



Kent State University Employee Engagement *The Division of Human Resources*

The Division for Human Resources has long-provided opportunities for university employees to be recognized, developed and retained as part of an engagement strategy. Recently, the division has had the privilege of garnering feedback from the university's employees and has continued to enhance its approach to engagement of those employees. The division continues to adhere to three pillars of its engagement strategy: engagement of university employees; engagement of the university's customers by its university employees; and engagement by our university employees upon their community.

It is believed that engagement goes far beyond simply "rewards". Rather, it is a robust approach of positive, meaningful interaction in all aspects of university operations. The ways in which employees engage students; the manner in which the university engages, develops and retains its employees; the method of management and supervision of staff by its leadership; and the opportunities created for university employees to be involved in their community and university-sponsored functions; all play a contributing role in defining the engagement strategy by the Division for Human Resources at Kent State University.

Definition:

Employee Engagement is defined as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in Kent State University. It can be characterized by at least three related factors:

- (1) A strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values;
- (2) A willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and
- (3) A strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

When defined in this fashion, employee engagement represents something beyond mere passive loyalty to the university. It involves an active relationship with the university such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves in order to contribute to Kent State University's well being.

(As adapted from *The Measurement of Organizational Commitment* - Porter & Smith, Note 4).

Correlation with University Strategic Plan:

- I. Ensuring Student Success
- IV. Engaging with the World beyond our campuses
- VI. Developing and recognizing our people

Methodology:

The Division of Human Resources (“HR” or “The Division”) utilized two data points for its strategic approach towards employee engagement:

- (1) Survey: *“An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Division for Human Resources at Kent State University”* - (2010)
- (2) Strategic Action Plan: *“Division for Human Resources Summary Response Action Plan to HR Assessment”* - (2010-2011)
- (3) Design Charrettes: *“Wellness Strategic Plan and Campus Well Being”* - (2012)

A Human Resources Assessment was conducted in response to examine overall efficiency and effectiveness and to identify opportunities for improvement. Due to the complexity of human resources and the critical strategic role it plays in the attainment of the university’s mission, the Division sought a comprehensive formal assessment which included input from as many stakeholders as possible both from within the university and externally. The Assessment identified current strengths and to address strategic opportunities for improvement within the context of the University’s overall mission. Stakeholder participation was inclusive of approximately 950 faculty and staff members who provided survey responses as well as comments submitted by over 275 faculty and staff members as part of the process.

The division also organized the collaboration of diverse stakeholders and experts into a structured creative process that developed scenarios in response to a design challenge. In this case, the design challenge assisted in developing a comprehensive strategic plan for wellness for Kent State University. The stakeholders and sources of expertise related to health and well being on campus are many, and while we all share interests in moving towards these goals, the responsibilities are very diffuse.

The result of both the strategic assessments and surveys was a method for organizing the division’s efforts towards meaningful institutional engagement of university employees. Although each tool had broader institutional categories and outcomes, the following areas were extracted and used by the division as a basis for its engagement approach as deemed important by university employees:

- (1) Total Rewards and Recognition
- (2) Multicultural Outreach

- (3) Cross Divisional Programs and Awareness
- (4) Career and Competency Development
- (5) Employee Communication
- (6) Employee Well Being and Quality of Life Opportunities

Current Activity:

Strategic Engagement Initiatives:	(I). Employer of Choice: Strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values	(II). Institutional Involvement: A willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization	III. Employee Loyalty: A strong desire to maintain membership in the organization
Total Rewards/ Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 Year Club • Presidents Excellence Award • Veterans Recognition • Office Support Staff Recognition • Milestone Award for Unclassified Staff • Service Award for Classified • Employee Discounts • Wellness Clinics • Compensation / Benefits Total Compensation • Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Compensation • Open Enrollment Wellness Fair • EAP • College of the Arts- BOGO Free
Multicultural Outreach		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LNC membership by HR staff • PAFSA membership by HR staff • United Way participation by HR staff • UDAC membership by HR staff • Collaboration of HR and D.E.I • King Kennedy Center involvement • NAACP involvement • El Barrio involvement • Esperanza involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmative Action programming • Talent • Employee Relations services
Cross Divisional Programs and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Hire Orientation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student employment opportunities in HR • Internship opportunities in HR • Volunteer staff and/or student mentorship opportunities • HR Forum

