

## CHAPTER 9

### STAFF

#### INTRODUCTION

The University of Kentucky employs over nine thousand individuals in the University System to carry out its teaching, research, and service mission. For each faculty member, there are approximately five non-faculty employees; a reflection of the extent to which the University has become dependent on the quality and availability of non-faculty employees in the professional, clerical, technical and service areas. The technological and logistical lines of support have become a deciding factor in the University's ability to carry out its mission. In decades past, relatively unsophisticated measures were used to assess the effectiveness of institutional stewardship for the non-faculty personnel employed by institutions of higher education. Relying on parameters influenced by the number and credentials of its faculty, past self-studies tended to address this large, though hidden, infrastructure of salaried and hourly employees as a peripheral matter in the self-examination and review process of institutional accreditation. Typically, library personnel were dealt with as a subset of the library operation, and laboratory personnel as subsets of various science departments. Collectively, however, the complexities of the issues affecting employment at the University transcend individual buildings, and departments; indeed, the University recognizes in this investigation that it has a major management function to conduct with its human resource operations.

For the University of Kentucky, as with most other major state universities, the need for people with increasingly specialized skills, higher managerial competencies, and commitment to new levels of excellence is and will continue to be an overriding management concern. In some areas of the University, the need will not be for more human resources or even significantly greater numbers of differing skills and talents, but for the ability of the institution to ensure that its long term employees are those who have been developed — not simply those who were unable to get a better job elsewhere. This dimension of stewardship has become magnified rather than diminished. At the same time, the functions of human resource management and stewardship have been rapidly expanding, partly in response to regulatory requirements affecting the University as an employer. These growing responsibilities include equal employment opportunity programs, health and safety efforts, more complex and variable benefits programs, specialized training and development, and a range of career management and planning programs that have not been considered essential in simpler times, when most managers were generalists, and the word "staff" meant secretaries.

Some institutions attract excellence. By virtue of what they do and how they operate, they attract the most dedicated professionals, the most innovative and aggressive managers, the brightest and most career-minded employees. This Report shares insights about the effectiveness of the University's stewardship and proposes recommendations to enhance the institution's reputation, both within and without, for the quality of its employees and services. Collectively, they represent but another step in the continuing progression of efforts to make the University a model of stewardship.

While not required by the *Criteria*, the Steering Committee felt a careful assessment of issues regarding support staff would be timely. A Committee on University Staff was established

and charged to: review (1) the extent to which the University provides an adequate institutional and academic support staff for assistance in carrying out the institution's mission in teaching, research and service and (2) the stewardship of these human resources including the extent to which institutional policy and practice maximize effectiveness.

The term "University stewardship" in regard to human resources seems to imply more than just the effective and efficient management of the Commonwealth's facilities, finances and human resources. This term connotes strong elements of concern about providing for the comfort and safety of employees, developing individual abilities and opportunities, promoting diligence and loyalty, and ensuring fairness and equity throughout the organization. Several initiatives have been undertaken over the last few years which highlight the growing awareness of the University's stewardship role. This role not only serves the employees but also benefits the institution in its efforts to attract and retain employees in a highly competitive environment. This Committee reviewed salient features of the ad hoc efforts already reported, and investigated other related aspects of the University's organizational structure, policies, and procedures identified as possible shortcomings in the ability of the organization to attract, develop and retain qualified personnel. Overall, the Committee's work focused on the University's organizational and human resource functions. Operating as a committee-of-the-whole, it conducted an intense review process over a five-month period. Formal discussions were held with selected campus administrators and opinion leaders.

The Committee's interviews and findings were shaped by input received from two open forums for University staff at which many issues and concerns were raised. Numerous letters, notes and phone messages were received with recommendations, complaints, and suggestions for investigation. Further, the content of several recently released reports provided valuable information, particularly those providing an in-depth analysis of the status of women and minorities. Since several themes emerged as uniquely sensitive issues to UK employees, an attempt to capture more complete data of employees' perceptions led to the design of questions to be included in the Self-Study Survey.

To carry out its work, the Committee was composed of faculty and staff members having had some direct exposure to one or more of the various themes to be addressed. This Report is divided into seven major sections. It begins with a general description of the characteristics and qualities of the University staff. The Working Environment at UK provides a general overview of several dimensions of the work environment which impact on employee satisfaction with their employment at the University. This section provides a backdrop to other issues that have received frequent analysis and debate in recent reports and forums, and were further explored in the staff survey. Subsequent sections specifically address Personnel Policies and Procedures; Employee Performance Appraisal, Training, Development, and Advancement; Staff Benefits; and Enhancing Communication. This latter section attempts to consolidate and address a number of communication issues which became a recurring theme throughout the Committee's investigation. Within each section the Committee's major findings are discussed followed by a series of pertinent recommendations intended to provide general identification and direction to subsequent studies and initiatives. A final section, Guidelines for Implementation, offers broad suggestions for enhancing the positive aspects of University stewardship, and for reducing impediments to effective stewardship in the years to come.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY STAFF

The University has increased its non-faculty staff by nineteen percent over the past decade. Large increases have occurred in the "Professional Non-faculty" (36 percent) and in the "Technical Paraprofessional" (45 percent) categories. The only employment category experiencing a decrease in numbers is "Executive Administrative/Managerial," which declined by nearly six percent. In looking beyond the aggregate numbers, one can note that the percentage of females increased from 60 to 63 percent over the past ten years, however the percentage of minorities decreased from 16.4 to 15.9 percent. Other features of the comparative growth of the University staff since 1981 is reflected in Table 9-1.

Table 9-1

Staffing Numbers by EEO Category - 1981 & 1991								
Category	Year	MINORITIES		WHITE		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Exec. Admin./ Managerial	1981	2	16	66	309	68	325	393
	1991	4	11	100	255	104	266	370
Professional/ Non-Faculty	1981	34	26	1,116	678	1,150	704	1,854
	1991	71	46	1,586	849	1,657	895	2,552
Secretarial/ Clerical	1981	162	14	1,627	60	1,789	74	1,863
	1991	216	10	1,716	104	1,932	114	2,046
Technical/ Paraprof.	1981	81	33	299	288	380	321	701
	1991	115	43	514	343	629	386	1,015
Skilled/ Craft	1981	0	32	2	192	2	224	226
	1991	1	36	6	244	7	280	287
Service/ Maintenance	1981	276	399	298	547	574	946	1,520
	1991	301	386	304	530	605	916	1,521
TOTAL	1981	555	520	3,408	2,074	3,963	2,594	6,557
TOTAL	1991	708	532	4,226	2,325	4,934	2,857	7,791

The overall staff increases appear to have kept pace with the University's needs for qualified personnel. Difficulties have been reported at times, however, in recruiting for selected job categories, particularly secretarial/clerical and health care personnel. Also, there seems to be a general lack of timeliness in Human Resource Services to expedite manpower recruitment. Generally, however, the University is able to attract adequate institutional and academic support staff to carry out its teaching, research and service functions.

