

# IUPUI Staff Council Committee Annual Report 2014-2015

**Committee Name:** Staff Affairs

**Chair:** Lyndy Kouns / Margo Barton / Kurt Snyder

**Members:** Dan Mathew, Emily Clossin, Felicia Jackson, Greg Mobley, Greg Rathnow, Matthew McKay

**Action Items:**

Action Item(s)	Status
Urban 15 Survey	Comparison submitted to SC President
Review of Strategic Initiative for staff impact	Submitted to SC President
Proposal for idea incentive program	Submitted to Exec Committee
Proposal for staff peer review committee	Submitted to Exec Committee

**Action Items to be carried over to 2015-2016:**

Action Item(s)	Status
Annual staff survey for committee direction	This will be an ongoing annual action item
Further develop/revise idea incentive program	First draft submitted for review
Further develop/revise peer review committee	First draft submitted for review

**Suggested new action items for 2015-2016:**

<b>Action Item(s)</b>	<b>Status</b>
Address communicate loop/incoming is strengthening, feedback loop still in progress	New topic discussed for upcoming year
Work on recommendations to strength unit council's	New topic discussed for upcoming year
Propose an education process for faculty appointed to administrative roles	New topic discussed for upcoming year
Work to establish involvement in discussions should IUSM transicate from Univeristy	New topic discussed for upcoming year

Please attach any completed documents or recommendations made by your committee during this report year.

**Report due: June 30, 2015**

**Submit to\*:** Karen Lee  
Staff Council Office  
[klee2@iupui.edu](mailto:klee2@iupui.edu)

**\*Preferred submission method is via email.**

**Attachment 1**

TO: IUPUI Staff Council Executive Committee

FROM: IUPUI Staff Affairs Committee

DATE: June 22, 2015

RE: Proposed Employee Suggestion (“Good Idea”) Program

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We propose the development of an employee incentive program to encourage and reward IUPUI staff for good ideas leading to cost savings or other benefits to their departments, divisions, or the University as a whole. We have researched several models and examples of employee suggestion programs (“ESPs”) from which we could draw. (See summaries below)

An effective ESP can greatly benefit any organization for two main reasons. First, the successful implementation of a good employee suggestion can yield significant cost savings. Although the university is not a “state agency” per se, it is a public institution. As described below, the Indiana State Personnel Department has implemented an ESP to encourage cost savings. In such an environment, the Indiana General Assembly is likely to look favorably upon any publicly funded organization which proactively encourages its employees to find creative ways to work efficiently and frugally. Furthermore, as an extraordinarily large employer, IUPUI can potentially scale up “small” savings to yield large institutional savings.

- Second, ESPs allow organizations to take advantage of the most qualified resource available – a staff which is uniquely qualified to assess organizational systems and processes. Empowering employees to have an active role in shaping their environment is not only good for “morale,” but also a wise use of subject-matter expertise.

Such programs are typically under the auspices of an institution or company’s Office or Division of Human Resources; whether that would be the case for an IUPUI ESP would be a threshold question to consider. Other aspects to be decided would include:

- What is/is not a suggestion?
- Who can participate?
  - Staff (Full-time only? Part-time?)
  - Students
  - Other?
- Award Criteria and Types of Awards – e.g.,
  - Cash
  - Percentage of savings

## EXAMPLES FROM A FEW REPRESENTATIVE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

### **Indiana State Personnel Department (SPD) ESP:**

A suggestion is “a constructive idea that defines an existing problem and proposes a detailed, reasonable solution.”

- Original
- Specific
- Describe foreseen cost savings or other benefit(s)
- **Not** part of the normal duties of the employee’s position (and not something the employee could implement on his/her own, as part of normal duties)

Suggestions can be “tangible” or “intangible,” the distinguishing factor being quantifiable financial benefits. For tangible suggestions, cash awards are given, based upon statutory guidelines and formulas (i.e., a small percentage of the annual cost savings, less implementation costs; currently capped at \$13,000 total). For “intangible” suggestions, non-cash awards are given – “tokens of appreciation.” Intangible suggestions may include but are not limited to changes in procedure, or safety and health concerns; they are “ideas that may have an overall benefit [that] cannot be measured in dollars.”

