

## LUOMA ACTION TEAM #8 NEW EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING FINAL REPORT

Recommendations for Anoka Technical College, Anoka-Ramsey Community College and Minnesota State  
June 22, 2016

### INTRODUCTION

**Team Charge:** Develop an onboarding program that creates a welcoming and inclusive environment during the first year for new faculty and staff.

- 1) Develop a proposal for in-person and online new employee orientation by December 2015. It should include a model describing essential elements of an onboarding program and examples of best practices (for example, scripts, agendas, toolkits, web sites, etc.);
- 2) Identify one or more elements of the proposal to be developed and ready for implementation in June 2016;
- 3) Present findings to the system HR community and provide resources for other institutions to develop similar programs.

**Executive Sponsor:** Kent Hanson, President, Anoka Technical College and Anoka-Ramsey Community College

**Team Advisors:** Jay Nelson, Chief Human Resources Officer, Dee Anne Bonebright, Director, Systemwide Training

**Resource Team:** Talent Management Steering Committee, onboarding subcommittee

**Team Members:** Matt Gardner, Derek Hughes, Julie Lutz, Julie Myers, Mike Nordby, Greg Rathert

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Onboarding is often seen as a tool to enhance retention, but it has many other potential benefits. Successful onboarding programs introduce the culture of the organization which can create a more cohesive environment where all employees are working towards common goals. By creating personal connections, onboarding can support and enhance an employee's performance.

#### Strategies

- Ensure compliance by standardizing processes and decentralizing leadership.
- Ensure that new employees understand their responsibilities and expectations.
- Empower employees to take an active role in shaping the future of the organization.
- Foster a culture of caring for all students and mutual respect for fellow employees.
- Strengthen connection by fostering relationships and collaboration and removing silos.

Goals

- Identify an opportunity for HR staff to perform more transformational and strategic workforce planning (HR-TSM).
- Integrate ongoing professional development within employee onboarding process (Strategic Plan Goal 3.4).
- Compile best recruitment and retention practices implemented across the system and develop a common toolkit for searches and retention efforts (Charting the Future 1.3.3).
- The orientation and onboarding process will be scalable for system-wide implementation.

Establishing a strong connection between the new employee and the strategic plan for Anoka Ramsey Community College and Anoka Technical College will lead to development and growth.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL ONBOARDING PROGRAMS

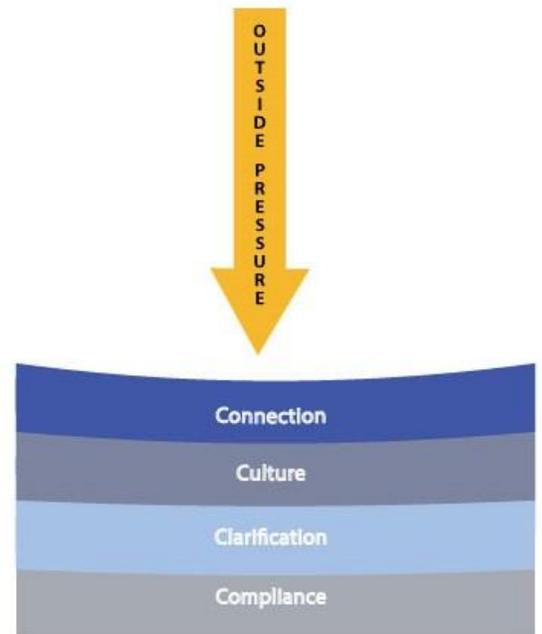
Successful onboarding programs are processes that progressively establish the sequential building blocks for employee success. Talya Bauer (2010) observes in “Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success” that these building blocks can be illustrated with the “Four C’s”: *Compliance, Clarification, Culture, and Connection*. Establishing formal processes and procedures designed to strengthen all “Four C” building blocks over time can create an onboarding program that can be more proactive, cohesive, and effective for all new employees.

COMPLIANCE

*Compliance* includes making the new employee aware of the legal and regulatory environment in which the position operates. They should know the rules and responsibilities of their new role. Collecting the necessary employee data for building the new employee record can also be considered part of *Compliance*. If this can begin prior to the start date, it can provide a jump start to the human resources transactional processes.