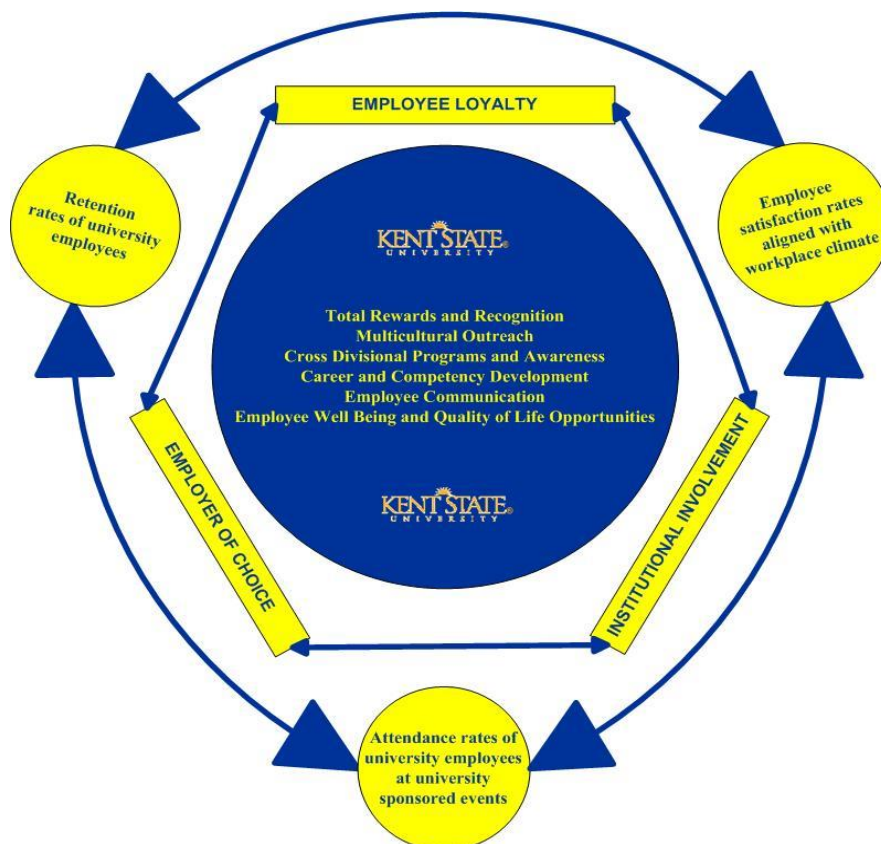
Career and Competency Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute for Excellence • HR Training • Lunch and Learn • Training Opportunities (Webinars/Facilitator) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute for Excellence • Career coaching • Career Advancement Services • Performance Evaluations • Training Opportunities (Webinars/Facilitator) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Evaluations
Employee Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Human Resources Knowledge Sharing • Compensation Calculator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Human Resources Knowledge Sharing 	
Employee Well Being and Quality of Life Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Wellness Programs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Wellness Programs

Metrics:

Initial measurement of engagement success has been calculated in the following ways:

- (1) Retention rates of university employees
- (2) Attendance rates of university employees at university sponsored events
- (3) Employee satisfaction rates aligned with workplace climate

Human Resource Divisional Engagement Model



Personal Well-Being – more than 60% indicated interest in relaxation and yoga classes; more than 50% indicated interest in meditation and financial management classes; more than 49% indicated interest in time management classes; more than 30% indicated interest in having a meditation room for employee use and a sleep management program; and over 20% indicated interest in parenting or grand parenting classes. The fact that less than a third of respondents indicated interest in a sleep management program, when earlier questions revealed that average hours of sleep falls below the recommended 7-8 hours and employees reported being rested for less than two thirds of the days in a month, indicates that employees don't fully recognize the important role that sleep plays in creating and maintaining health.

Objective PW 1: Create a work culture (policies, procedures, training, etc.) supportive of employees taking care of their whole self. Remove policy barriers to providing best resources.		
	Recommendation	Action
PW 1.1	Evaluate opportunities to provide employees with schedule flexibility to accommodate participation in health and wellness programs and services. FI, FO, HM, PW, SW, BNE, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with collective bargaining units and human resources to assess opportunities to create a more flexible workplace.
PW 1.2	Create spaces employees can use for stress-relief during the work day (meditation rooms, yoga space, etc.). PWL, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with Office of the University Architect.
PW 1.3	Improve consistency in shift scheduling to encourage maintenance of healthy sleep patterns. PW, HM, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with collective bargaining units and human resources to reduce changes to individuals schedules to once a year, or every five years, etc.
PW 1.4	Offer a variety of “self-improvement” trainings as an employee development opportunity. PW, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with training and development to create these types of opportunities.
PW 1.5	Improve convenience of health and wellness offering locations (i.e., bring flu shot clinics to each department). FI, FO, HM, PW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify programs and locations for distributed delivery.
Objective PW 2: Provide programming resources and education opportunities for employees.		
	Recommendation	Action
PW 2.1	Increase the variety of wellness program and service offerings to include more holistic offerings. PW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an array of offerings: stress management, meditation, yoga, etc. Provide workshops/information, etc. that address sleep issues. Offer classes in financial management.