Information generated by those responding to the staff survey give some insight to some of the qualitative features of the current staff. Approximately 70 percent of both the hourly and salaried staff have been employees of the University for five or more years. A comparable percentage predict they are likely to remain at UK for six years or longer. From these data it seems that a reasonably stable work force has been achieved.

The educational levels reported by hourly employees indicate only 2 percent have less than a high school diploma, while 22 percent have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Another 40 percent have earned an Associate degree or some other certificate of specialization. The salaried staff report 42 percent are holding a bachelors degree and another 40 percent are holding a masters degree or higher. Again, a variety of specialized certificates and training experiences are well represented in the educational profile of the salaried staff. Educational endeavors continue to be evident in that 40 percent of the respondents in both groups indicate they have taken courses for credit within the past three years. About half of those taking classes are directing their efforts toward completion of a degree program.

While these qualitative indicators reflect the recruitment and retention of a reasonably well educated and experienced work force, many additional parameters are unknown and require further investigation. Trends such as the general aging of the work force, motivations and expectations associated with higher educational attainment, and issues related to the gender and minority composition of the University staff warrant detailed analyses. With the implementation of the Human Resource System to collect pertinent data about the University staff and other investigative procedures, the University should be able to gain a better understanding of the composition and features of its work force. This would seem to be an important imperative if the University seeks to learn how best to be an effective steward of this resource in the coming decade.

## **THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT AT UK**

The University experienced some rather financially lean years during the 1980's. Much of the decade was characterized by budget freezes, minimal salary increases, operating budgets that failed to keep up with inflation, and a work force in many University support operations that tried to conduct business as usual although severely understaffed. Given that salary compensation is but one variable in the overall formula of employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction, an attempt was made to assess to what extent other factors in the University working environment serve as a positive influence on employees' motivation and decision to work at UK. To this end, Sections B and C of the Self-Study Staff Surveys were designed to assess employee perceptions about aspects of their work environment. The following discussion is largely based on the analysis of the employee survey results.

### **Issues Identified**

Generally, employees expressed very positive feelings about the University and their jobs. There is some difficulty interpreting the data since there are no comparative norms; however, it seems reasonable to assume that when 75 percent or more of the respondents indicated satisfaction on a particular dimension that this constituted a majority of sufficient size to label a favorable disposition. It is recognized, however, when 25 percent of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction that it reflected the dissatisfaction of nearly a thousand employees and, if the

Survey results are generalizable to all hourly, professional and administrative employees, that it reflects the dissatisfaction of nearly two thousand employees. Dissatisfaction occurring in numbers of this size undoubtedly affects the University's operations and emerges as a concern to be addressed by managers at all levels. It becomes apparent that one of the great values of the Staff Surveys has been to establish a baseline against which the University can assess itself in the future.

### Employees' Perceptions of Their Environment

The extent to which employment at the University and the concomitant activities within its milieu contribute to job satisfaction are presented in Table 9-2.

Table 9-2

	Percentage Agreeing	
	Hourly Staff	Admin/Prof.
Paid Holidays between Christmas and the New Year	95	93
Central Kentucky as a place to live	88	88
Educational, cultural and athletic opportunities	87	86
Compatibility with my family situation	77	75
Safety and attractiveness of the UK environment	70	66
Involvement in activities in and around UK setting	57	65
Enhancement of my social status	45	48

Combined percentage of responses indicating "strongly agree" and "agree" for Hourly (N=1855) and Administrative/Professional (N=1517) Staff groups.

The University as a place of employment and its location within Central Kentucky are considered to be positive factors in the overall satisfaction of both professional and administrative staff and hourly staff. Additionally, the cultural, athletic and educational opportunities extended by the University were viewed favorably by most employees. The work scheduling and holidays were perceived satisfactorily and as being largely compatible with employees' family situations. These dimensions have a slightly more positive effect on the hourly employees than the professional staff. Interestingly, the assumption that employment at UK would hold a certain amount of prestige or status was not substantiated. Employees in both groups tended not to perceive their employment at UK as enhancing their social status within the community.

Reactions to factors affecting job satisfaction within the work environment have many positive aspects as shown in Table 3. Generally, respondents rated favorably the people they work with, their relationship with their supervisor, and the general working conditions. On this latter point, however, two elements emerged as possible deterrents to their job satisfaction: (1) the adequacy of space and, (2) the adequacy of staff to carry out the functions of their units.

Table 9-3

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**Dimensions of Job Satisfaction and the Work Environment**


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	Percentage Agreeing	
	Hourly Staff	Admin/Prof.
I receive respectful treatment by the UK community	81	86
I am satisfied with the people I work with at UK	77	88
My relationship with my supervisor is satisfactory	82	78
I am satisfied with working conditions in my unit	75	80
My unit has adequate staff to carry out its function	52	45
My unit has adequate space to carry out its function	46	44
Opportunities exist for promotion and advancement	43	37
Opportunities exist to transfer to professional positions	24	23

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Combined percentage of responses indicating "strongly agree" and "agree" for Hourly (N=1855) and Administrative/Professional (N=1517) Staff groups.

Another dimension, reflected in Table 9-3, which failed to be perceived in a positive way is the opportunity for advancement. In fact, the majority of respondents rated this dimension "somewhat" or "very negative." Further, hourly staff see little opportunity to transfer into non-faculty professional staff positions. Insights about these negative perceptions were revealed in anecdotal feedback indicating a sense of frustration, that regardless of the years of experience, amount of work, and breadth of responsibilities, opportunities for individuals to advance or to be reclassified as professional staff are extremely limited. Additionally, having expectations for advancement may not be an unreasonable expectation since almost one-fourth (22+percent) of the hourly employees hold a bachelors degree or higher. This frustration seems to be particularly acute in units which have limited staff to carry out their responsibilities, resulting in the existing staff members taking on additional responsibilities without what they perceive as adequate recognition.

