



# The Value of Value: What Counts to UCAR Employees

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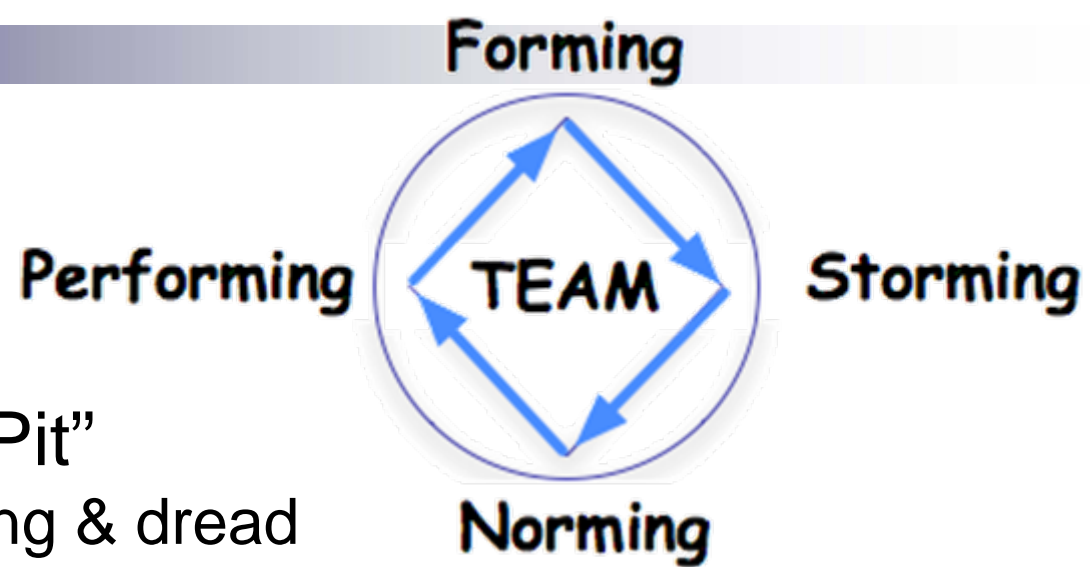
*Presentation to the UCAR President's Council  
8 June 2006*



# Topic From the President's Council

'At a recent UMC meeting, there was a discussion about UCAR culture. An observation was made that a "second-class citizenship" exists at UCAR. When the group was asked if they agreed, many strongly agreed that this existed but there wasn't much discussion about who was second-class or how they were impacted. It might be useful to have a better sense of this (real or perceived) and what, if anything, we might need to do about it.'

# Process



- Wallowing in the “Pit”
  - Clarification meeting & dread
  - Struggled to get “data”
  - Hero’s journey ally: Catherine Shea
  - Policy Review/Meeting with Bob Roesch of HR
  - Literature search
  - Appreciative Inquiry (not a survey)
    - Approval needed by President’s Council, UCAR Legal
- Teamwork and shared effort prevailed
- We struggled but developed great relationships along the way.



# Taking Action

- Mission:

‘The L/A Diversity Team will explore the value system of the institution with the intent of raising awareness of the importance of fairness, equality, and mutual respect in the workplace.’

- Goal:

‘To research and increase clarity regarding the equitable treatment of all employees and how they are valued within the organization.’

# UCAR HR Benefit and Policy Overview

- Retirement, health benefits, retirement age limits
  - Same for all
- Vacation benefits
  - Ladder, project scientists, & managers vs. rest
- Severance, sabbatical leaves
  - Severance: RIS for all, w/ exception of Sci. I and IIs (one year notice)
  - Sabbatical: not for everyone
- Professional development leaves
  - Limited to division/program directors
- Promotions, career path, salary
  - Scientists: performance
  - The rest: job description
  - Salary: Market value
- Flexible working hours/telecommuting:
  - Job and, in some cases, supervisor dependent

# Literature Search Results

- Organizational social capital: employees' collective goal orientation and shared trust
- Results: individual commitment to collective good, flexible work organization, manageable collective action, and intellectual capital
- Created by:
  - Investments in collaborative work, training, job security, and learning
  - Competitive and group-based compensation
  - Rewarding and promoting in line with org. values and goals
- Potential pitfall: possibility of reduced risk taking and innovation

Leana, C.R., Van Buren, H.J., 1999: Organizational Social Capital and Employment Practices. *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 24, Issue 3, p538-555.