The SPD ESP lists many exclusions to define when a suggestion is ineligible, e.g., “routine maintenance ... which may be reported through regularly established channels”; “suggestions relating to wages, benefits, hours of work or merit complaints,” etc. To participate, employees must be full-time and cannot be:

1. The CEO (or principal deputy or assistant of the CEO) of any agency or institution;
2. A member of a Board or Commission;
3. A person whose job duties include cost analyses;
4. A member of the State Suggestion Committee, or the State Suggestion Coordinator.

### **“My Starbucks Idea” Program:**

“The site is at once a crowdsourcing tool, a market research method that brings customer priorities to light, an on-line community, and an effective internet marketing tool.” – Mike Schoultz, [www.digitalsparkmarketing.com](http://www.digitalsparkmarketing.com) (Blog, accessed 6/15/15)

As might be predicted, the “My Starbucks Idea” site is heavily trafficked and very interactive. Thousands of ideas have been submitted over the past seven years, and they are tagged, categorized, tracked, and discussed. However, it’s hard to really tell what the benefits/rewards are for submitters, other than feeling “heard.”

### **Suggestion Programs at other Colleges & Universities**

Links and brief descriptions for about 25 suggestion programs throughout the U.S. (and one in Canada) were compiled. If we decided to develop and implement a suggestion program, we could research the best practices as tested in settings similar to ours. Highlights to consider from a few of these other programs include the following:

- Kansas State has an Employee Suggestion Program, which is outlined in its Employment General Policies and Procedures (<http://www.k-state.edu/policies/ppm/4800/4890.html>). The KSU Human Resources Department has an Employee Suggestion Award Committee comprised of three university support staff members and three “unclassified” members, all appointed for two-year terms by the Associate Vice President for HR. Awards can be a certificate of merit, a cash payment, or both. The Program Application Form and Evaluation Form are available online at the KSU Policy website.
- Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) conducts its program once a year during a May “30- day sprint.” This program appears to be folded into the larger Commonwealth of Virginia ESP, whereby an annual email from the Governor is sent to all state employees, and suggestions are submitted directly to the Governor’s Office for evaluation. The winner of the top employee suggestion receives a \$2,500 cash prize. (<http://www.hr.vcu.edu/compensation-and-rewards/rewards-and-recognition/employee-suggestion-program/>)
- The University of Louisville’s Employee Relations office (ER) has primary responsibility for receiving, forwarding, monitoring, and approving awards for suggestions. The President of the University or his designee appoints an ESP Committee of seven employees to serve three-year terms (reappointment to successive terms is permitted). This ESP includes a very thorough Evaluation Guide. As with the Indiana State Personnel Department ESP, “tangible” benefits are eligible for cash rewards, calculated as percentages of annual savings. An interesting twist with this program is the possibility of paid leave (or \$50 per day in lieu of leave) for adopted suggestions which result in intangible benefits to the university. (<http://louisville.edu/hr/benefits/employeesuggestion/EmployeeSuggestionProgramAdministrativeManual.pdf>)

## Attachment 2

TO: IUPUI Staff Council Executive Committee

FROM: IUPUI Staff Affairs Committee

DATE: June 22, 2015

RE: Proposed Staff Peer Review Committee

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We propose a complaint review process composed of staff peers to assist employees both with locating official resources and provide peer support. The purpose of this committee is to enhance working conditions for all employees and provide a resource for effective and efficient resolution of employment conflicts. *This committee is not intended to replace University procedures but to be a resource for staff.* This committee is comprised of peers deemed eligible by the IUPUI Staff Council Executive Committee. This will be an ad hoc Staff Council Committee.

The committee will draw from a pool of non-Staff Council members who agree to serve as required. Six (6) staff, including committee chair, and one (1) faculty member will assist employees who feel they have been treated unfairly.