Quality of Work Life – The most highly endorsed interests address flexibility, both with respect to participating in wellness options during the workday and having a flexible work schedule; more than 70% endorsed the importance of addressing positive/supportive styles of management and supervision; more than 60% endorsed the importance of clear work goals and employee empowerment; and more than 50% endorsed creating bully-free work zones.

Objective QWL 1: Provide opportunities within the work setting for employees to feel supported and connected.		
	Recommendation	Action
QWL 1.1	Increase employee awareness of IMPACT (Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offerings and support services provided. PW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a communications and marketing plan to re-launch KSU's IMPACT EAP service.

QWL 1.2	Develop a "small city" system, within Kent State University to reduce stress/burdens (child-care, dry-cleaning, banking, etc.). PW, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey employees for the types of lifestyle services they feel would be helpful to have available on campus.
QWL 1.3	Integrate health and wellness support into the KSU mobile application. FI, FO, HM, PW, SW, BNE, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design support to feel like a concierge experience OnStar('On Star' for real life).
Objective QWL 2: Improve training opportunities and mandate specific requirements for managers and leadership to create a positive working environment.		
	Recommendation	Action
QWL 2.1	Create a positive work culture. QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide positive leadership training for all employees. Include positive leadership assessment in performance appraisal.
QWL 2.2	Develop and implement a mandatory supervisor training series for front line supervisors and all management levels, fundamentals of supervision (1st year) and a management series (2nd year). QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop several cohorts (same individuals go through several classes together). Accomplishment: pin for completion, with university wide recognition.
Objective QWL 3: Provide training opportunities and mandate specific requirements for non-supervisory employees to create a positive working environment.		
QWL 3.1	Reduce or eliminate counterproductive workplace behavior. QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a mandatory face to face bullying and interpersonal skills training for non-supervisory employees.
QWL 3.2	Offer a variety of professional development options. QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training and mentoring in management skills.
Objective QWL 4: Assess and implement a plan for recognizing, training, and motivating employees to increase employee engagement and job satisfaction.		
	Recommendation	Action
QWL 4.1	Evaluate the merit increase structure to ensure recognition for performance is being achieved. QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase compensation and improve merit increase structure/allocation to truly recognize the best employees.
QWL 4.2	Develop and implement a formal program (university wide) on how to recognize employees in non-monetary ways (i.e. verbal recognition at department level). QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take the KSU fold over pins and put "great job" (you are #1) etc. and give to employees. Monthly employee of the month per department then can be noted in e-Inside. HR needs to lead the charge "what are the options now." Levels-bosses must pass on the recognition and directors must tell managers/supervisors about recognition received; culture shift with consequences; feedback from performance evaluations. Increase accomplishment recognition. Provide recognition with limited costs.
Objective QWL 5: Create a flexible and positive physical and culture work environment necessary for employees to be satisfied with their job and engage in wellness activities.		
	Recommendation	Action
QWL 5.1	Evaluate feasible ways to create a flexible and consistent work environment for employees at all KSU locations. PW, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase schedule flexibility. Provide flexibility and workplace social norms to lighten up the work atmosphere: play music, celebrate birthdays, etc.

Social Well-Being – as noted earlier, employees perceive a limited role for the university’s role in facilitating their social well-being. Yet 63% of respondents are interested in having the University publish a directory of groups and associations to join, which they could use on their own to connect to others with shared interests; and 49% indicated interest in making recreation leagues available to employees.

Objective SW 1: Include health and wellness goals in management performance metrics.		
	Recommendation	Action
SW 1.1	Develop a culture of teamwork and trust. PW, SW, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer educational programs that build groups - trust, team-building, etc.
SW 1.2	Provide mentors/coaches/facilitators among groups. SW, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a directory of groups and associations for a variety of wellness activities and hobbies.
SW 1.3	Support employee efforts to engage in fitness and recreation activities together. SW, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and support employee recreation leagues for a variety of sports. • Publish a directory of employee hobbies, sports, and recreational activities.
SW 1.4	Create a variety of social activities: social mixers within the workplace, clubs, & activities outside of work. SW, QWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of time to do things outside of work, so having social events/connect time during work is ideal; but requires that workload accommodate the time! • Include families in social activities
Objective SW 2: Provide ongoing training for supervisors on their roles in supporting a culture of wellness.		
Objective SW 3: Hold monthly/quarterly social events to include community and families (esplanade walk, night run, play day, etc.).		