CLARIFICATION

The *Clarification* level refers to ensuring the new employee understands the responsibilities and expectations of the job. The new employee will require job specific information and training so it is important to tailor elements of the formal onboarding process to the position, or group of positions.



## CULTURE

Each organization has a story to tell. Gaining an understanding of its history, challenges and victories, and leadership strategy will help a new employee transition within its unique culture. The culture building block can also include how the organization views and measures success.

## CONNECTION

The *Connection* building block refers to the establishment of interpersonal relationships and information networks. Formal opportunities for networking would expand the employee's knowledge of the overall operations of the department or organization which is important in identifying opportunities for collaboration.

## CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Through the research phase the team recognizes that the following are current characteristics that affect the onboarding process at the colleges:

- Shared strategic plan and vision unite three campus locations, two institutions, while preserving separate missions and separate HLC accreditations;
- Newly created professional development committee taking an active role at ATC to address lack of consistent faculty development plans and consistent faculty review processes;
- ARCC has an active committee on faculty development;
- Experiencing growing pains associated with transformative vs transactional.

Based on discussions with key stakeholders, the team has identified the following desired outcomes:

- Deconstruct silos and enhance collaboration;
- Centralize and streamline processes;
- Rebuild a "bottom-up" leadership model by decentralizing leadership and empowering employees to bring ideas and action without directive;
- Achieve a proactive, more agile organizational model;
- Rebuild trust culture.

## CHALLENGES WITHIN THE CURRENT ONBOARDING PROCESS

The team met with the Human Resources (HR) department, Academic Affairs leaders, and surveyed new faculty at Anoka Technical College and Anoka-Ramsey Community College (herein referred to as "the colleges"). Challenges to creating a successful onboarding process emerged within these conversations. The challenges described below likely exist within every Minnesota State institution, and are common limitations to sustaining a successful onboarding program.

**Challenge:** *Current process limits opportunities for deeper connection.*

The current focus on compliance and clarification prioritizes information-sharing over relationship-building, devaluing the roles of community and collaboration. While this helps new employees learn *what* to do and *how* to do it, it inhibits the exploration of *why*. This in turn limits the ability of new employees to establish a deeper connection with the colleges' unique mission and a more inclusive organizational culture across faculty, staff, and administrator constituent groups.

**Recommendation:**

Identifying opportunities for new employees to engage with each college's community, mission, and strategic plan is essential in helping the onboarding process become less transactional and more transformational. A faculty mentoring program will help foster the deeper conversations and connections needed to facilitate this change. Eventually this mentoring program could be implemented for all employee groups. Additional community-building activities could be explored as well, such as: social luncheons, cross-departmental trainings, and employee recognition events. Consulting the new employee toolkit for additional strategies and best practices (e.g., STAY interviews) is also recommended.

**Challenge:** *Current process lacks clear stewardship and unified vision.*

Currently, the onboarding process has shared ownership between HR and Academic Affairs. The team observed the current HR department's limited capacity to offer additional services within their organizational structure. Current HR team members are heavily tasked with transactional business items ensuring faculty are paid accurately and in a timely manner. This transactional workload prevents the HR team from taking-on development of transformational programs like a faculty orientation and streamlined onboarding.

**Recommendation:**

The team identified the need for a clear steward and project manager to coordinate and execute a strategic vision, and additionally define roles for the onboarding process. A consistent and streamlined approach is necessary across the colleges. The team recommends the colleges identify an individual in a strategic position to perform the coordination role.

**Challenge:** *Employees are hired periodically throughout the year.*

Staff and faculty are not hired on the same date. This separation of faculty and staff was further entrenched due to the HR department having separate positions dedicated to primarily serving faculty or staff. Furthermore, the onboarding requirements for different employees, bargaining units, and/or positions are extremely varied.

**Recommendation:**

Faculty are an effective pilot group offering more consistency in hiring and start dates, and a linear timeline for onboarding and orienting a large sample of the employee population. The lessons learned can be modified to apply to other groups of employees in the future.