Criteria to serve on the committee:

- Full-time staff member
- Employed with the University for two years
- Not currently under a probation period, disciplinary action, or investigation for violations of University policy
- At least one member of the committee must be a staff council representative to serve as committee chair
- The faculty council will be asked to recommend a pool of faculty willing to serve on the committee in a rotating capacity

Who can file a grievance

- Any staff member seeking a resolution to a situation or action believed to be a violation, misinterpretation, misapplication, or unreasonable application of a University policy, procedure, rule or regulation regarding employee employment.
- Employees who feel they are being discriminated against because of protected status should immediately take the issue directly to the University Affirmative Action/EEOC office. However, the committee can direct employees on how to access these resources.

Prior to filing a grievance, the employee must discuss his/her concerns with the immediate supervisor and/or department head/school dean. If the immediate supervisor is the alleged cause of the grievance, the grievant will take the concern to the next level of management.

Grievances based upon a “for cause” termination, disciplinary action, or demotion will qualify automatically for a committee review if a timely (within 15 days of occurrence) request is made by the grievant.

This process not a formal proceeding, but an opportunity for staff to utilize peer support and receive guidance in resolving grievances.

The grievant will be given the opportunity to present the issue and any documents supporting the complaint. The committee will review presented information and speak with involved parties or witnesses to the event. Committee members will refrain from discussing the case outside the confines of the committee; all interactions are kept in strict confidence. At the conclusion of the fact gathering and review process, the committee members will render a consensus opinion and submit to the Human Resources Administration Director and the IUPUI Staff Council Executive Committee.

The grievant may invite an advisor to be present at all meetings.

Per University policy, no employee or faculty member will be allowed to take reprisal action against an employee, an advisor, or witness involved in the peer grievance committee. Additionally, no employee or faculty member is to use an official position to attempt to influence the grievance process.

No member of the committee has any binding authority to act or make promises on behalf of the University; the committee is an advisory role to facilitate and assist employees in navigating University policies.

#### Peer Review Programs at other Colleges & Universities

A brief review of existing peer review committees is provided below. If the idea is accepted, a review of additional policies could be conducted to establish a best-practices assessment.

Kansas State University “believes that its employees are a valuable resource, and realizes that occasional employment conflicts are inevitable when people work together. In trying to resolve employment conflicts among employees as fairly as possible, the University provides a dispute resolution process for all permanent university support staff (USS) of the University (see .130 Mediation) culminating in a full opportunity for a fair hearing before an impartial panel of university support staff...” (website: <http://www.kstate.edu/policies/ppm/4000/4030.html#purpose>). KSU also “provides to its employees both an informal and a formal process for dealing with employment-related issues and concerns” (website: [http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/Employee\\_Resources/p.aspx?tabid=190](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/Employee_Resources/p.aspx?tabid=190)).

Similarly, Alabama A&M has established a Staff Grievance Training to equip peers to serve on a Grievance Hearing Panel to review and make recommendations on “an allegation by an employee that there has been a violation, misinterpretation, misapplication, or unreasonable application of a University policy, procedure, rule, or regulation regarding the employee’s employment conditions” (website: <http://www.aamu.edu/administrativeoffices/hrservices/Documents/AAMU%20STAFF%20GRIEVANCE%20TRAINING%20%28Final%29.pdf>).

The University of Vermont has also developed procedures to provide a mechanism for discussion with appropriate decision makers, “the Mediation Process provides a forum in which parties can freely talk while addressing mutual concerns and the Grievance Process provides a means to address allegations that actions taken by management are impermissible under University policies” (website: <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/hr/complaint.pdf>).

**Attachment 3**

Staff Affairs Committee Annual Staff Survey

What is your job classification?

CL/NU/PN/RS/GS/TE

LE

SM

PAO (non-exempt)

PAE (exempt)

Do you feel you have the support of your supervisor to attend trainings/development/employee events?

Yes

No

Do you take advantage of any of the benefits provided by the University (check all that apply)?

Insurance for family

Tuition benefit

Retirement plan

Healthy IU

Dietician

Please rate the following issues in order of importance to you:

Item 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Item 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Item 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Item 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Other

What can Staff Affairs do for you?

How satisfied are you with the University as an employer?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neutral

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Would you recommend IUPUI as an employer?

Yes

No      Why not?

Please describe your concerns, or changes, you think would be beneficial to IUPUI staff: