

Values Clarification

History

When IST was established in 1999, a small group of faculty and the dean developed a document entitled: “What We Value.” This document was referred to during faculty retreat and used in conversations with prospective donors and faculty candidates.

Staff members, however, were unaware of the existence of this document, partly due to lack of input into its creation and also due to a growth in the number of staff since the inception of the school.

With the hiring of an interim dean in 2006, it seemed an opportune time to look, as a community and as faculty and staff, at what we collectively value as a new chapter in the college begins. An outside facilitator helped us brainstorm about the values we felt were important and then rank them in order of importance.

At the end of the exercise, a question was raised about the next steps—were we going to stop after developing the list? We decided to take the next step, which was to determine what these values “looked like” and what kinds of strategies might be needed to enhance any of the values.

Hank Foley, interim dean, asked Susan Lucas and Chris Fivek to co-chair a team of representatives of all units across IST to begin to determine what the values look like and give him strategies by the end of the fall semester.

Team members

JoZane Cardamone, Research
Ruth Donahue, Business and Career Solutions, resigned; replaced by Madhavi Kari
Chris Fivek, Human Resources, co-chair
Catherine Hanhauser, Development, resigned; replaced by Shannon Keller
Margaret Hopkins, Communications
Belinda Ilgen, Human Resources
Penny Irvin, Finance
Olivia Lewis, Equity and Diversity
Susan Lucas, Equity and Diversity, co-chair
Chris Milito, Information Technology
Jeanie Peritz, Undergraduate Programs
Marie Reese, Professor in Charge
Stevie Rocco, Solutions Institute
Gerry Santoro, fixed term faculty
Brian Smith, assistant professor
Eileen Trauth, full professor, resigned; no replacement

Process

In September 2006, the first action the team took was to determine, by number of votes, what appeared to be the most important values: diversity, community, open communication, respect, work/life balance, and customer service. Team members volunteered to work in subgroups on specific values. Subgroups met before each full committee meeting, which was held once a month. Meetings continued through December of that year.

Each subgroup developed a working definition of a value and a set of recommended strategies for improvement. The committee as a whole agreed on each definition and set of strategies.

While recognizing that although we were a representative group in terms of the organizational structure of the college, we also recognized that we do not represent the diversity of the college as a whole. It will be critical that after the strategies are presented to the dean in January this document be distributed to all faculty and staff and a survey conducted to determine how the college as a whole ranks the current status of each value. After interventions are put in place, another data collection effort can occur next year at the same time.

Some general thoughts

As the subgroups deliberated on the definitions of values, then came back together, it quickly became clear that our core values are highly interdependent. One team member likened their interdependence to a mobile, where in a gentle breeze each piece touches the others. We feel that such interdependence is to be prized and valued because of the strength it provides in support of IST's mission:

Inspiring solutions...

Through **education** that builds leaders by combining theory and real-world practice

Through **research** that integrates people, information, and technology

Through **partnerships** that facilitate the collaboration of industry, government, and education

Through an IST **community** that respects and leverages diverse experience, knowledge, and values

...that improves the lives of people in Penn State, Pennsylvania, and the global society.

It also became very clear as the strategies began to be developed that there are common, low or no cost, solutions to many of the barriers in experiencing our values. Training and communication are often identified as the paths to solutions, probably not surprising for an institution of higher education that believes in the power of knowledge to affect change. But what also is needed is administrative and management support of these initiatives, otherwise they will not be successful.

Values

The working definition of each value will be described, followed by their rating and strategies to improve the climate for that value. Also included for each strategy is the suggested office to be responsible for implementation of the strategy.

Value: Community

Members: JoZane Cardamone, Chris Fivek, Margaret Hopkins, Susan Lucas

Working definition: The IST community is characterized by a sense of belonging, which is bolstered by an appreciation of interdependence and an emphasis on the opportunity of all to participate that is reflected in working for the benefit of the whole.

Strategies:

- Make faculty and staff aware of the Penn State principles and policies about sexual harassment and nondiscrimination and harassment (AD 41 and AD 42) and expectations that they should act in accordance with those principles and policies (Human Resources, Equity and Diversity).
- Schedule regular time for the dean, senior associate dean, and associate dean to interact with the various units in IST (Dean, Senior Associate Dean, Associate Dean).
- Schedule systematic get-togethers of all faculty and staff in the college, with various units taking responsibility (Dean's Executive Committee).
- Create a calendar on the IST Web site to post events (Solutions Institute).
- Establish the faculty and staff retreat as an annual event, with planning input from faculty and staff. The "State of the College" address by the dean should always be a part of the retreat (Professor in Charge, Human Resources, Equity and Diversity).
- Feature a faculty and staff member in every issue of *Up Close and Personnel*; ask the same questions of all who chose to be featured (e.g., last book read, animals, children, etc.) (Communications).
- Vary the location of the Dean's community interaction events (Dean's office).
- Create a once a month "dean-o-gram" meeting in cybertorium for updates about the college, or have a dean's blog (Dean's office, Communications).
- Establish a committee to develop a yearly schedule of faculty and staff get-togethers and to make recommendations about charities that IST could support throughout the year (committee to be appointed).
- Encourage "grass roots" initiatives to build community (e.g., Relay for Life, Jared's Box, etc.) (Dean's Executive Council).

Value: Diversity

Members: Chris Fivek, Shannon Keller, Madhavi Kari, Susan Lucas

Working definition: A positive climate for diversity is a welcome climate for all people inclusive of demographic background, personal characteristics, and intellectual/methodological perspective, and one that encourages collective responsibility for civil behavior.