# Inquiry



## ■ Overview

- 60 Anonymous and 40 Confidential inquiries

## ■ Summary themes:

- Workplace Environment
- Compensation
- Empowerment
- Career Development
- Recognition

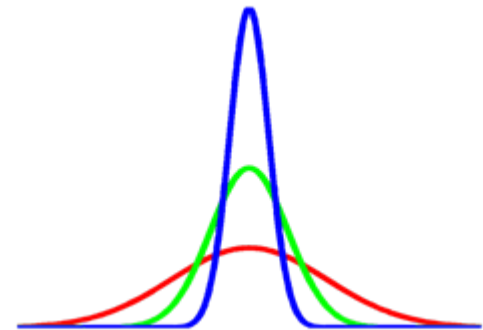
# Workplace Environment

- Most comments about the work environment at UCAR were positive.
  - Family-friendly
    - Flexible hours
    - Daycare
    - Family sick time
  - Environmentally-friendly
  - Wellness events, workout centers
  - Social Events (up-the-hill race, Spring Fling, etc.)
- Some instances of outdated equipment and poor office space impacting productivity.
- Supervisor relationship has more impact than physical surroundings/office space.

# Compensation

“Increase my pay” was NOT the #1 answer!

- The benefits are good.
  - However, there is an undercurrent of PTO inequity.
- Raises primarily reflect range-of-motion, not performance
- “What will it take to get a promotion/raise?”
- People like annual reviews to broach topic of raises.
- People appreciate the bonus/merit awards.
  - But are unclear as to how to motivate their supervisors to initiate the process.
  
- Compa-ratio system not clear.
  - Institution-wide mean insufficient.
  - Divisional breakdown might be revealing.



# Empowerment

*Increase employees' abilities to “use more judgment and discretion in their work and to participate more fully in decisions affecting their working lives.”*

Potterfield (1999)

- Desired by inquiry respondents:
  - Decision-making power
  - Open communications
  - Inclusion
  - Access to resources
  - Advocacy
  - Respect
  
- Primarily at supervisor/group level

# Career Development

- Career Path
  - Clear, clear but limited, none
  - Job Opportunities
- Mentoring
  - Staff want this at all levels
- Training
  - Available vs. budget restrictions
  - Need opportunities to capitalize on training given
- Resource Allocation
  - Concerns run the gamut from staffing to office space
    - Not enough technical staff for projects
    - Office location or type not conducive to work
    - Equipment not technologically advanced for work

# Recognition

## ■ One-on-One

- High rating, big impact:
  - Praise
  - Acknowledgment
  - Expression of interest in and enthusiasm for work
- Annual appraisals – valued, but sometimes only source of feedback
- In some cases, only negative feedback is received – demoralizing

## ■ Public

- Awards – STAR program, Special Recognition, Outstanding Achievement
- Acknowledgment – Writeups, “press,” Web highlights, recognition in meetings (team up to UMC)
- Many requests for new and expanded award programs and acknowledgment venues

*Non-scientific respondents: increased recognition of administrative, computing, education, engineering, and operations staff needed.*

# Observations

Based on inquiry responses...

- Nature and quality of working relationship with colleagues and supervisor strongly impacts employee sense of value
- UCAR, NCAR, and UOP considered very good places to work
- Culture of scientists as elite employees felt to exist
- More mentoring and career path clarification desired
- Level of employee empowerment and job satisfaction spans a wide range
- Acknowledgment and recognition at all levels is “priceless”

# Recommendations

- Invest in supervisor training
- Evaluate and reward supervisors on team-building and communication skills
- Increase diversity of management backgrounds
  - Technical expertise can and should be promoted
- Improve internal communications at all levels
- Treat all employees as professionals and recognize and value contributions of all employees
- Develop a mentoring system useful to all employees
- Improve and expand current awards and recognition system



# Our Thanks to...

Chris Sansone

*Team facilitator and provider of sanity/reality/process checks as needed*

Catherine Shea

*Project ally and strategy consultant*