

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

BACKGROUND

In October 2017, Middlebury instituted its inaugural employee engagement survey with ModernThink. We chose ModernThink because it is a strategic development consulting firm that works in partnership with *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and it cofounded The Great Colleges to Work For® program in 2008. They have surveyed over 1,000 colleges and universities across the country and have a database of benchmarks and best practices. They provided Middlebury with a neutral third-party perspective, and through their expertise, we received a set of key findings and recommendations for improvement.

One of the improvement recommendations centered on performance management. The senior leadership adopted this recommendation as the foci of an institutional strategy and action plan for improvement. The employee engagement survey team designed a process to gather more information on employees' perceptions of performance management on both campuses, Vermont and California. With 10 sessions on each campus, more than 130 people participated in one or more sessions to provide insight, to problem solve, and to make recommendations for improvements in this area.

In those sessions, performance management was framed as how we align the capabilities and contributions of our people throughout the year to achieve our organizational goals.

We seek to understand performance management as a series of activities that ensure the following:

- managers provide employees with clarity about what is expected in their job roles
- two-way feedback occurs about how those expectations are being met and clarified
- support and guidance is provided for opportunities for ongoing learning and development

APPROACH

Our approach involved soliciting feedback from staff and managers on performance management. To ensure that we fostered an expansive conversation, we defined performance management in the manner noted above. We facilitated six sessions on both campuses to first review and reflect on the ModernThink data. We did so by pulling all statements from the survey that related to performance management (as herein defined) and sharing the

institutional ratings for each statement. The compiled feedback was then used to support a second conversation around action plans for improvement.

The survey team reviewed all notes from these second sessions. The following areas emerged as priorities.

- Enhancing onboarding
- Addressing compensation
- Improving the APS instrument
- Improving how we manage for performance

ACTION PLAN

I. ENHANCING OUR ONBOARDING OPPORTUNITIES

Onboarding needs to be more than a process of information sharing. A strong onboarding process should help new hires to adjust to the institution, clarify the social and performance aspects of their jobs, and position them for success. Human Resources, as well as each department, has a role to play in that process.

Enhancing Our Onboarding Process						
1–3 months	3–6 months	6–12 months	12–18 months	Resources	Responsible parties	Timeline for completion
Identify short-term opportunities to improve departmental onboarding processes	Work with 1–2 pilot onboarding projects		Expand to full departmental onboarding reviews		Human Resources Department Managers	December 2019
			Identify opportunities to utilize and implement the new HCM system		Human Resources Department Managers	September 2020

II. ADDRESSING COMPENSATION

While this was not a focus of our performance management discussions, concerns about compensation continued to arise. A fair, equitable, and competitive salary structure is critically important to the recruitment and retention of highly qualified employees. We are operating under a compensation structure established in 2007–2008. It is time to evaluate it to ensure that it meets our current needs and institutional priorities, including how we recognize merit. We will begin a phased process of review beginning this fall.

Addressing Compensation						
1–3 months	3–6 months	6–12 months	12–24 months	Resources	Responsible parties	Timeline for completion
Prepare a proposal for compensation study	Engage in first phase of compensation study—design		Conduct full compensation study under the new design	FY19 and FY20 budgets	Human Resources Cabinet	January 2020

III. IMPROVING THE APS INSTRUMENT

There was a great deal of dissatisfaction directed at our current APS tool. With the deployment of a new Human Capital Management (HCM) technology system, we have an opportunity to develop a new tool for our annual assessments, but also an opportunity to re-evaluate what we want to evaluate. We would like to explore a competency-based model for performance evaluation and will explore that opportunity in detail as we continue to implement our new technology. The initial phases of this work will occur this year, with the intended target of having a new performance evaluation system in place for FY 2020.

In addition to a new tool, we would like to evaluate other types of performance assessments. Specific focus will be given to a 360-degree feedback model.

Improving the APS Instrument						
1–3 months	3–6 months	6–12 months	12–18 months	Resources	Responsible parties	Timeline for completion
Identify an area that is currently proficient in 1:1 coaching		Pilot 360-degree feedback approach for development	Assess pilot results		Human Resources SLG Organizational Development	Fall 2019
		Evaluate Oracle’s performance management system	Implement new performance management system	HCM	Human Resources GMHEC	April 2020
Begin discussion of competency-based performance management model	Develop managerial competencies		Assess performance on managerial competencies (baseline)	HCM	Human Resources	April 2020

IV. BROADENING OUR VIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The most significant insight garnered through this process is the need, and desire, to broaden our view of performance management. If we think about performance management as the ways in which we align the capabilities and contributions of our people throughout the year to achieve our organizational goals, it must be comprised of more than the APS process.

Particular emphasis will be directed toward professional development, initially for managers. The thinking here is that managers provide a crucial link in the organization between senior leadership and staff. They work to translate strategy into operations and have a critical role in ensuring the development of their staff and coaching for success. Accordingly, our initial efforts will focus on a professional development program for managers. Key topics will be a core set of managerial competencies, as well as the development of managers as coaches.

Professional Development						
1–3 months	3–6 months	6–12 months	12–18 months	Resources	Responsible parties	Timeline for completion
		Develop program for the development of role-based competencies			Organizational Development Human Resources	January 2019
			Begin inaugural courses for managers	TBD	Organizational Development Human Resources	September 2019–June 2020

Managers as Coaches						
1–3 months	3–6 months	6–12 months	12–18 months	Resources	Responsible parties	Timeline for completion
Identify a department to pilot a regularized 1:1 coaching model	Train managers in coaching		Assess pilot		Human Resources SLG Organizational Development	Fall 2019