**Challenge:** *Different appointment types for faculty require variations upon the onboarding experience.*

Key differences and challenges exist only within faculty appointments, such as:

- Faculty may not be physically present on the campus given advancement within technologies.
- Not all faculty members have an office or a permanent workspace.
- Faculty have different teaching loads and campus involvements.
- Faculty may be scheduled to work evenings when majority of campus facilities are closed for operations.
- Assignment terms affect the faculty member's availability.

**Recommendation:**

A universal onboarding/orientation program for faculty would likely fail given the different personnel needs, campus involvement, and levels of faculty engagement. Specifically, the team recommends a unique onboarding/orientation program for: (1) full-time faculty, (2) part-time faculty, and/or (3) temporary faculty. The current recommendations are focused on Unclassified Full Time (UFT) faculty, but can to be modified to other types.

**Challenge:** *Participation and engagement in the program.*

There are current onboarding processes at the colleges, but attendance and participation is not mandatory. If new employees don't participate, the desired outcomes are unlikely to be achieved. Multiple collective bargaining agreements exist within Minnesota State, and within the faculty contract there are many different circumstances that require the colleges to pay employees; however, onboarding and orientation programs are not one of the explicit circumstances requiring pay.

**Recommendation:**

The inherent value of an onboarding program is enhanced through ongoing participation by all employees, so some effort and resources will have to be devoted to make sure employees are fully engaged. When incentives are well-aligned to onboarding milestones, employees will:

- Find it convenient to participate;
- Be properly compensated and/or recognized;
- Find value in participating in the activities;
- Be motivated to actively engage in their ongoing professional development.

PHASE II – 4 C'S MAPPED TO IMPLEMENTATION

A successful onboarding process should be systematically addressing the "4 C's": Compliance, Clarification, Culture and Connection. This is a process that should begin before the new employee arrives on campus and should continue at least through the first year. The goal is to give new employees the support and encouragement needed to be productive and engaged members of the college campus. It should address not only the rules and requirements of the new position, but should connect the new employee to the values and culture of the campus as well and encourage personal connections. It is important that there is a department that is supervising the process to make sure that all important components are being addressed as appropriate

to the position. The team identifies the following initial best practices to consider for June 2016 implementation:

- Create inter-departmental team accountable for onboarding.
- Align hiring process with goals of transformational onboarding.
- Develop online training/materials. New employees should begin the process before arriving on campus for day one.
- Design half-day, in-person onboarding/orientation with managers, peers, and leaders from across the colleges.
- Set up "welcome lunch" with supervisor.
- Provide a college-branded welcome gift for all new employees.
- Establish a growth plan for the employee and complimenting it with a series of face-to-face meetings with a supervisor, department head, and key support staff.
- Create mentor program.
- Implement expectation that all employees participate in onboarding activities.
- Integrate professional development throughout the onboarding life cycle.
- Establish measures for success.

This proposal requires a financial commitment, and executive leadership buy-in to provide accountability to attendance and participation. Reference [Appendix A: Onboarding Gantt Chart](#).

## HANDOFF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation for immediate focus is to establish a person or team responsible for the onboarding program. This person or team would be responsible for:

- Develop Onboarding Program Charter that connects program goals and deliverables to the Colleges' strategic and diversity plans.
- Identify and involve stakeholders in the development of onboarding resources.
- Define program success and ways to measure.
- Integrate the Onboarding Process with the HR-TSM project.

In addition, this person or team has an opportunity to strengthen the workplace culture through a series of connection events. Planning could include:

- Identifying the right incentives to encourage participation.
- Cultivating alignment with faculty development plan processes.
- Breaking down silos by fostering cross unit cooperation.

## SCALING UP SYSTEM-WIDE

A system workgroup will provide a venue for colleges and universities to share proven approaches, missing components, and opportunities for aligning best practices for onboarding.

## RESOURCES & FURTHER READING

A plethora of additional resources are available in the [New Employee Toolkit](#) within the Minnesota State Orientation and Onboarding SharePoint site.

