

ADMINISTRATIVE & PROFESSIONAL FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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WORKING GROUP CO-CHAMPION

Rick Larson, larsonrd@jmu.edu

RECOMMENDATION TITLE: Exit Interview System Review

PROBLEM STATEMENT/ISSUE:

- What is the fundamental issue at hand?
Currently, JMU Human Resources (HR) utilizes a method of gleaning information from employees who choose to work elsewhere and leave employment with JMU. The purpose of the current system is to ascertain the rationale for the employees' departures and utilize the information to influence changes to enhance retention. Currently, HR notifies the appropriate HR consultant of every exit interview response and follows up to ensure action is taken to reduce turnover for the remaining and future employees. A substantial percentage of departing employees do not utilize the system, which makes it difficult to spot trends or establish action to mitigate turnover. To promote participation, responses are confidential. Confidentiality limits HR's ability to deal with one-off circumstances, so our system is most effective when negative patterns of behavior are observed by others. The confidentiality also prevents HR from sharing results, which leads some skeptical community members to feel that information is being withheld or that concerns voiced by departing employees go unheard.

- What are the range of implications associated with this problem?
Once employees decide to quit, it's too late to retain them. Implementing "stay interviews" could allow intervention prior to the loss of a good employee. (Stay interview should augment exit interviews as opposed to replacing them.)

The inability to widely share results of exit interviews degrades confidence in the system, decreases trust, and breeds suspicion of the exit interview process. These suspicions often include thinking that JMU will not divulge or respond to concerns and that the university is only motivated to suppress certain truths.

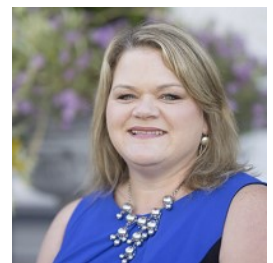
Many employees simply do not want to participate in the exit interview process. If they have a complaint, they fear that sharing it will prevent a possible return to JMU or will "follow them" to their next job. Those who are content on departure don't see a need to participate.

Problem Statement Continues on Next Page

WORKING GROUP LEADERSHIP



Rick Larson,
Leadership Council



Cannie Campbell
Working Group-Co-Chair



Venus Miller, WG CC



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PROBLEM STATEMENT Continued:

- What evidence does exist to illustrate the problem?

For those who do not participate, all information heard about the current system is anecdotal and seldom, if ever, voiced by the exiting employee.

No robust “stay interview” system exists that is designed to retain employees prior to departure.

Responses from interviews to-date seldom reveal trends or patterns of behavior. Often survey questions are not fully answered (especially those requiring richer narrative responses).

RECOMMENDATION:

Conduct research into exit and stay interview best practices to inform ways to modify systems to help insure lower turnover, enhance community trust and improve employee satisfaction.

- What are the specific steps that would address the problem described above?
 1. Research the topic
 2. Confer with on-campus partners and interested parties
 3. Render a recommendation
 4. Request resources (if required)
 5. Maintain, modify or replace the current process based on the analysis conducted
- Which resources (time, money, personnel, space, partnerships, other assets, etc.) will be required for a successful implementation? It is likely this recommendation will require time and possibly money. Until research is conducted and a specific way forward is established, resources will not be known.

RATIONALE:

- What context can you provide that situates both the problem and/or the appropriate intervention?

In the context of racial equity, it is important for JMU to be made aware of problems that may force ethnically diverse JMU employees to depart the university for other jobs. It is important that we implement effective systems to help mitigate such departures or confirm that our current system is state-of-the-art and is already effective.

- Why is this recommendation along with the steps/interventions associated important?

Greater equity and diversity help JMU. Trust and respect are required to ensure positive relationships. These are important concepts that JMU embraces. Being able to verify that the university’s “exit” and “stay” interview systems are state-of-the-art and effective will enhance equity, diversity, trust and respect.

- Do you consider this recommendation to be a short, intermediate, or long-term solution, and why?

Long-term. Employee turnover is an ongoing concern. It may be seen as particularly important in the current employment climate, but the need for good information about why employees choose to stay or leave JMU will continue.

A&P Faculty WG—EXIT INTERVIEW SYSTEM REVIEW

SUCCESS:

- How do you propose the success of your recommendation be measured?

JMU employees report having confidence in the exit interview process.

The majority of exiting employees participate in the exit interview process (or its replacement).

Opportunities for intervention with current employees take place that help employees decide to remain at JMU.

Intervention happens when undesired patterns of behavior that influence employees' desire to leave JMU employment become evident.

- What timeline or milestone dates would be important to identify as success is measured?

Research should be completed within one year of the designation of an implementation co-champ for this recommendation.

Recommendations for change should be vetted (including any required budget and/or procurement process) and implemented within one year after the recommendation (results of the research) is completed.