Although employees generally sense that they are treated with dignity and respect (hourly staff less so than the professional and administrative) several hundred respondents were moved to add a variety of written comments making reference to the lack of recognition for their work, and expressing the perception that they were treated as a "second class citizen" (by faculty and administration). This "second class citizenship" theme was also voiced in the two open forums as well as in other verbal and written comments to the Committee. This perception relates to a finding reported earlier in which many non-faculty employees lack a sense of status within the greater community; indeed, this appears to be true as well for the University community.

#### **Employees' Perceptions of Their Work**

There is agreement between the responses of hourly staff and the professional and administrative staff on several important dimensions which assess perceptions about the work that is done. These perceptions are reflected in Table 9-4.

Table 9-4

**Employees' Perceptions about Their Work**

	Percentage Agreeing	
	Hourly Staff	Admin/Prof.
I am interested in my work	85	95
My work is important to others	86	87
My work provides a sense of accomplishment	81	88
My skills and Knowledge are used well	78	85
There is a degree of challenge in my work	73	88
My experience will be helpful in the future	71	82
My work contributes to society's improvement	68	84
I feel positive about the salary I receive for my work	44	61
My work has minimal work-related conflict and stress	48	39

**Combined percentage of responses indicating "strongly agree" and "agree" for Hourly (N=1855) and Administrative/Professional (N=1517) Staff groups.**

Employees indicate their skills are appropriately used, their work is challenging, and they indicate the belief that their work experience at the University will help them in the future. This is particularly true for professional and administrative staff who indicate more strongly their intentions to remain at the University. Further, employees are interested in what they do, perceive their work to be both important and a contribution to the improvement of society. For a great many employees, their work provides them with a sense of accomplishment. However, they rejected the notion that their job has a minimal amount of work-related conflict and stress. Working at the University seems to evoke its share of conflict, stress, and frustration, but identification of the causes which are responsible for this perception could not be identified with the data collected by the survey. One aspect of work at the University which appears to be a great deterrent to job satisfaction is the salary received. Since the administration of this Survey the University implemented salary changes using comparable salary and market data. Many entry level salaries were adjusted. It cannot be determined whether this recent University effort would attenuate the strong negative position expressed by the majority of salaried and hourly employees. It is, however, a conscientious effort by the University to use local labor market data in wage and salary calculations to attain greater parity with local business and industry.

**Employees' Perceptions of Job Safety Conditions**

Employees' perceptions of the general on-the-job safety conditions indicate there is much room for improvement. Slightly over half of the respondents (55 percent) agreed that their work area is environmentally safe - about 25 percent would consider it unsafe and another 20 percent don't really know. Approximately a third of the respondents acknowledged that they work around hazardous materials or equipment and, of this group, slightly over half indicated that the supervisor checked to see that safety procedures are used and equipment is checked regularly to ensure that it is in proper working condition. Less than two thirds of this group indicate they would know what to do in the event of an accident with hazardous materials or equipment. Generally, employees seem to assume that adequate measures are taken to ensure their safety and

health, but the University may need to be more proactive on this issue to demonstrate that this trust is not unfounded.

### Perceptions of Women

Within the last two years, gender issues have gained much attention primarily due to the release of the Report of the University Senate Council *ad hoc* Committee on the Status of Women. Several items in the staff survey revealed findings similar to those (hereafter referred to as the Report on the Status of Women; Exhibit AA). Table 9-5 reflects perceptions about the University's efforts in the area of women's issues.

Table 9-5

	Percentage Agreeing			
	Hourly Staff		Admin/Prof.	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
My relationship with my supervisor is satisfactory	78	84	79	76
My experience at UK will be helpful to me in the future	66	73	80	83
My unit is generally supportive in its efforts to recruit, retain and promote women	55	58	61	39
The institutional climate at UK is generally supportive of women	57	42	79	70
I feel generally positive about the salary I receive for my work	39	46	66	57

**Combined percentage of respondents indicating "strongly agree" and "agree" for Hourly (Male N=562; Female N=1262) and Administrative/Professional (Male=578; Female=929) Staff groups.**

Similar to overall employee perceptions, women in both groups tend to perceive their work experience at UK in a positive light. Additionally, hourly staff women expressed a higher level of satisfaction with their supervisors than their male counterparts. However, there is a lack of compelling agreement by either group that there is a supportive environment in either their unit or the institution in general. There is a difference of opinion. Hourly staff women tend to perceive their unit as more supportive than the overall institutional climate; salaried staff women reflect just the opposite perception. An explanation for this difference is difficult to ascertain, but the timing of the release of the Report on the Status of Women may well have influenced respondents' perceptions. The very release of the report seems to have signaled the start of a decisive initiative to address the concern's of women. Perhaps, salaried women sense this more so than hourly staff women. Another possible explanation comes from the Report on the Status of Women which accounted for differences in the perceptions of hourly staff women by noting: "Of particular concern to many staff is the belief their supervisors may have the power to punish

inadequate job performance, but not the power to reward superior performance...The power to reward appears to hourly staff women to reside in some other entity in the University which is not personally aware of the work situation or work performance of the employee.”

It is fair to say that the University continues to have significant room for improvement on gender issues as perceived by women. A paramount issue will be efforts to address the negative perception about the salaries paid to women. Since the administration of the Staff Survey, there has been an increase in the salary of entry level positions which will significantly affect women. Additionally, at least four women have been appointed to senior level positions within the higher levels of administration. While these actions may reflect a concerted effort on the part of administration, it must be recognized, however, that insufficient time has elapsed between the release of the Report on the Status of Women use this data to assess progress in this area. For the most part, these survey data confirm what has already been learned and reinforce the need for measured progress over the coming years.

### Minority Perceptions

Similar to the women’s responses on the Staff Survey, responses from minorities tended to differ substantially on only a few but significant questions. These are reflected in Table 9-6.

Table 6

	Racial Differences in Agreement about the UK Environment				
	Percentage Agreeing		Admin/Prof.		
	Hourly Staff	Black	White	Black	White
My unit is generally supportive in its efforts to recruit, retain and promote minorities	38	62	54	67	
The institutional climate at UK is generally supportive of minorities	29	68	28	61	
I feel generally positive about the salary I receive for my work	36	45	65	61	
My relationship with my supervisor is satisfactory	75	83	88	77	
My experience at UK will be helpful to me in the future	77	71	84	82	

Combined Percentage of respondents indicating “strongly agree” and “agree” for Hourly (Black=212; White=1575) and Administrative/Professional (Black=26; White=1463) Staff groups.

