Difficulty

Specific steps that generated the strongest sense of difficulty were:

Staff	
Identifying classification	87%
Identifying salary range	79%
Negotiating start up package	73%
Negotiating salary with candidate	71%
Faculty	
Negotiating spouse/partner opportunities	74%
Obtaining permission to search	70%
Identifying salary range	68%

Survey Results: Perceived Timeliness

Strong alignment between the steps that were seen as difficult and the steps that were seen as slow.

Aspects of the concerns about timeliness:

- Time spent waiting in the approval process for action
- Time spent being bounced back and forth because of technical issues (incorrect information, job descriptions not conforming to expectations, etc.)
- Time spent being bounced back and forth because of disagreement/debate/dissatisfaction/dismay about outcomes

Survey Results: Perceived Clarity, Consistency, Helpfulness

- Respondents had the greatest concerns about clarity of information
- Highest levels of concerns about clarity and consistency were expressed at the college/division levels
- Respondents were generally positive about the helpfulness of the units that they interacted with
 - All units received more positive comments than negative
 - College offices and “informal networks” received the most consistent praise

Survey Results: Comment Analysis

Approval Process

- Time required for initial authorization and for extending offers to candidates
- Amount of “back and forth” in the approval processes

Staff Salaries

- Advance notice to candidates of salary range
- Participation of department in salary discussion
- Low salaries

Onboarding

- Quicker access to IT resources
- People want to see orientation spread over a longer period and with more depth

Summary

Strategic Challenges

- Balance of responsibility, authority and involvement in classification and compensation issues
- Balance of compliance and university mission in respecting external constraints
- Balance of HR salary expectations against fiscal realities
- Building trust & respect

Tactical Opportunities

- Timeliness of processing, decisions and approvals, particularly for classification and compensation
- Ease of execution for operational processes: e.g., advertising, reimbursements, filing forms, onboarding, and securing furniture

Guiding Principles for Moving Forward

- Processes will be built on trust & respect
- Position authorizations will balance mission and fiscal responsibility
- Classification decisions will be strategic and thoughtful within the framework of applicable state & federal law
- Salary decisions will balance internal equity, market demand and fiscal responsibility
- We will minimize operational friction, taking reasonable cognizance of resource commitments and institutional risk tolerance
- We will work within policy (both internal & external) as we seek to improve it

Action Steps

- **Tools for Classification & Compensation**

- Job Families
- Custom Classifications
- Specialty Factors
- Salary Benchmarking

- **Communication & Training**

- **Process Improvement**

- Posting & Advertising Positions
- Applicant Tracking
- Onboarding

- **Policy Refinements**

- **Assessment**

Action Steps: Custom Classifications

Broad classifications, which we have the authority to customize:

- We can add qualifications to individual positions, beyond those specified by SUCSS
- We can create *job families* that provide professional advancement opportunities without requiring an individual to change positions
- We can differentiate salary based on job descriptions

We have been working with the SUCSS office to convey your interests and refine implementation

Custom Classifications

Classification	ACAD	ADMIN FIN	DoIT	ATHL	EMMC	OERD	RIPS	STAF	UNIV ADV	TOTAL
Accounting Associate		8								8
Business/Admin. Assoc	11	6	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	28
Grants & Contracts Associate							11			11
Human Resource Associate	3									3
IT Manager/ Admin. Coordinator	1		6			1				8
IT Technical Associate	12	4	56		6	6	1	2	2	89
Program Adviser	39			2	1	1				43
Program Assistant	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	7
Program Coordinator	25	0	0	0	0	7	3	3	2	40
Program Director	3	1	0	0	1	2	0	3	0	10
Total	96	19	63	4	10	21	16	12	6	247



Action Steps: Communications & Training

Ongoing Communications

- Build a communications network that reaches all hiring officials
- Form user group(s) of hiring officials
- Create a user-friendly website for HR processes
- Create a listserv for hiring officials, HRS staff, ...

Training

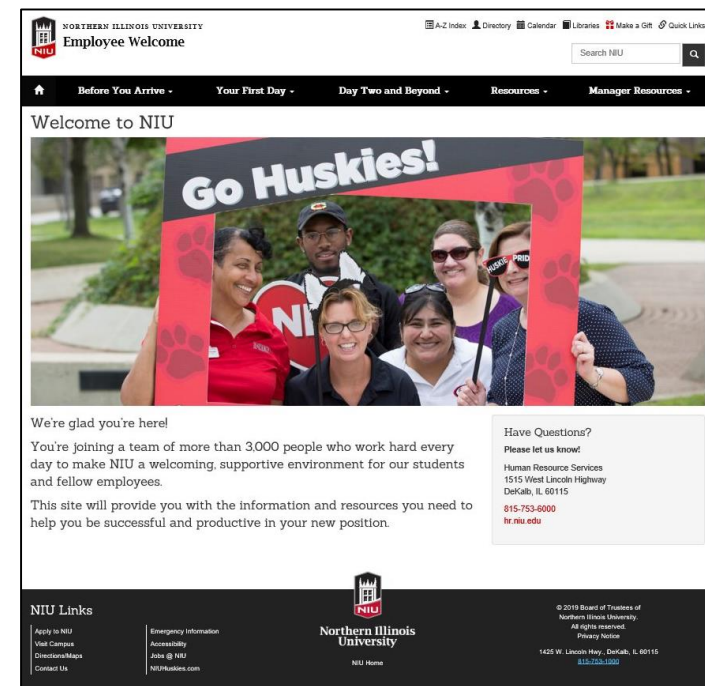
- Provide onboarding of hiring officials
- Provide annual training cycle to provide updates
- Provide improved job aids for key steps such as constructing job descriptions or providing salary comparisons



Action Steps: Process Improvement

Employee Onboarding

- Incorporate SEM goal of “becoming brand advocates” into the onboarding process
- New online process and site www.niu.edu/employee-welcome/
 - Online portal to replace multiple paper forms
 - Ongoing messaging and engagement across first six months of employment
- Streamlined IT access
- RFP for online I-9 processing



Next Steps

- Form focus groups to obtain additional feedback on:
 - Authorizing Faculty Positions
 - Spouse/Partner Opportunities
 - Startup Packages
 - Special Hires: Grants; International; Extra Help; Research & Clinical Faculty
- Form ongoing user groups
- Disseminate detailed information on all Action Steps
- Examine staffing implications
- Continue exploration of other human resource processes



Closing

For hiring processes (and all HR processes), we will continue to:

- Improve collaboration
- Add clarity
- Increase and improve communications
- Make the processes easier to navigate

Discussion