Strategies:

- Offer/require/strongly encourage all managers to undergo training in managing diversity. Plans should be reflected in the SRDPs (Dean, Human Resources).
- Offer/require/strongly encourage all faculty and staff to undergo training in managing diversity on the job and managing difficult people (Dean, Human Resources).
- Create mechanisms by which Human Resources and Equity and Diversity can communicate to all IST about what their offices do and the role of confidentiality (Human Resources, Equity and Diversity).
- Develop peer conflict mediation network, which would include students, faculty, and staff training in conflict mediation and team management. This could include quality team training as well (Learning Initiatives, Human Resources, Equity and Diversity).
- Consider offering a series of affirmative action workshops (Human Resources, Equity and Diversity).
- Encourage attendance in diversity programs as part of staff development. This should be reflected in the planning portion of the SRDP. SRDPs without diversity education plans will be returned as incomplete (Dean's Executive Council, Human Resources).

- Create an anonymous way for staff to submit concerns about climate (Equity and Diversity, Human Resources; this may have been resolved with the implementation of suggestion boxes).
- Continue with the practice of evaluating faculty and staff on contributions to community and diversity (Dean’s Executive Council).

Value: Respect

Members: JoZane Cardamone, Chris Fivek, Margaret Hopkins, Susan Lucas, Stevie Rocco

Working definition: Respect is the foundation that our values build upon. A respectful environment is one in which where everyone has a voice and we appreciate each other as peers and colleagues. Respect for each other, their beliefs, and the opportunity to think differently than others is critical for our success as a college. Absence of respect may be related to hierarchy, which leads to assumptions about worth. Respect means that it is all right to disagree; everyone must have the courtesy to listen.

Strategies:

- Create a Staff Advisory Committee to bring forward strategies and suggestions (Dean, Equity and Diversity, Human Resources).
- Create opportunities for more interaction between faculty and staff (Dean, Equity and Diversity, Human Resources).
- Establish a set of ground rules for any kind of meetings, for example, interruptive devices such as laptops, PDAs, and telephones should be turned off or not be brought to meetings (Dean’s Executive Council).

Open Communication

Members: Olivia Lewis, Jeanie Peritz, Belinda Ilgen, Gerry Santoro

Working definition: Open Communication encompasses two dimensions. Ideally information would be available to everyone in the college. Timely, factual information about what is happening within the college reduces the opportunity for gossip and misperceptions. We all need to be cognizant of the fact that not all information can be disseminated immediately due to its sensitive nature. Additionally, the community would be one where colleagues are comfortable enough with each other to disagree and voice concerns. The community needs a certain level of trust and respect for the diversity of thought in place in order for communication to flow freely. In this technology age, we need to utilize face-to-face communications in addition to technology-based communications. The value of Open Communication and the climate necessary to facilitate open communications cannot be fully realized until all other values are fully integrated in our daily operations. We are a team and rely on each other to uphold these values.

Strategies:

- Listservs should be established based on the topic of information, i.e. lists based on tenure, research, curriculum, etc. rather than delineating by “rank.” These lists should be available to everyone that desires the information with the choice to opt-out (Dean’s Executive Council).
- Post meeting minutes of the various committees to keep everyone informed of what is going on within the college (Committee chairs).
- Create a college-wide calendar to include committee meetings and events (Solutions Institute).

- Create an archive of postings so that individuals who are not able to read information as it comes in has a place to go and search for old postings or missed information; this could be set up as a blog or wiki (Solutions Institute).

Work/Life Balance

Members: Chris Fivek, Belinda Ilgen, Marie Reese, Brian Smith

Working definition: Work/life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where, and how faculty and staff work. It is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, office, and college.

IST is committed to putting people at the heart of the college and recognizes the importance of all members of the faculty and staff achieving a balance between work and home life. To achieve this, the college will ensure an environment that will work towards a work/life balance for all, regardless of race, gender, marital status, color, nationality, religious belief, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, age or disability.

The diverse community that we encompass relies on the contribution of every single member of the IST community to make certain we continue to strive towards achieving this goal. Our community is our most valuable asset and is committed to achieving and sustaining excellence through people. This will be in fulfilling the mission set forth by the university as student-centric in providing coverage in all offices and for all services.

Faculty and staff will feel happier both at work and at home, and that will help in the reduction in absenteeism, sickness, and stress. Faculty and staff will be more motivated, more productive, and will provide excellent service. There will be increased morale, commitment, and loyalty to the college. Improved retention will cut out the cost of recruitment, advertising, interviewing, selecting, and training, as well as retaining the skills and experience only time can build. Greater flexibility in approach to tasks can open a door for more efficient and effective ways of working. A good work life balance will attract future members to our community

We make every effort to offer all our faculty and staff a wide range of options to assist them in balancing their work and home lives. By offering this initiative we hope that all our community will benefit.

Strategies:

- Keep in mind childcare issues and family obligations when arranging various college functions/events (Dean's Executive Council).
- Continue flexibility of starting and ending times by area, according to office needs. Consistency across units should be examined (Dean's Executive Council).
- Include commitment to work/life balance into all faculty and staff job announcements (Professor in Charge, Human Resources).

Value: Customer Service

Members: Chris Milito, Marie Reese, Penny Irvin

Working definition: IST is committed to treating each other and all visitors to IST as we would like to be treated ourselves. Every part of the IST community plays a role in achieving the college's mission. Each

individual and office contributes to the achievement of our common goals and the creation of a positive college climate by being honest, responsive, efficient, and effective.

Strategies:

- Interact with others ethically, respectfully, courteously, and with integrity (Community).
- Listen carefully in an effort to understand others' points of view (Community).
- Provide honest, accurate, current, and relevant information (Community).
- Deliver impartial advice that will help customers choose between different options and make decisions (Community).
- Administer appropriate referral for further guidance (Community).
- Identify turnaround time to respond to customers, as appropriate by unit (Dean's Executive Council).

January 9, 2007