

7-11-06 Staff Council Meeting

Attendees included members Craig Turnbull, Richard Pickel, Susan Agner, Suzanne Wilson, and Bob Casmus (Council chair), along with Tonia Black-Gold (Council liaison).

Discussed today was the need for a standard exit interview with all employees departing Catawba College. Cited the need to use the data collected in these interviews as an objective way to improve the College as a whole, rather than simply filing the documentation in a personnel file. Exit interviews would become part of the standard procedure in dealing with departing employees.

A concern was raised about using the term "irate persons" in an internal job posting. Consensus was that this term was negative and off-putting and did not reflect well on the College.

Reporting on the Council's continuing review of the grievance policies in place at Catawba's aspirant institutions. At this meeting, the Council compared Birmingham Southern's policy to Catawba's and discussed grievable and non-grievable (theft, drinking on job) employee offenses which could result in disciplinary action. Council members noted Catawba's failure to clearly spell out which is which and cited discrepancies in how some employees are treated differently from others when being disciplined. Discussed the need to nurture, remediate and salvage the College's variable assets (the employees) who are experiencing difficulty. The Staff Council hopes to have a recommendation on how to revise Catawba's grievance policy by January 2007 and noted some new members will be joining the grievance committee.

The Staff Council discussed the need for more in-house training or staff development programs for all employees, training them in everything from responsible workplace behavior to how to successfully resolve conflict, etc. Spoke of the possible collaboration between H.R. and Career Services and scheduling one program per month using local resources (H.R. persons at Rowan Regional, Food Lion, etc.) as program speakers. Students in Catawba's new leadership program could attend for credit, College seniors could use this as part of their Life Skills Training (currently being done by Margaret Faust and Marcia Miller) and employees who attend these programs on a regular basis could "qualify" as a Catawba College Community Leader with a certificate of participation placed in their files. Those attending noted the need for mid- and upper-level managers to embrace these staff development programs and support employee participation in the same. Members decided that they would pursue the first of the staff development programs concerning workplace responsibilities in the spring.

Staff Council members spoke of their desire to turn over the current mentoring program (training and assigning of mentors to new hires) to the human resources office within the next year. Spoke of desire for the mentoring to become a function of the human resources office, continuing the training and system which the Staff Council has put into place.

Discussed plans for a fall staff meeting on a Tuesday or Thursday in October. Topics for this meeting would include an update on the Council's grievance research and recommendations, introduction of new members on the grievance committee, introduction of members on the Staff Council, and a brief session on why public relations is every employee's business.

The Staff Council will not meet in August, but will meet again at 11 a.m. on September 21.