Despite the perception that their experience at UK will be helpful in the future, lack of adequate salary compensation in the present is more acutely felt by minorities than white counterparts, particularly by hourly employees. Even with the report of a variety of racial undertones in some supervisors’ decision making, the personal relationships with their supervisors are generally expressed as quite good. Negative perceptions seem to be related to larger institutional issues which are less personalized. Minority employees tend to perceive that

supportive efforts are greater within their respective units than is being reflected at the overall institutional level, although the overall levels of agreement about support are rather discouraging.

The findings of the Report of the University Senate Council *ad hoc* Committee on Minorities (hereafter referred to as the Minorities Report; Exhibit AB) indicate that UK has an image problem both within and without in regard to minorities. The fact that the percentage of minorities working at UK decreased over the past decade is surprising in the face of increased publicity about equal opportunity efforts. Some insights to this trend are noted in the Committee's Report where it states: "This (small number of new minority employees) may indicate that minorities do not wish to work at UK or that they are not being sought after. It is possible they could not afford to work at UK since new employees averaged less than \$9,000 per year (in 1989)."

Perceptions of the institutional climate toward minorities tend to be influenced by the perceived need for improved personnel policies and procedures, clarification of job expectations, supervisory training, and educational opportunities. The tuition waiver program for employees, the Martin Luther King Holiday, the increased visibility of the Minority Affairs Office, and the heightened sensitivity about cultural diversity are all positive signs to change UK's image. But most importantly is the need for a pervasive attitude change. Seminars to eliminate racism in the work place are a modest beginning, but persistent and decisive administrative efforts will be required to address these complex issues. At best, it is believed that the University may have to demonstrate new behaviors and policy over considerable time before improved institutional realities will translate into a favorable institutional image.

**Recommendation 9-1:** The University should implement a recurring survey process to gather data which will permit the tracking of shifts in employees' perceptions and allow more measurable assessment of the effectiveness of institutional policies and administrative initiatives.

**Recommendation 9-2:** The University should conduct focus groups to identify and resolve factors which contribute to employee dissatisfaction, particularly those factors which will enhance communication and appreciation between faculty and staff.

**Recommendation 9-3:** The University should charge the proposed Office of Environmental Health and Life Safety to provide information and training and to conduct an inspection and correction program.

**Recommendation 9-4:** The University should maintain and share with employees pertinent UK salary data which makes a comparison with salaries at local businesses and industries to reduce speculation that the University underpays and undervalues its employees' efforts.

**Recommendation 9-5:** The University should vigorously implement the recommendations proposed in the reports on the status of women and the status of minorities at the University.

## PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Personnel operations at the University are a complex integration of functions. Hiring, reclassification, transfers, wage and salary, employee evaluation, and training and development are all components of the system. The diversity of functions performed by the Human Resource Offices are often conducted in a manner which defies recognition of the parts that make up the whole. It is not unusual for the "Personnel Office" to take the brunt of employee criticism whenever there is dissatisfaction with one's employment situation. Trying to sort out which aspects of the personnel system merit praise or condemnation becomes an unfruitful task. The Committee recognizes that there may need to be some differences in personnel actions across sectors in order to enable them to be responsive to their unique missions and environments. The fact remains that personnel functions are at the heart of the Human Resource System. The activities, policies, etc. of the Human Resource System should be designed in a way that is recognizable and understandable to all employees as an integrated system with multiple responsibilities. This should facilitate a more systematic accountability of its efforts and actions.

### Issues Identified

Even without comparative norms, it would appear that a significant number of employees have concerns about the initial employment, reclassification, transfer and promotion processes. While employees were generally quite positive about the majority of factors describing their employment at the University, there were many concerns and negative feelings expressed in the personnel area. The Survey results, anecdotal feedback, and forum input are consistent with the information collected by the two ad hoc Committees for women and minorities. For this reason, many of those findings will not be repeated in this Report. It is noteworthy, however, that the employees responding to the Survey expressing similar concerns to those previously reported. Once again, the Committee does not have a "yardstick" by which to interpret the data and subsequently pass judgment about how the University's stewardship compares to other employers. The initial employment hiring process is perceived as fair by over half of the respondents; however, once in the system further personnel actions are rated much lower. These perceptions are reflected in Table 9-7.

Table 9-7

Levels of Agreement with Current Personnel Policies and Procedures		
	Percentage Agreeing	
	Hourly Staff	Admin/Prof.
All job descriptions should be periodically reviewed	94	92
The process for obtaining initial employment is fair	58	64
The process of transferring within UK is fair	43	39
The system allows for job mobility upward and lateral	40	41
The basis for determining salary increases is fair	35	42
The process for reclassifying positions is fair	25	25

Combined percentage of response indicating "strongly agree" and "agree" for Hourly (N=1855) and Administrative/Professional (N=1517) Staff groups.

The reclassification and transfer processes of the UK Personnel Office, in particular, seem to be viewed with suspicion and contempt by many employees, including faculty. Many anecdotal references were made concerning the inability to understand how this system of job classification, upgrade, and compensation works. It is perceived that some departmental chairs and unit directors know just what to say or who to talk to in order to achieve a positive outcome on a personnel action. Most others, who are well intentioned yet less attuned to the idiosyncrasies of the system or less sophisticated in their communication skills, feel powerless to function within the system to adequately recognize and reward employee efforts. This disparity in getting things done has given rise to the perception that there exists a "good old boy network." Other comments reflect the perception that the Personnel Office is an adversary to, rather than a champion of, employee advancement. Lost applications and transfer requests, unduly long delays in processing paper work, and an often unfriendly reception to telephone and other requests for information have given most employees the impression that dealing with the Personnel Office is an overwhelming and generally unpleasant task. These perceptions are so emotionally charged and wide spread that it appears the Personnel Office is faced with a serious public relations problem with its own clients.

A 1987 Report of an *ad hoc* Committee on Wage and Salary (Exhibit 9-A) captures the essence of these frustrations. In quoting from the final report of the external consultant group of Mercer-Meidinger-Hansen, (Exhibit 9-B); the Committee concluded: "The University has one of the most diverse and complex compensation programs ever encountered (by the company) in any setting. The (wage and salary) program is a virtual patchwork of separate and minimally integrated systems." Further, looking at the personnel system from a broader human resource perspective, the Report states "...the primary impact of the program's problems appear to be more insidious than recruitment and retention. Soft labor market conditions are facilitating recruitment and retention; but...morale appears to be suffering and some staff are seriously questioning the value of (their) commitment to hard work." Since the release of the Report several of the many recommendations in the consultant Report have been implemented. Regrettably, changes in procedures and policy have not substantially altered the very negative perception of Personnel Office activities which is held by many employees.

In addition to the personnel system's inability to be perceived as fair and predictable in its operations, the University's policies and procedures do not appear to be applied in a consistent and equitable manner across individual units. Approximately 75 percent of the supervisors supervise six employees or less. While such an organization of work groups may be necessary to carry out tasks, it appears to be a barrier to standardized monitoring and enforcement of a variety of policies and procedures. Discrepancies among supervisory practices resulted in a variety of complaints which were mentioned during the course of the Committee's investigation both in the open forums and in written feedback. Aside from the accuracy of these reported incidents, the frequency of their being mentioned and the diversity of interpretation and enforcement seem to be saying more about the effectiveness of supervision than it does the effectiveness of the policies or the employees. Many similar perceptions were also noted in the Committee reports on Women and Minorities. These perceptions were the most prevalent.

1. Disability (sick) leave is not counted the same for all, is used differently in annual performance reviews, is used interchangeably with vacation leave, and must be verified by a physician in some units and not in others.
2. Professional (salaried) staff members come and go as they like. They do not seem to be held accountable for any type of regular working hours or for a full work week.

3. Merit increases don't seem to be based on merit. Everybody gets the same raise regardless of performance, the evaluations are so skewed that they do not differentiate between excellence and mediocrity.
4. There is a great deal of personal bias in the completion of annual performance evaluations and none of the "higher ups" seem to notice or care.
5. The process of completing annual evaluations varies dramatically across units. In some units the secretary completes the evaluation instead of the supervisor. Some employees report never being evaluated or seeing their evaluation.
6. In some offices employees are not allowed to take advantage of the opportunity to attend classes during the work day. Others report that not all employees are making up the missed work time and that homework is being done on office time.
7. Compensatory time is regulated inconsistently. Some employees receive it, others do not. Some staff members brag that they have so much compensatory time that they will never have to take vacation.
8. There needs to be closer supervision and greater levels of accountability. Some employees do very little and the supervisor ignores it. Much of the enforcement of rules depends on who is liked and disliked.

It is apparent that the human resource needs and goals of the University have changed considerably over the past decade. Despite the changes, the personnel system seems to have a life of its own with only a tenuous resemblance and capability to meet the strategic objectives for stewardship inherent and implied in the University's *Strategic Plan*. The personnel function appears to have a relatively low status within the University Administration compared with the operations of facilities planning, finance and budget, and external relations. It is difficult to see any identifiable leadership for personnel matters within the President's immediate cabinet.

The years of budget limitations have had a severe impact on most units comprising the University infrastructure, but the human resource operations appear to have been, in particular, adversely affected. The Human Resource System Data Base, soon to be brought on line will be an important step toward obtaining the needed technology for tracking and analyzing personnel trends. However, the management of multiple personnel functions seems to require a much more pervasive and integrated system than is currently in place. Accentuated by the scarcity of resources, the needs of the system have been postponed to the point that a major revamping seems necessary if for no other reason than to restore confidence in it.

**Recommendation 9-6:** The University should replace the current personnel system with one which is a true human resource system appropriately reflecting the values of an academic institution and comprehensive in its efforts to develop, evaluate and promote employees.

**Recommendation 9-7:** The University should establish cabinet level responsibility for human resources in the President's Cabinet, with a charge to build a human resource system which is responsive to the organization, sensitive to the needs of employees and understandable to all.

**Recommendation 9-8:** The University should increase the staff of the Human Resource Offices to a level which will enable its employees to manage both the volume of work required and the stress levels associated with dealing with employee issues having so much emotional investment.

**Recommendation 9-9:** The University should completely review all job descriptions and update each job description at least every three years with the participation of both the employee and supervisor with the final document being shared with the employee. The description of duties and setting of job standards should be linked to training, evaluation, transfer and promotion actions.

**Recommendation 9-10:** The University should restate, clarify, and enforce the employment policy that internal candidates will be given priority for transfers and promotions where applicable. When it is not applicable, employees should understand why it is not.

**Recommendation 9-11:** The University should provide an annual update on the state of human resources at UK which gives data about salaries, internal transfers and promotions, employee retention, education and training opportunities, and other information which will help employees to see progress in this area.

## **STAFF EVALUATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND ADVANCEMENT**

Conceptually, an ideal performance appraisal system looks at an individual's past performance in order to create a future in the organization. This appraisal of potential is a quintessential planning process. Such a system pre-supposes a planning view of the capabilities and human characteristics needed by the organization, and emphasizes the development of employees for the future. But what are the opportunities for training and of what value will training hold for advancement in the current structure of the University. These become the companion issues in the assessment and development of an integrated human resource system.

### **Issues Identified**

In general, the true objectives of performance appraisal are not well served by the current system. Comments indicate raters have varying interpretations of quality in the performances they are asked to judge. There is frequent mention of personality issues and biases in the process. Performance appraisal is by its very nature an often dreaded process by both employees and supervisors alike; however, it is the most significant annual event for expressing appreciation for a job well done, and informing employees about where they stand in the eyes of their supervisor and the University. Beyond this, however, employees need to understand the supervisor's expectations so that they are able to do something positive about their future performance and opportunities by designing goals and availing opportunities for training and development. But, only slightly over half (53 percent) of the respondents to the Staff Survey agreed that the evaluation form and process used in their unit was a satisfactory way to evaluate job performance.

## **Staff Advancement Opportunities**

The prevailing perception (50 percent hourly staff and 44 percent professional and administrative staff) is that the present University personnel system does not allow freedom of upward and lateral job mobility. This survey finding was reinforced by strong sentiment expressed that the University has no career development or advancement plan. High performers tend to see little opportunity for advancement and, though their performance may be rated highly, feel discouraged, unrecognized, and unrewarded. Issues of competency and development pervade the University system. Typically the only way for employees to advance is to transfer to a different unit, but in so doing departments and units often find their only source of continuity extinguished. To retain employees and counteract this trend, it was reported that some units are cutting back on staff by combining positions requiring a hybrid of skills, e.g. word processing and other secretarial skills with financial and other skills of an accounts clerk. While this may be an effective use of personnel, obtaining adequate training is impossible, and the system provides little compensation for the additional skills or added responsibilities.

## **Educational Investment in Staff**

It seems ironic that an institution, which by its very existence intrinsically values the acquisition of knowledge and skills, would take a minimalist approach to education for improvement of job performance (or for training and development as it is known in business and industry). It also seems ironic that an institution which prides itself on the preparation of leaders for the next generation would so seldom employ available resources to enhance its own functioning. These paradoxes inhibit the development of a truly productive career at the University for many members of its staff. As one employee stated "personal and professional development is viewed as an investment for faculty but as an expense for staff." This inequity is grounded in the University Governing Regulations as well. There is educational leave for faculty to pursue advanced degrees with reduced work loads and even without pay with a continuation of benefits. Hourly and salaried staff do not appear to have the opportunity to reduce their work loads even to commensurately increase their educational credit load at their own expense. This policy results in staff members who resign their positions at the University to pursue advanced degrees and enhance their potential for employment elsewhere. It was suggested by some employees that opportunities for an educational leave program be available to long-term employees similar to the faculty sabbatical leave program.

A great deal of the criticism of the current system focuses on supervisory practices. It would appear that the development of competent supervisors is a critical training and development issue in and of itself. For the most part, supervisors attain their positions based on their technical knowledge of the job (or in the case of academic chairs their scholarship). Yet, as is the case with most organizations, there appears to be little guidance on how to manage the transition to supervision, to become fully appreciative of what the role of supervision entails, and to develop effective supervisory competencies except through trial and error.

## **Salary Increments**

A final issue associated with performance, advancement, and compensation focused on the process of determining salary increases within the University's various units. In particular, the treatment of all salary increases as merit increases appears to be a major factor in the strong tendency to disagree that the current system is fair. Generally, if all employees receive a merit increase based on the assumption there are no undeserving employees, then many employees do

not see this as an adequate gauge of performance differences and abilities. As a result, the procedures for salary increases will continue to be a source of suspicion, debate, and discontent. On the other hand, if all employees are to receive at least a modest increase called merit in order to keep pace with the cost of living, then it would seem reasonable to designate it cost of living and administer it as such, reserving merit money for the most meritorious performance.

**Recommendation 9-12:** The University should identify career advancement opportunities and competency clusters requisite to advancement and promotion within the system.

**Recommendation 9-13:** The University should review the policy under which salary increases are administered according to cost of living and merit increases.

**Recommendation 9-14:** The University should implement standardized competency testing and performance thresholds which can become a part of the evaluation, training, development and advancement process.

**Recommendation 9-15:** The University should institute a mandatory supervisory training program with appropriate evaluation mechanisms for all supervisory personnel, including academic leaders.

**Recommendation 9-16:** The University should revise and standardize the performance appraisal process such that it promotes positive outcomes and reflects both administrative and staff input into its design.

**Recommendation 9-17:** The University should develop a comprehensive offering of training opportunities utilizing the talents and resources of the University in the delivery of in-service training.

**Recommendation 9-18:** The University should implement a systematic process for career counseling to help employees develop career paths, and direct them toward appropriate education and training opportunities.

**Recommendation 9-19:** The University should develop mechanisms comparable to the educational leave opportunities for employees to enhance their education and potential to contribute to the institution.

## **STAFF BENEFITS**

As mentioned in a previous section, less than half of the employees responding to the Survey expressed satisfaction with their financial compensation. Wage and salary compensation continues to represent the major cost factor in the University employee equation. Increasingly, however, the cost-of-staffing levels and the projection of future costs involve providing noncash compensation—known as the hidden pay check. Employee perceptions about the University's Staff Benefits Program are reflected in Table 9-8 on the next page. It can be seen that ninety percent of the non-faculty employees responding to the Self-Study Survey indicate that employee benefits are an important consideration in their decision to continue working at UK. Over eighty

percent of the respondents acknowledged that they were generally pleased with UK's staff benefits.

Table 9-8

**Perceptions of Selected Aspects of the University Staff Benefits Program**

	Percentage Agreeing	
	Hourly Staff	Admin/Prof.
Benefits are an important consideration working at UK	99	90
A year-end benefit summary would be helpful	92	94
I am generally satisfied with UK fringe benefits	85	82
There should be tuition benefits for employee dependents	78	82
UK should develop a specific maternity leave policy	74	79
Received adequate information on benefits at orientation	69	61
Information about benefits is adequately communicated	64	60
I feel adequately informed about changes in coverage	58	58
Progress toward my goals is helped by tuition credit	54	53
Staff input is considered in fringe benefit decisions	29	32

Combined percentage of responses indicating "strongly agree" and "agree" for Hourly (N=1855) and Administrative/Professional (N=1517) Staff groups.

The level of satisfaction is a favorable indication that many recently implemented programs and employee opportunities have been noticed, notably: decreasing the waiting period for selected benefits; the opening of the Kindercare facility; initiating wellness and employee assistance programs; and issuing a year-end summary statement of each employee's benefits, withholdings, and the University's contributions. This latter action was implemented at about the same time as the Survey's administration. It is not possible to determine if the 92 percent (hourly staff) and 94 percent (salaried staff) approval of a year-end summary statement is a strong plea for, or a positive endorsement of its implementation. Increases in the amount of term life insurance and taking a first step toward equalizing the University's retirement contribution for faculty and staff were implemented after the survey was administered. These actions favorably reflect a serious intention to raise the University from its relatively low 1988 standing (compared to benchmark institutions) identified by the Employee Benefits Committee in its study leading to the development of an Employee Benefits Strategic Plan, (1989-1994) (Exhibits 9-C and Appendix 9-A).

**Issues Identified**

While the importance of and satisfaction with the University's benefits program received favorable reviews, there is less consensus on how the benefits program should be enhanced. Payment of some portion of family health insurance was the top ranked priority by hourly employees. The equalization of the University's contribution to both faculty and staff retirement at 10 percent was second priority. The administrative and professional staff ranked these two items in reverse priority. Both employee groups ranked third the adoption of a flexible benefits plan which would allow employees some choice of individually tailored additional benefits once

mandatory benefits were covered. Over one hundred new and expanded benefit options were suggested by survey respondents, representing a diverse array of individual needs and preferences. While many suggestions mentioned were without substantial agreement, those benefits most frequently suggested include: dependent tuition assistance, increased dental coverage, and child care assistance. Paid maternity leave was also identified by several respondents; which is one approach to addressing the more pervasive issue — that UK should develop a specific maternity leave policy. The diversity of desired benefit options appears to have resolution only in the adoption of a flexible benefits plan.

