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## Keep UIC Employees Engaged During Tough Economic Times

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

Our employees like others across the United States are working under stressful conditions. Layoffs, pay cuts and other fallouts from the recession have devastated employee engagement. During these tough times managers and supervisors will need to acknowledge performance challenges that may be an outcome of “recession blues.” Identifying solutions to refocus employees on achieving college or administrative unit goals is important to retain our talent and help UIC move through this challenging period in our history. Causal links between employee engagement, customer satisfaction, operating efficiency and organization success are well documented. More engaged employees are higher performers. Choosing to make an investment in professional development represents a commitment to our employees and to the future of UIC.

Consider the points below as decisions are made about actions to take in an effort to re-engage UIC’s employees.

**Lead From The Front.** Employees’ confidence in the ability of senior management is one of the most important predictors of retention. Look for opportunities for senior management in your college or unit to speak with employees through scheduled group meetings or brown bag lunch discussions rather than emails or “one-off” scripted meetings. Use the meetings or discussion sessions to share information about college or unit operations and to listen to ideas, suggestions, feedback from employees.

**Invest In Your Staff.** Always consider skills and competencies that will help employees further develop a career at UIC. What do they need to know to do their job better? What should they learn to prepare for the “next-level” role at the university? Should you need assistance identifying appropriate learning opportunities for employees in your area, visit the UIC MyCareer website at <http://www.uic.edu/depts/hr/mycareer/index.html>.

*( Continued on page 2 )*



## Keep UIC Employees Engaged During Tough Economic Times *(continued from page 1)*

**Focus on People Management.** Through regular performance feedback, managers can help employees confirm learning needs, become more focused on achieving defined workplace performance goals and shape a career path at UIC. A comprehensive Employee Performance Review Process (EPR) is documented on the MyCareer website. Access the EPR webpage at <http://www.uic.edu/depts/hr/mycareer/eprprocess/>. Easy to use forms, as well as step-by-step guidelines for implementing the process in your college or unit are accessible on the webpage.



**Open A “Door” To Support Employee Success.** Many of your “star” performers may simply want a work environment where “barriers” to doing their job effectively are low. Too many “road blocks” in the workplace can lead to frustration and ultimately, turnover. If feasible, consider reorganizing business processes, teams or reporting structure to facilitate more efficient and strategic performance by your staff.

**It’s Not All About Pay.** Yes, it is important to know employee market value and make every effort to pay at least what the market dictates. However, contrary to popular belief, pay is rarely the main reason why most professionals leave an organization. Recent research shows primary reasons employees in the United States leave their jobs include lack of confidence in management team and lack of training, career growth and advancement opportunities.

Focusing on engaging employees now will position UIC to continue efforts to achieve defined goals with the support and commitment of its most talented employees during these tough economic times and beyond.



## Job Analysis and Job Description Plan for Academic Professional Jobs

**To:** Academic Professional Employees at UIC  
**From:** Anniese Lemond, Director HR Compensation  
**Date:** January 4, 2010  
**Subject:** Job Analysis and Job Description Plan for Academic Professional Jobs

In the letter that was sent to you last month, UIC's Chancellor Paula Allen-Meares, Provost Michael Tanner, Vice Chancellor John Loya and Medical Center CEO, John DeNardo, informed you of the State Universities Civil Service System's (SUCSS) most recent audit of UIC's employment policies, practices and procedures. That letter outlined several audit findings and compliance objectives. This memo -- the second in the series of planned communications regarding UIC's compliance efforts -- addresses the plan for analyzing Academic Professional positions and creating job descriptions for each.

### *The Job Analysis and Job Description Plan*

As communicated in the Chancellor's letter, the job analysis and job description development process will be a major undertaking with an imperative for completion as soon as practicable. As such, we look to all Academic Professionals and their supervisors for their full cooperation, support, and patience.

The job analysis process (*i.e. the systematic study of work in an organization to identify the observable duties and responsibilities, as well as the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform a particular task or group of tasks*) requires the timely cooperation of many people across campus. The information gained from these analyses forms the basis of the job description which is necessary for determining the appropriate employment categories of jobs and the relationship of one job to another within the organization so as to better identify pay, career development, promotional and training opportunities for Academic Professional job holders.

Academic Professional employees in the Executive Director, Director, Associate Director, Assistant Director, Coordinator, Assistant To and Specialist titles will be asked to participate in the initial review which begins in January 2010. Academic Professionals in titles other than those included above will be asked to participate at a later time. Participation is two-pronged consisting of a short pre-interview questionnaire (designed to gain summary job duty information and employee demographic data) followed by an in-person interview when necessary (designed to drill down into specific job duties) with the job holder and supervisor. The supervisor's presence is encouraged to ensure fair play and consistency. *(Continued on page 4)*

# Job Analysis and Job Description Plan for Academic Professional Jobs

*(Continued from page 3)*

The job analyses will be sequenced as follows:

- AP jobs in the UIC Administrative Units and other jobs contested by the Civil Service during the recent audit (beginning in January 2010)
- AP jobs in the East Side Colleges
- AP jobs in the West Side Colleges, and finally
- AP jobs in University Administration that are located on the Chicago Campus

It will take several months to complete the job analyses for each of these sections.

The Human Resources contacts in the Colleges and Administrative Units, each Academic Professional employee and his/her supervisors will receive specific information regarding the timing of the pre-interview questionnaire and the interview well in advance of implementation for the section.

We are planning a series of regularly scheduled communications to keep you informed. However, if there are questions about the job analysis and job description process contact Anniese Lemond, Director of Compensation, at 312-355-4330 or [alemond@uic.edu](mailto:alemond@uic.edu).

## Positive Time Reporting (PTR) Reminder

January 31, 2010 is the date that the UIC campus will begin complying with The State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (SOEEA) and The University Reporting Policy for SOEEA. The University Reporting Policy requires that all Academic Professionals (APs) and Exempt Civil Service (not eligible for overtime) employees will report each week the total number of hours spent each day on official University business, to the nearest quarter hour, on an on-line reporting tool. A successful UIC pilot program was implemented with campus UICHR on October 18, 2009.

It is important to remember that SOEEA does not require employees to record their specific work activities, only the total number of hours spent on University business each day, including evening and weekend hours. Also, this time reporting requirement is separate from, and in addition to, other University reporting requirements and obligations. Therefore, PTR has no relationships with vacation/sick, payroll, or grants and contracts time reporting. The University will monitor compliance with this policy through ongoing internal and external audits.

Questions concerning the University Reporting Policy can be directed to Russ Dickow, UICHR, at [rdickow@uic.edu](mailto:rdickow@uic.edu).



# Special Programs Update

**Retirement Recognition Luncheon:** Photos of the Retirement Recognition Luncheon are available online at [http://photo.lib.uic.edu/cgi-bin/store/imageFolio.cgi?direct=Events\\_in\\_2009/Retirement\\_Luncheon](http://photo.lib.uic.edu/cgi-bin/store/imageFolio.cgi?direct=Events_in_2009/Retirement_Luncheon).

As you conduct exit interviews for retirees, please capture their personal email addresses in PPAIDEN. This will help us better prepare for the 2010 Luncheon.

**2009 Campus Charitable Fund Drive:** Thank you to all who participated in the 2009 Campus Charitable Fund Drive! Results will be distributed next month. It is important to note, Charitable Fund payroll deductions are ongoing, unless cancelled in writing by the employee.

**Save the Date—Retirement Planning Conference is on April 24, 2010:** Details will follow in future HR eNews editions. To access materials from the May 2009 Retirement Planning Conference, please visit [http://www.uic.edu/depts/hr/Special\\_Programs/retirement\\_conf.shtml](http://www.uic.edu/depts/hr/Special_Programs/retirement_conf.shtml).

If you should have questions, please contact Dana Poncher at ext. 3-2960 or [dponcher@uillinois.edu](mailto:dponcher@uillinois.edu).





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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](mailto:OE@uillinois.edu).

