Mankato Hiring Process
Action Team Final Report and Recommendations

Background

Minnesota State University (MSU), Mankato submitted an action project proposal to the Luoma Leadership Academy in 2011. The project proposed an examination of Mankato's hiring process for unclassified employees. The project's sponsors are Dr. Richard Davenport, President of MSU, Mankato and Becky Barkmeier, Chief Human Resources Officer at MSU, Mankato. Action team members are Michelle Thom, Normandale Community College; Donna Brown, Minnesota State University, Moorhead; Maria Baxter-Nuamah, MSU, Mankato; Kent Kogler, Metro State; and Jennifer Otley, Assistant Director of Human Resources, Metro State. During the project's life span, Jennifer accepted another position elsewhere and Kent withdrew from participation due to other commitments.

To complete our project, we used several methods. First, we interviewed the project's sponsors, as well as additional stakeholders from MSU, Mankato. We then examined several MSU, Mankato documents used in their current hiring process. Next, we mapped Mankato's current hiring process to determine where additional efficiencies might be achieved. We demonstrated Normandale Community College's current electronic workflow for Mankato staff to determine if it could be modified for use by MSU, Mankato and to gauge the receptiveness by Mankato HR staff. Finally, we made some recommendations, including pursuing an automated hiring process that is developed and implemented in phases.

Sponsor Interviews

In an effort to further define the problem, we interviewed our sponsors last summer during our week at the Luoma Leadership Academy. Following are the results of our interview:

- Mankato's hiring process is long and cumbersome.
- It is the most frequent complaint the administration receives from employees.
- Steps have been taken to reduce the steps.
- The sponsor is requesting that the team review the process and determine if additional efficiencies can be achieved.

Stakeholder Interviews

We also conducted stakeholder interviews. Stakeholders interviewed are as follows:

- DeeAnn Snaza, Assistant Director of Human Resources
- Linda Hanson, Director of Affirmative Action
- Dr. Vijendra Agarwal, Dean of Science, Engineering and Technology

- Dr. David Jones, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Stakeholder concerns were similar to those expressed by the project's sponsors and are summarized as follows:

- Too many steps
- Convoluted process; needlessly complex and confusing, particularly for new hiring managers and search committee members
- Paper-based system too confusing for both search committees and candidates
- Concern over loss of candidates as process takes too long

Document Review

The team gathered several documents used in Mankato's hiring process. The purpose of this was to review the documents to become more familiar with the process used, as well as to consider whether one or more documents currently used could be eliminated from the current process. The documents reviewed are as follows:

- Search Process Checklist
- Position Requisition Form
- Screening Summary Report
- Unclassified Personnel Document New Hires/Changes in Appointment
- Finalist Approval Form
- Offeree Approval Form

Process Mapping

We created a map of Mankato's current unclassified hiring process in an effort to determine where additional efficiencies could be achieved. The current process map is attached. The current process map clearly illustrates the complexities of the current process.

Initial Conclusions

At this point in our project, we paused to reflect on what we learned. Following are our initial conclusions:

- The steps have already been reduced from 35 to 21. It will be challenging—given all the requirements – to reduce the process further.
- Mankato's Human Resources and Affirmative Action functions are housed separately – Given this separation of functions (and offices), it will be difficult to reduce steps further.

- Complex State and Federal requirements related to collective bargaining agreements, public employment, Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity also make it difficult to reduce steps further.
- Institutional commitment to and culture surrounding inclusive hiring by search committee will also make it difficult to reduce steps further.

Site Visit

Normandale Community College implemented an automated hiring workflow during the course of this project. Based on the experiences of the project team member who is employed by Normandale, the project team discussed modifying Normandale's process to meet Mankato's needs. Remaining project team members Donna Brown and Michelle Thom traveled to Mankato in June to meet with sponsor Becky Barkmeier and staff from Mankato's Information Technology and Human Resources departments. We demonstrated Normandale's new process for those present at the meeting and a discussion occurred after the presentation. Based on the conversation, following are the project team's recommendations.