One of the recurring, yet elusive, themes repeated over the life of the Committee is the need for better communication. On the issue of receiving adequate information about staff benefits, the level of personal confidence steadily declines from the first introduction at UK's new employee orientation, down to the general communication of information, and finally to changes and possible changes in UK's benefit coverage. Perhaps it is for this reason that only two thirds of all respondents believe their opinions and interests are reflected in administrative decisions pertaining to UK's fringe benefit program. Anecdotal comments indicate that supervisors often give misinformation about benefits and that there are few opportunities to talk to someone about what the benefits really mean. The fact that nearly half of the employees still have not taken advantage of the 125 Plan is an indication that the features and advantages of this plan are still not understood. It is difficult to accept the premise that employees, once knowledgeable of the 125 Plan, would choose not to participate in it and thus pay more taxes than necessary. There are favorable reports of unit meetings devoted to the topic of staff benefits at which a representative of the Staff Benefits Office was present. More of this face-to-face communication seems necessary. This will be particularly true as the staff benefits regulations and opportunities become more sophisticated, and employees are given wider latitude in choosing which benefits they need to implement to match evolving individual and family situations over the course of their employment at the University. Additionally, as the University strives to provide options to its employees, financial and benefits counseling will be required to facilitate intelligent choices and maximize their advantages.

Finally, there appears to be a need for a greater capability to track benefit utilization. The tuition credit program is an example of one benefit which currently defies analysis. To enhance information about the number of employees taking classes through the program, other questions beg answers. Why are some employees taking classes while others are not? How many faculty and staff have enrolled? Are undergraduate or graduate courses being taken? How many employees begin but do not complete courses and why? How has the program impacted on employee morale, personal and professional development? Has it created problems for supervisors? This is but one example of the need for the proactive identification of goals, communication of processes and procedures, and analysis of effectiveness.

The University administration's commitment and systematic implementation of the Employee Benefits Committee's Strategic Plan have been major factors in improving staff benefits at the University of Kentucky. Enhancing the University's standing among the benchmark institutions is a reasonable and measurable goal. However, there remains some question as to whether "reaching the benchmarks" is the same as "being a good steward." On a strategic level it would seem desirable to exceed benchmark goals. In fact this may be essential since attracting and retaining qualified staff will ultimately be determined by the University's ability to be competitive with comparable benefits provided by other employers in Central Kentucky.

**Recommendation 9-20:** The University should continue implementing the recommendations of the Employee Benefits Committee Strategic Plan (1989-1994).

**Recommendation 9-21:** The University should implement a flexible benefits plan as a means of enhancing benefits for all in an equitable manner.

**Recommendation 9-22:** The University should increase the staff of the Staff Benefits Office to facilitate the timely and effective communication of the University's benefits program.

**Recommendation 9-23:** The University should systematically set goals, gather data, and assess the University's effectiveness in meeting the benefit needs of its employees.

## ENHANCING COMMUNICATION

Within any organization as large as the University of Kentucky, one is apt to hear quite often the statement: "The trouble with this place is there is no communication." The Committee certainly received this type of comment in various forms and fashions. It is safe to assume that communication should flow both upward and downward in the University structure. However, it should come as no surprise that much information does not flow upward and downward with equal ease. Downward communication is facilitated largely by various administrators' control of their own actions, but much upward communication remains dependent on stimulation, encouragement, and the creation of a climate conducive to communication. Some factors which came to light during the Committee's investigation highlight the essential differences between the accomplishment of upward communication as well as downward communication. Although the issue of communication was briefly addressed as part of previous sections, an attempt to organize and understand the factors which inhibit communication is addressed here.

### Communication Issues Identified

There is a tendency to assume that downward communication has occurred because meetings are held and memorandums are circulated. Two factors seem to play an important role in dissipating the intent of these communication efforts. First, administrators and supervisors at each level filter the information passed on to others to the point that some employees are not very well informed about the most routine and simple policies and procedures. This was evident in the Committee's open forums, where some of the issues raised by participants were addressed on the spot by individual administrators present or by others in attendance. It became apparent that the behavior of some employees has been influenced by very basic misunderstandings. The town meeting concept introduced recently on the Lexington Campus is a positive step toward overcoming the tendencies for important information to be misinterpreted, distorted, or stopped entirely as it passes down through the levels of the organization. Similarly, another factor which is interfering with downward communication is the issue of understanding. On many occasions, it was mentioned that a memorandum was received (regarding staff benefits, personnel policy or procedures) but it was not understood. The lack of understanding may be a function of personal abilities, either the sender's writing or the receiver's reading, or the fact that little attempt was made by supervisors in unit meetings to clarify the content of important memoranda. It is apparent that greater effort must be directed toward transmitting understanding rather than just transmitting messages.

Enhancing upward communication will be inherently more difficult to accomplish. Employees expressed strong sentiments about their sense of "powerlessness, invisibility, and voicelessness." Addressing this issue will first require further efforts to establish a non-threatening climate. This is illustrated by the number of employees who shared their concerns about reprisals for their candid response to the Self-Study Staff Survey. Although individual anonymity was assured in the design of the Survey and management of the Survey data, suspicions and the need for self-protection prevented some employees from completing the Survey form, while others acknowledged that they withheld or tempered their true feelings and perceptions. The fear of reprisal seems to deter the effective use of campus offices. The endorsement of a staff ombudsman by over 80 percent of the respondents may well be a reflection of a need for a secure communications link, as well as a more direct and impartial line for having issues addressed. There is also a high level of agreement (over 70 percent) that a staff council should be created to serve as a representative advisory body to the University administration, and an even higher percentage (87 percent) of respondents would like to have an elected representative of the UK staff serve on the UK Board of Trustees. The recently constituted Staff Council on the Lexington Campus and within several colleges in the Medical Center, luncheons with selected staff members, and special newsletters represent some of the approaches already in place. Other possible organizational solutions to the upward communication problem. More informal and closer to the unit levels, seem equally necessary. Focus groups, additional investigations, and a more emphatic effort to assess the communication effectiveness of supervisors are some alternatives. Collectively, some measures must be taken to alter the current perception, by a meager 20 percent of the respondents, that staff opinion is adequately reflected in the governing procedures and policies affecting them.

**Recommendation 9-24:** The University should prepare supervisory personnel at all levels to be an agent in the process of enhancing communication within the University.

**Recommendation 9-25:** The University should implement focus groups, quality circles, councils, open forums and other interpersonal settings which will enhance the clarification of downward communication and facilitate upward communication.

**Recommendation 9-26:** The University should identify and eliminate supervisory practices which involve intimidation and reprisal.

**Recommendation 9-27:** The University should enhance staff involvement in goal setting and participatory management practices wherever possible.

**Recommendation 9-28:** The University should create an organizational element(s) whereby staff can be better represented.

**Recommendation 9-29:** The University should devote as much attention to promoting ourselves to each other as we do the Commonwealth.

## **GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The recommendations presented in this Report are broad in scope in an attempt to pursue an ideal environment and organization. There would be little value in proposing recommendations

that would not enable the University to obtain the excellence which it strives to achieve. Full implementation of the recommendations will require substantial resources and a remarkably concerted effort on the part of all employees of the University. Enhancements to the University's stewardship, however, are both desirable and attainable. Certain tenets underlying the recommendations are deemed pivotal if any of the intended improvements are to be realized. Further, there is a sense of urgency to be encouraged regarding attention to the perceived needs and desired actions expressed by employees. Many of the comments expressed on the final page of the Staff Survey indicated a two-fold challenge. Most of the employees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be heard, but many of them are skeptical about whether anything will result from their input. To exploit the sense of promise and trust extended by the process, and to negate the predictions of the skeptics, the following guidelines are essential:

1. Communicate effectively with employees how their input has been translated into actions. This is not only a plea for action, but also for a certain amount of legitimate publicity when action occurs.
2. Encourage responsible leaders to be identifiable to all employees. The issues associated with personnel policies and procedures, evaluation, training, development, and enhancement seem to require the presence of an individual who can tie together all the component parts of the system and ensure the continuity of its effort.
3. Provide additional resources to strengthen the infrastructure of the University's support systems. The full mission of the University can only be furthered through the support and expertise made available to faculty and administration.
4. Make training a vehicle for implementing changes, extending opportunities, and modifying the perceptions and interactions of the University's employees. New policies seem much less necessary than consistent and effective implementation of existing ones.
5. Ensure managers and supervisory personnel at all levels take a more proactive role in advancing the University's agenda for making improvements. Strong accountability measures should be employed to ensure this occurs.
6. Conduct further studies of this nature on a periodic basis to identify priority issues and to demonstrate sincerity of intent to make the University a model institution of employment.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Several initiatives have been undertaken over the last few years which highlight the growing awareness of the University's stewardship role. This role serves not only the employees but also benefits the institution in its efforts to attract and retain employees in a highly competitive environment. An Academic Support Committee was formed and charged to review: (1) the extent to which the University provides an adequate institutional and academic support staff for assistance in carrying out the institution's mission in teaching, research and service and (2) the stewardship of these human resources including the extent to which institutional policy and practice maximize effectiveness.

Findings by the Committee were shaped by input received from two open forums for University staff at which raised many issues and concerns. Numerous letters, notes and phone messages were received with recommendations, complaints and suggestions for investigation. Further, the content of several recently released reports provided valuable information, particularly those providing an in depth analysis of women and minority issues. Since several themes emerged as uniquely sensitive issues to UK employees, an attempt to capture more complete data of employees' perceptions led to the design of questions which were included in the Self-Study Staff Survey.

Overall, the Committee's work focused on the University's organizational and human resource functions. This report shares insights about the effectiveness of the University's stewardship in five areas: UK Work Environment; Personnel Policies and Procedures; Employee Performance Appraisal, Training, Development and Advancement; Staff Benefits; and Enhancing Communication. Within each area issues are identified and recommendations are proposed to enhance the institution's reputation, both within and without, for the quality of its employees and services. Collectively, this Report represents but another step in the continuing effort to make the University a model of stewardship.

Generally, employees expressed positive feelings about the University and their jobs. In the absence of benchmark data, there was no basis for comparing employee responses to responses by employees at other institutions or to previous studies. Certain aspects of the University environment can be identified which employees perceive as deterrents to job satisfaction including: salary received, adequacy of space, adequacy of staff; and, opportunities for advancement. A smaller but very strong concern was the perception that hourly and professional staff were treated as "second class citizens." Along this line, University efforts to make improvements in recruiting, retaining and promoting women and minorities have not yet been realized. Finally, employee perceptions of the general on-the-job safety conditions indicate there is room for improvement.

The reclassification and transfer system of the University, in particular, seems to be viewed with suspicion and contempt by many employees, including faculty. In addition to the failure of the personnel system to be perceived as fair and predictable, University policies and procedures do not appear to be consistently applied across individual units. Accentuated by the scarcity of resources, the needs of the personnel system have been postponed to the point that a major revamping seems necessary if for no other reason than to restore confidence in it.

A great deal of criticism of the current system focused on supervisory practices. The need for a program to prepare academic and support leaders for their roles is paramount. Additionally, the prevailing perception is that the present University personnel system does not allow freedom of upward and lateral mobility. This reflects the need for greater attention to internal training, career opportunities and standardized equitable policies on compensation.

Over eighty percent of the Survey respondents indicated they were generally pleased with UK's staff benefits. This level of satisfaction is a favorable indication that many recently implemented programs and employee opportunities have been noticed, notably: decreasing the waiting period for selected benefits; the opening of the Kindercare facility; initiating wellness and employee assistance programs; and issuing a year-end summary statement of each employee's benefits, withholdings, and the University's contributions. Over one hundred new and expanded benefit options were suggested by survey respondents reflecting a diverse array of individual needs and preferences.

Employees expressed strong sentiments about their sense of "powerlessness, invisibility, and voicelessness." Addressing this issue will first require greater efforts to establish a non-threatening climate. The endorsement of a staff ombudsman by over 80 percent of the respondents may well be a reflection of a need for a secure communications link, as well as a more direct and impartial line for having issues addressed. There is also a high level of agreement (over 70 percent) that a staff council should be created to serve as a representative advisory body to the University administration, and an even higher percentage (87 percent) of respondents would like to have an elected representative of the UK staff serve on the UK Board of Trustees. While these are possible organizational solutions to the upward communication problem, other solutions, more informal and closer to individual unit levels, seem equally as necessary.

Full implementation of the recommendations will require substantial resources and a remarkably concerted effort on the part of all employees of the University. Enhancements to the University's stewardship, however, are both desirable and attainable. Certain tenets underlying the recommendations are deemed pivotal if any of the intended improvements are to be realized. Most of the employees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be heard, but many of them are skeptical about whether anything will result from their input. To exploit the sense of promise and trust extended by the process, and to negate the predictions of the skeptics, the University should give serious consideration to implementing the guidelines detailed in the report.