

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, January 21, 2015, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Njord Conference Room, Rampton Complex

PRESENT: Carlos Braceras, Executive Director
Shane Marshall, Deputy Director
Amber Mortensen, Region Two
Becky Hjelm, Project Development
Brandi Trujillo, Administration
Carlos Rodriguez, HR Manager
Chris Ransom, Region One
Daniel Allred, Region Four
Donna Beagley, Region Four
Ivan Hartle, Project Development
Jake Brown, Region Two
John Haigwood, Operations
Kevin Nichol, Program Development
Kristi Urry, Program Development
Liz Olschewski, Administration
Mike Cole, Region Three
Ryan Halverson, Region One
Tawnia Lang, Operations
Tonia Wall, Region Three
Diane Josie, Executive Assistant

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. Carlos welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES

This item was carried over from the last meeting. There was a question about the possibility of having flexible schedules on any day other than Friday. Carlos and Shane explained that in the past when employees were allowed to flex on either Monday or Friday, it left only three core days to schedule meetings. The current rule about flexing only on Friday applies to everyone including those in the offices, maintenance stations, shops, etc.

One EAC member asked about the possibility of working from home on Fridays. Carlos said the Department allows telecommuting. The ability to telecommute is based on the individual job requirements and is approved at the manager level.

Another EAC member asked about telecommuting on red air days. He had an employee suggest to him that on red air days, everyone who can telecommute should be allowed to do so. Carlos

said the Governor has not made any announcements about state employees telecommuting on red air days.

An EAC member asked if the air quality improved when we were working the four-day work week. Carlos said it was hard to measure. Another member asked if the state would ever go back to the four-day work week. Carlos said that would not happen.

2. PERFORMANCE PLANS

The EAC member that brought up this item said that as a supervisor, the current Performance Plan does not give you good options to address great performance or bad performance. She would like to enhance the Performance Plan format to help supervisors and employees.

The group discussed the ability to add comments or attachments to the plans to note an employee didn't meet expectations on a specific item, but then can mark "met expectations" on the overall plan. Carlos Rodriguez said it is important for managers to continually communicate with their employees. The group discussed the need to use the performance plans to note accomplishments as well.

Carlos Braceras asked if there are opportunities for training supervisors. Carlos Rodriguez said DHRM offers training to supervisors. One member said he uses DHRM's Utah Leadership Institute as a resource.

Another EAC member noted the steps to handle performance improvement plans are difficult and time consuming. He would like more training on the process. Carlos Rodriguez recommended that supervisors consult with Mary Ann Davis in HR before starting any performance improvement action.

ACTION ITEM: Shane will check into having the performance improvement plan process more user-friendly and streamlined.

Another member mentioned going through a performance improvement plan with an employee, but the decision made by the supervisor was not upheld at the higher level. The supervisors are reluctant to deal with performance improvement plans because they are not backed up at the higher level. It was mentioned that the supervisor should talk with the higher level leader before initiating a performance improvement plan.

ACTION ITEM: Shane will relay the message to the senior leaders that we all want to be on the same page.

Carlos Rodriguez provided the following input on using UPM.

- Going into the UPM system under the "Home" Tab provides access to how to use the UPM. Supervisors can click on to the "UPM instructional videos" link.

- The DHRM State Trainer is available to teach supervisors how to conduct actual performance evaluations, goal setting theory, feedback, coaching, etc. Supervisors should work through Carlos Rodriguez to schedule this.

3. TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE

An EAC member said he thinks team building exercises are a good way to build confidence and team work. Some of the members mentioned they currently do team building exercises with their groups. Carlos mentioned the annual employee appreciation luncheons.

The group discussed the various options for team building exercises. Carlos Rodriguez mentioned the website Mind Tools, http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_52.htm. He provided the following information regarding team building opportunities.

