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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Can Competency Management Help UIC Achieve Greater Results?.....1

Compelling AP Vacation Use Prior to Termination.....3

SURS Benefit Estimator.....4

2010 Employee Performance Review.....5

Special Program Update.....6

Can Competency Management Help UIC Achieve Greater Results?

Kim Morris Lee, Ph.D.
Director, Organizational Effectiveness

Competency Models are used in private and public sector organizations as a strategic tool to achieve business results. While defined competencies may vary across models, the intent of the model, [guide to focus workforce on systematic approach to achieve organization goals], is universal across industry sectors. At UIC, in the absence of a campus-wide Competency Model, leaders across campus make independent decisions about **competencies required for a job**, application of employee **competencies in the performance of job duties**, and management of employee performance to achieve results in a College or Administrative Unit.

Yes, it is true, in many organizations, valid and reliable Competency Models sit on the shelf. Sometimes this valuable tool is not used and does not become part of the organization's culture. You might ask, why? What is the reason for this scenario? Often it is due to lack of senior leaders buy-in and commitment to using competency management as a way to conduct business on day-to-day basis. Other times, it is the result of more focus on design and development of the model and less focus on implementation—turning strategy into action that can be monitored for results.

For many organizations, use of competencies has become an academic exercise. These organizations fail to realize the real business benefits of a competency management strategy.

(Continued on page 2)



Can Competency Management Help UIC Achieve Greater Results? *(continued from page 1)*

Aligning UIC's strategic intent to a competency management plan may yield meaningful results in many areas. Effective competency management at UIC can help management to:

- **Confirm** the workforce has the skills to support UIC's strategy.
- **Deliver** special project results across colleges/units on time and under budget, by assigning people with the right skills to them.
- **Retain** employees by providing career paths and development opportunities for all.
- **Reduce** the cost of expensive external contractors by utilizing competencies of current employees and leveraging skills across the university.
- **Identify** learning and development requirements based on "real" UIC business needs.
- **Facilitate** employee engagement in the workplace and focus on developing skills associated with career progression at UIC.
- **Create** employee development plans to retool or build upon skills needed to accomplish college/unit work.

As campus leadership continues efforts to identify opportunities to reduce operating cost and increase operating efficiency, aligning an employee competency management plan with UIC's long-term strategy might be an option to consider. Of course, building a UIC Competency Model is the first step. And, Campus Human Resources has taken that step. The UIC competency framework and "Core Competencies" are confirmed. "Manager" and "Executive" competencies for the UIC Competency Model are targeted for validation first quarter of FY11.



Compelling AP Vacation Use Prior To Termination

Tom Riley
Director, Labor and Employee Relations

The current crisis in state funding has caused an increase in the number of terminal contracts (notices of non-reappointment) issued to Academic Professionals as departments reorganize to conform to budgetary constraints. Similarly, sudden changes in grant funding, whether through the loss of a grant, Principal Investigator, or uncertainty regarding grant renewal, result in the issuance of notices of non-reappointment to Academic Professionals whose positions are entirely dependent on grant funding. Finally, in response to increased workload, a flat campus wage program and mandatory furloughs, some Academic Professionals are opting for resignation or retirement at this time. The question has been raised whether Academic Professionals can be required to use all accrued vacation time prior to the last day worked. While the simple answer is yes, it is not always the appropriate action, and there are important nuances to consider.

The principal reason a department would want to compel an Academic Professional to use vacation time prior to termination of employment is to avoid the fiscal liability of a large lump sum pay-out at the end of the appointment, particularly when there is a sudden loss of grant funding. Another reason is to address concerns about a lack of productivity, increased workplace tension or lowered morale due to the continued presence of a disgruntled or poor performing non-reappointed employee. In these kinds of situations, the campus has relied on the language of UIC HR Policy 1207, Payment of Terminal Benefits for Academic Employees. It states: "Employees ending employment with the University may be required to use all vacation benefits before the last day of employment."

The recommended best practice in such a case would entail a vacation schedule amenable to both the employee and the department, with some deference to the employee's choice. If the employee refuses, and the department wishes to require vacation use, the department may assign the time. However, per CMS benefit rules, the employee must be present at work on the terminal date or the employee will lose health benefits for the time period to the last day actually worked. Therefore, vacation time should be scheduled prior to, and not including, the last scheduled day of work.

(Continued on Page 4)



**Compelling AP Vacation Use
Prior To Termination** *(continued from Page 3)*

When consideration turns to situations of voluntary resignation or retirement, HR 1207 recommends: "Employees approaching retirement may accumulate up to the maximum vacation earnings (48 days) if this can be done without hardship to, and with the approval of, the employing unit."

This allows the employee to maximize their retirement annuities which are based upon years of service and average earnings during the high four (4) consecutive years, one of which must be the last year." Best practice would suggest that an unintended consequence of requiring use of vacation prior to termination in cases of voluntary separations would likely result in a lack of notice by the employee to the employer in order to maximize the final payout. Management discretion should be thoughtfully applied.



SURS Benefit Estimator

Did you know that you can use the [SURS Benefit Estimator](#), an online calculator, to get a "ballpark figure" of your retirement benefit under differing scenarios? This tool can be utilized even if you are not yet eligible for a SURS counseling appointment. See [Preparing to Retire on NESSIE](#) for a list of additional retirement planning resources.



2010 Employee Performance Reviews

Kim Morris Lee, Ph.D.

Director, Organizational Effectiveness

Each year, Employee Performance Review forms are completed May through July unless directed by specific policies in a department. Employee Performance Review forms and Performance Review meetings should be completed by Friday, July 30, 2010.

Managers are encouraged to schedule a meeting with each direct report prior to Friday, July 30th to discuss information documented in the annual review form. While in general, the meeting discussion should focus on prior year work performance, the primary purpose of UIC's **Performance Review Process is developmental**. Consequently, it is during this meeting that managers should engage employees in a conversation about skills and abilities required to meet work performance expectations for the next fiscal year. What are the employee's strengths? And, how do you anticipate having the employee utilize strengths to accomplish defined goals for the college or unit? If annual performance review results suggest opportunities to improve a specific competency, what is the development plan to address the learning opportunity? Performance Goals for the new Fiscal Year may be documented on the Annual Performance Review form in Section III.

Employee Performance Review skeptics may believe this process is meaningless. These individuals may say: it doesn't matter if it's not linked to salary increase or job promotion. In a "perfect world" the employee Performance Review Process might be aligned with an organization's strategy, and associated with consequences for non compliance (i.e., not completing an annual review for each direct report). Research has shown, however, this structure is not always necessary for a successful Performance Review Process. Commitment from managers to develop employees by providing consistent, constructive and documented feedback is the key element of a successful Performance Management Process.

Consider the below excerpt from the article titled, *Making Performance Appraisals an Inspiring Event* by Joe Folkman and Jack Zenger.

A performance appraisal can be an inspiring event when it facilitates individual improvement by focusing on the issues that will make a big difference. People want to make a difference and they want to be successful. When a process helps them to be successful, they appreciate that process. It is critical that every manager understand that improvement does not necessarily mean fixing weaknesses. Areas of improvement can focus on building strengths or fixing weaknesses. The critical issue is to address something that will have a great impact on the employee's effectiveness. When individuals have significant weaknesses, they need to hear that their weakness is fatal and it needs to be fixed. An appraisal process that both evaluates performance and facilitates improved performance lets people know where they stand and offers them a path for improvement.

At UIC, the **Performance Review Process** is designed to help employees develop competencies needed to assist the university achieve its goals. **The Annual Review Form is a tool** to document information about work performance that has been observed throughout the year.

Special Programs Update

Dana Poncher
Coordinator, Special Programs

2010 Employee Recognition Award Program— Wednesday, November 3, 2010

Please save the date! We will honor recipients of the Awards of Merit, the Chancellor's Academic Professional Excellence (CAPE) award, the WOW award, the I.N.S.P.I.R.E award and the Luminary award . We will also recognize UIC employees with 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 years of service. For eligibility and recognition guidelines, refer to the [Employee Recognition Policy](#).

Employee Recognition Month—November 2010

Certificate and Service Award Pickup—Thursday, November 4, 2010

Department Service Award recognition ceremonies should be held during Employee Recognition Month, November 2010. Certificates and service awards will be available for pick up on Thursday, November 4, 2010 from 7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m, HRB, room 205A. If your department will be hosting their recognition prior to November 4, 2010 please contact dponcher@uic.edu, 3-2960 to make alternate pick up arrangements.

Preparing for the Retirement Luncheon

Department representatives received retirement lists which were to be reviewed and returned by July 9, 2010. Employees who are a rehired retiree should not be included on list. Employees planning to retire by August 15, 2010 should be coded as such in BANNER. Please direct any questions or concerns to Marilyn Sommer at msommer@uic.edu or call 6-3504.

(Continued on Page 6)



Special Programs Update (continued from Page 6)

Campus Charitable Fund Drive

The 2010 Campus Charitable Fund Drive will run October 1, 2010 through December 1, 2010. The Kickoff Breakfast and Charity Fair, for department representatives, will be held October 1, 2010 from 9am to 11am at Student Center East, Illinois Rooms. Prior to the kickoff, a special luncheon will be held for department representatives on **September 22, 2010**. The luncheon will provide an opportunity to discuss participation incentives and contests and receive input on how to make the campaign successful.



This year we will initiate a new program to help foster the campaign. We will make ourselves available at one of your unit/department meetings to present program specifics, how to participate, and we can even showcase a participating charity. It is not time consuming—we can do the presentation in 3-5 minutes. If you are interested or would like more details, please contact Marilyn Sommer at msommer@uic.edu or 6-3504. 2010 Campus Charitable Fund Drive pledge forms, additional program information and participating SECA charity information is available at: http://www.uic.edu/depts/hr/Special_Programs/

Mark Your Calendars! Special Program Dates Summary

September 22, 2010	Department Rep Luncheon—Campus Charitable Fund Drive
October 1, 2010	Kickoff Breakfast and Charity Fair—Campus Charitable Fund Drive 9:00-11:00 am , Illinois Room, Student Center East
October 1— December 1, 2010	Campus Charitable Fund Drive
November 3, 2010	Employee Recognition Award Program The UIC Forum, 11:00 am
November 4, 2010	Certificate and Service Award Pickup Human Resources Bldg, 2nd floor 7:30 am—2:30 pm
December 1, 2010	Retirement Luncheon



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Information for this publication related to Human Capital operations in general, or UIC HR specific policies and procedures is received from HR professionals campus-wide.

Send requests to publish articles and HR policy/procedure updates or reminders to Organizational Effectiveness at OE@uillinois.edu.