For further reading:

Cable, D. (2013). Reinventing Employee Onboarding. *Sloan Management Review*, 54(3), 23-28.

Eisner, S. (2015). Onboarding The Faculty: A Model For Win-Win Mentoring . *American Journal Of Business Education*, 7-22.

Lavigna, B. (2009, June). Getting Onboard: Integrating and Engaging New Employees. *Government Finance Review*, 65-70.

Lee, D. (2015). *Successful Onboarding: How to Get Your New Employees Started Off Right* . Retrieved September 18, 2015, from Human Nature at Work:  
<http://www.humannatureatwork.com/SuccessfulOnboarding.pdf>

Peterson, B (June 5, 2014). *What Do New Hires Want From Onboarding?* Retrieved from  
<https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2014/06/what-do-new-hires-want-from-onboarding-infographic>

Pike, K. L. (2014). *NEW EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING PROGRAMS AND PERSON - ORGANIZATION FIT: AN EXAMINATION OF SOCIALIZATION TACTICS*. Retrieved September 20, 2015, from University of Rhode Island: [http://www.uri.edu/research/lrc/research/papers/Pike\\_Onboarding.pdf](http://www.uri.edu/research/lrc/research/papers/Pike_Onboarding.pdf)

Root Inc. (2014). *New Hire Onboarding: An Overlooked Element in Sustaining Successful Strategy Execution*. Retrieved September 18, 2015, from Root:  
[http://www.rootinc.com/white\\_papers/new-hire-onboarding-overlooked-element-sustaining-successful-strategy-execution/](http://www.rootinc.com/white_papers/new-hire-onboarding-overlooked-element-sustaining-successful-strategy-execution/)

Talya N. Bauer, P. (2010). Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success. *SHRM Foundation's Effective Practice Guidelines Series*.

Vanden Bos, P. (April 2010). *How to Build an Onboarding Plan for a New Hire*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/04/building-an-onboarding-plan.html>.

APPENDIX A Model Onboarding Timeline for Academic Year 2016-2017

ID	Task Name	Led By	Start	Finish	Duration	Q3 16			Q4 16			Q1 17			Q2 17			Q3 17		
						Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1	<b>Compliance</b>		7/1/2016	8/15/2016	32d															
2	Collect necessary employee data.	HR	7/1/2016	8/1/2016	22d															
3	Credentialing	HR	7/1/2016	8/15/2016	32d															
4	Set up job assignments in SCUPPS and SEMA4	HR	8/1/2016	8/15/2016	11d															
5	Set up employee benefits in SCUPPS	HR	8/1/2016	8/15/2016	11d															
6	Network Security/access/etc.	Office of Inst Technology	7/1/2016	8/15/2016	32d															
7	Keys, Office Assignment, Parking, etc.	Campus Security	7/1/2016	7/1/2016	1d															
8	Scheduling and Load Sheet (FAMA)	Dean	8/1/2016	8/15/2016	11d															
9	<b>Clarification</b>		7/1/2016	7/31/2017	282d															
10	Update/Prep Online Training Materials	Onboarding Team	7/1/2016	8/1/2016	22d															
11	Employee Engages Online Training Materials as needed.	New Employee	8/1/2016	7/31/2017	261d															
12	Set up or Update Growth Plan including professional development.	Supervisor, Employee, Department Head	9/6/2016	9/9/2016	4d															
13	<b>Culture</b>		8/1/2016	8/22/2016	16d															
14	Provide a College branded welcome gift.	Onboarding Team	8/1/2016	8/22/2016	16d															
15	In-person Onboarding/Orientation (half day)	Cabinet, Managers, New employees	8/15/2016	8/15/2016	1d															
16	Welcome Lunch with Supervisor	Supervisor	8/22/2016	8/26/2016	5d															
17	<b>Connection</b>		7/1/2016	4/28/2017	216d															
18	Faculty Development Day	Faculty Development Coordinators	8/19/2016	8/19/2016	1d															
19	Mentorship or Peer Advocate program	Onboarding Team	7/1/2016	7/1/2016	1d															
20	Appraisal	Dean	4/3/2017	4/28/2017	20d															
21																				