- DHRM offers an orienteering (compass) course to agency personnel for a nominal fee \$250.00 per group (of 20 or fewer).
- DHRM has two trainers who have the capacity to help with team building activities on an ad hoc basis for short sessions (90 minutes or fewer) and small groups (20 or fewer), for management/leadership groups.
- For other team building consultants on the State of Utah's contractor list (<https://dhrm.utah.gov/training/provider-contact-information>) Doug Nielsen Communications and Professional Education are most likely to have the capability to provide team building services. Their fee information is here: <https://dhrm.utah.gov/training/contractor-pricing-structure>.

ACTION ITEM: Shane will forward this information to the leadership team.

Carlos Braceras pointed out there is no new money to do any of the team building activities.

The EAC member said he received a suggestion for a family day at UDOT where employees could bring their families to see the different things we do. Carlos said he and Shane will take this suggestion under consideration.

ACTION ITEM: Carlos and Shane will report back to the Council on the idea of a UDOT family day.

4. EMPLOYEE OPPORTUNITIES

This item was brought up because a few maintenance employees who have a lot of experience also earned a degree. They could be a valuable asset to the jobs they apply for, but they are not considered for the jobs. The employees feel like those doing the hiring don't realize the depth of the experience. One example is the methods engineer position in Central Maintenance.

The group discussed the issue of some positions classified as engineering positions when it's not necessary to have an engineer. Carlos Rodriguez said sometimes we could utilize temporary reassignments or career mobility to put employees in the positions to see if they can do the job.

Shane clarified the two issues involved. Employees that are taking the time to graduate are not being considered for positions. Employees that are qualified are not getting the jobs because of the job classification even if they have the knowledge to do the job.

Carlos and Shane agreed the leaders need to evaluate some positions to see if an engineering degree is required. They would like to justify the requirements for positions before the jobs opening are posted.

Carlos Braceras said it would be good for employees to have a discussion or coaching session with their leaders. Shane said the leaders need to meet with employees to discuss their education plans upfront.

One EAC member asked if Engineering Level IVs could apply for career mobility. Carlos and Shane would encourage the Level IVs to move around to gain experience.

Another member asked about job shadowing to allow an employee an opportunity to experience different jobs. If the senior leader approved, a temporary reassignment would be available based on work load.

5. RANDOM DRUG TESTING FOR ALL UDOT EMPLOYEES

Carlos Rodriguez addressed this item. He said some state agencies have tried to conduct random drug testing for all employees. The Attorney General's Office told them you have to prove a nexus based on the job responsibility and the drug testing. The position has to be safety sensitive.

He said the UDOT Substance Abuse Policy has a list of reasons justifying a drug test for employees.

6. MECHANICS' SALARY INCREASES FOR ASE CERTIFICATION

Shane said mechanics currently earn bonuses based on their ASE certifications. It was set up this way because it enforces the employee to maintain certifications required for their job. If it gets included in the salary, it is difficult to manage/enforce. Carlos Rodriguez said HR will write a letter to any financial institutions informing them these bonuses are considered as base pay per the Utah Retirement System. The employees need to request the letter from HR.

An EAC member said he received input that the amount given for the ASE certification has not been increased for about seven years.

ACTION ITEM: The EAC member will send that information to Carlos and Shane to review and address.

7. CLOTHING ALLOWANCE FOR PAINT CREW

This item deferred to the next meeting.

8. POLICY LIMITING LENGTH OF TIME PLOWING

Shane said the leaders are going to work to address the length of time a driver can be in a snow plow. The group discussed the issues involved in limiting the amount of time a plow driver can work. There may have to be some exceptions.

ACTION ITEM: Shane said the leaders will come up with some guidelines to address this issue.

9. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND TRASH PICK UP

This item deferred to the next meeting.

10. REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNT FOR COST OF CDL PHYSICALS

The Department reimburses the maintenance employees for the cost of their CDL physicals up to a certain amount.

Carlos Rodriguez provided the following link where UDOT new hires can go to get their CDL physicals: <https://nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov/NRPublicUI/home.seam>. He said employees need to check with their insurance to be sure there is coverage. He said employees can contact HR if they have any questions.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.