Recommendations

It makes sense to look at the current process and determine whether and if further efficiencies can be gained. Because we may not increase the efficiency of this process by further reducing the number of steps, Mankato should consider an electronic or automated solution for this issue. Correctly identified and implemented, an electronic solution could reduce the amount of time it takes to hire someone and reduce the number of candidates who get lost in the process by moving on to a different employer of choice with a less cumbersome process. Following is a summary of our recommendations:

- Create greater efficiency through automated/electronic system.
- Use electronic forms where possible.
- Use automated workflows to speed up process.
- Electronic system could be phased in.
- Several options should be explored: ImageNow, NeoGov, SharePoint.

Attached are four new process maps that illustrate how the current hiring process could be broken down and phased in. For this project, we took the current process and broke it down into four phases: Position Origination; Candidate Recruitment and Screening Materials; Search Committee Process; and Finalist Offer. Each process map or "phase" depicts activities in the hiring process that could be automated and those that would likely continue to occur "off-line," or could not be automated without a more significant investment. Each map also highlights in yellow a potential step that could be eliminated. For example, in the Position Origination phase, the Budgetary Authority step could be eliminated if that responsibility is fully delegated to the Vice President or Dean overseeing the hire in question. In the Candidate Recruitment and Screening Materials phase, the new process suggests that two forms that are currently

separate – Draft Job Posting Form and Recruitment Plan Form – could be combined and made into an electronic form thereby eliminating the need for two forms to be completed by the hiring supervisor or search committee chair. In the current process, the Vice President drafts an offer letter, which is then sent to Human Resources for review and sent to the finalist. The Finalist Offer phase process map has HR drafting the letter (in consultation with the Vice President) and sending to the finalist thereby reducing the need for the Vice President to find time to draft the letter.

In addition, each phase of the new process map highlights in red a possible electronic form that could be developed to automate the process and make it more efficient.

Other avenues to explore include NeoGov and SharePoint. Hennepin Technical College is utilizing NeoGov for the process of position requisition. St. Paul College is using the Microsoft product SharePoint to create electronic workflows for documents in its onboarding process. The functionality of SharePoint could be explored for hiring purposes as well; however, because Mankato has used ImageNow in the past and has licenses that are current, our recommendation is to consider using Image Now to create workflows like those attached to speed up its hiring process and make it more efficient overall.

Barriers

Just as there are significant opportunities for improvement, there are also barriers to achieving efficiencies in Mankato's hiring process. Some barriers are as follows:

- Cost – An automated system with electronic forms and workflows will involve an upfront investment in time, dollars and human capital; however, the long-term return on investment would be significant.
- Customer buy-in – As is the case with any change, getting buy-in from the customer or end users will be critical. Involving customers on the front end, such as through a campus-based advisory committee, might be worthwhile.
- Human Resources staff buy-in – Already overburdened staff expressed concern about taking on yet another project. This is one reason to consider phasing in workflows. Also, helping staff to understand that an upfront investment of time will result in a future savings will be critical.
- Added complexity due to number of hiring managers and supervisors – Mankato staff also expressed concern about establishing workflows due to the large number of hiring supervisors on the Mankato campus. Information Technology staff should be consulted up front to get their ideas on how this could be managed and maintained.
- Capacity – Similar to gaining staff buy-in, like most campuses, Mankato's Human Resources capacity has limitations due to the number of staff. Staff workloads may have to be temporarily reviewed and shifted to accommodate a project that involves making a significant change to the current hiring process.

Current Process Map

MSU Mankato Unclassified Hiring Process

Complete Position Origination Documents → Establish Search Committee → Draft search materials → Training needed?

