

University Team Initiative

AUGUST 2002 NEWSLETTER



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ANNOUNCEMENT

We are pleased to announce the formation of the University Team Initiative, a University-wide initiative intended to stress the importance of teamwork. The Employment Services Office of Human Resources will lead this effort under the direction of Carol Cantrell and Pat Underwood, with the help and guidance of Ida Davis, an outside consultant. We have enlisted staff members from across the University to develop and promote the campaign.

This University, like many institutions, provides many activities, programs, services and projects designed to assist and support its employees, and we intend to build on these existing opportunities. We will enlist the help of faculty and staff in identifying what is working, what services need to be provided, what practices need to be improved, and how these activities can be fostered by team cooperation and spirit. We expect the project to highlight areas for improved communication, more efficient manage-

ment and better use of services; and we will create and implement strategies to address these needs.

We envision a three-phase project that will include stages of exploration, examination and implementation. This initiative will have many opportunities for University-wide interaction and input from faculty and staff. We want individuals within the organization to recognize that they are a part of the University team and to understand their value and contribution to the whole University.

In the coming months, we will publish a regular newsletter and web page that will offer up-to-date details about our activities as well as information about the role of team work in providing a motivated, valued-added work environment. We believe this is an important program and see it as an exciting challenge. We invite you to participate at every opportunity—responding to our surveys, submitting ideas and suggestions and participating in discussions and other events. We are excited about the University Team Initiative and hope we can count on you to help make it a success.

A CHALLENGING PROCESS

Teamwork is challenging. It requires the ability to listen and to express oneself clearly, to see things from new perspectives, to value difference, and to commit to a shared vision or goal. When individuals set aside personal agendas and work effectively as a team, they are able to accomplish much more than they would have on their own—we know this because we are all members of many different kinds of teams in our work, personal and community lives. But while some of these function well, others are less effective than they could be. Teams experience conflict, and can suffer from lack of leadership and from inadequately conceived or communicated agendas. So it is important for any organization to examine the various models of teamwork it has in place and assess honestly what works and what doesn't.

Here at New School University there are many opportunities to recognize teamwork. Preparations in each division for upcoming accreditation reviews, searches for key officers and faculty, and the restructuring of departments and

systems, to name just a few examples, are all processes driven by teamwork. In the coming months, the University Team Initiative will look at existing models of teamwork throughout the institution, and explore ways to develop and improve upon these efforts.

The first phase of the University Team Initiative project is one of exploration and information-gathering, and a key component of this phase will be a series of open discussions about various aspects of team building. To initiate the series, Tom McDonald from the Office of Student Affairs facilitated a discussion on Morale and Team Building, held July 18. Nine participants, representing the Graduate Faculty, University Student Affairs, Milano, The New School, University Records, and the Mail and Duplication Office, came to share their perceptions, offer ideas and propose strategies to improve morale in their departments and throughout the University. The conversation covered such topics as the effective use of communication to bring people together and enhance their knowl-

edge of the organization; and the benefit of having upper management involved in and committed to the team-building process.

OTHER UPCOMING DISCUSSIONS ARE:

August 8, 9:00am:

Teamwork in a University

August 8, 3:00pm:

Building Good Teams

August 15, 9:00am:

University Systems and Structures

August 15, 3:00pm

Managing Change

August 22, 9:00am

Developing Team Players

August 22, 3:00pm:

Room for Creativity and Innovation

Look for additional information in the upcoming newsletter under Employee Services. Reserve early—space is limited. For locations and reservations contact Pat Underwood at underwop@newschool.edu or Sonia Salas at salass@newschool.edu

WHO WE ARE

We are employees from all sectors of the University who have come together to create a more cohesive and productive work environment through teamwork.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TEAM BUILDING EFFORT

- Ask for advice and help from colleagues when you need it.
- Submit ideas and suggestions to the team.
- Create a professional development plan.
- Submit articles on team work in your department—get the discussion started.

Join the University Team Initiative!