Draft search materials → Review Summary Statement of Equal Opportunity in Hiring Practices

Training needed? → Yes → Contact OAA for training → Submit draft posting, recruitment plan, applicant screening form, reference check questions and interview questions to Dean/VP → Dean/VP reviews, submits materials to HR

Training needed? → No → Submit draft posting, recruitment plan, applicant screening form, reference check questions and interview questions to Dean/VP

Dean/VP reviews, submits materials to HR → Revisions back to Dean/VP

Dean/VP approves final materials and notifies Search Committee chair → HR posts → For faculty only, Search Committee screens internal fixed-term IFO candidates → HR screens for minimum qualifications → Search committee screens for preferreds, diversity → Search Committee notifies potential finalists by phone → Search Committee conducts reference checks on finalists → Finalist approval for to VP/Dean, OAA, HR

HR screens for minimum qualifications → HR sends applicant pool to OAA for certification

Interview finalists → Recommend candidate? → Yes → Provide search info to Dean/VP → Complete Offeree Approval Form and submits to OAA, HR → Hiring Official reviews and signs Work Experience Summary and forwards to VP → VP extends offer → HR reviews offer letter and terms of appointment

Recommend candidate? → No → Fail Search → Complete Notice of Failed Search

Offer Letter sent → Candidate accepts in writing → Dean/VP notifies search chair of acceptance → HR notifies unsuccessful finalists → VP submits appointment documents to HR → Search chair submits search documents to HR

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Possible Future Process Map(s)

**MSU Mankato
Position Origination**

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┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│Hiring Manager│   │              │   │              │   │Budget        │   │              │   │              │
│completes     │──▶│Dean Approval │──▶│Vice President│──▶│Approval – Can│──▶│Affirmative   │──▶│Human         │
│Position      │   │              │   │Approval      │   │a Dean or VP  │   │Action        │   │Resources     │
│Origination   │   │              │   │              │   │also assume   │   │Approval      │   │Approval      │
│Documents     │   │              │   │              │   │budgetary     │   │              │   │              │
│              │   │              │   │              │   │approval      │   │              │   │              │
│              │   │              │   │              │   │authority?    │   │              │   │              │
└──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
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"Off-Line" Activities:

- Establish Search Committee
- Search Committee Training
- Draft Candidate Recruitment and Screening Materials
- Review Summary Statement of Equal Opportunity in Hiring Practices – Could this be covered in search committee training? Sign a formthat is good for all searches for one year?

Luoma Action Project Team – Mankato Hiring Process

**MSU Mankato
Candidate Recruitment
and Screening Materials**

Hiring Manager completes Draft Job Posting Form

Hiring Manager completes Recruitment Plan Form – Can these be one form?

Hiring Manager completes Applicant Screening Form

Hiring Manager completes Draft Reference Questions Form

Hiring Manager completes Draft Interview Questions Form

Dean or Vice President Approval

Human Resources Approval

"Off-Line" Activities:

- HR posts position
- Applications received
- HR screens for minimums qualifications
- For faculty only, search committee screens internal fixed-term IFO candidates

HR creates Applicant Pool Certification Form

Office of Affirmative Action Approves

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MSU Mankato
Search Committee Screening
Process

"Off-Line" Activities:

- Search committee screens for preferred qualifications and diversity

- Search committee notifies potential finalists by phone

- Search committee conducts reference checks on finalists

Search Committee Chair completes Finalist Approval Form → VP/Dean Approval → Affirmative Action Approval → HR Approval → HR notifies search committee chair to proceed

"Off-Line" → Interview finalists and complete Screening Summary Report for each → Yes Finalist → Search Chair provides search info to Dean/VP → Dean/VP Completes Offeree Approval Form → Affirmative Action Approval → HR Approval

No Finalist

Search Committee Chair completes Notice of Failed Search Form → HR

Luoma Action Project Team – Mankato Hiring Process

MSU Mankato
Finalist Offer and Search
Wrap-Up Process

"Off-line" → Dean or Hiring Official reviews and signs Work Summary Experince Form completed by finalist → VP Reviews Work Summary Experience Form → VP Drafts Letter of Offer → HR reviews and sends to candidate – can HR also draft the letter? → Finalist accepts in witing → Dean/VP notifies search committee chair of outcome → HR notifies unsuccessful finalists – Can HR also notify the search committee?

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