



# Council of Academic Professionals

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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May 31, 2005

Chancellor Richard Herman  
Office of Chancellor  
Swanlund Building  
601 E. John  
Champaign, IL 61820

Dear Chancellor Herman,

Two years ago, then-Chancellor Cantor asked the Council of Academic Professionals (CAP) to provide a list of morale boosters for campus staff in light of budget and staffing cuts as a means of saying “Thank You” for making it through the year. CAP was pleased that many of our suggestions were implemented.

Never letting a good moment pass by, CAP has created another list of potential morale boosters. We looked at no-cost or low-cost opportunities. Some are changes in current policies. They are listed in no particular order.

1. Review the Floating Holiday mechanism. Some staff forget to take the holidays, which CAP view as essentially two extra vacation days. We would suggest either calling them that, or developing a system where the first two vacation days that a person takes are the floating holidays. If this is not possible, could the expiration date (date to use by) be extended? Right now staff are required to use the days by June 30<sup>th</sup> as they do not accrue. A minimum change would be their availability until the end of the contract year, August 15<sup>th</sup>?
2. CAP greatly appreciates the extra time the Chancellor has provided during the Christmas recess. However, the announcement for the half-day last year created some problems including planning for the holidays. If you intend to extend the benefit this year, could the announcement be made in October or early November? Last year’s announcement also created some confusion relative to office staffing and availability.
3. Another gift provided last year was the free football ticket for one of the Illini home games. However, many staff are not or were not into athletics or the football team for a variety of reasons. As a possibility, could tickets be provided for an event at Krannert such as a play or symphony performance? Could a performance be added specifically for all staff?
4. Seed money could be provided to units and/or departments to develop innovative grass root recognition or award programs for Academic Professionals. Seed money could also be used to develop training or professional development programs throughout the university system.

5. Encourage more colleges to develop a recognition or award system. ACES has an outstanding award system at all levels that could be a model for other colleges.
6. The CAPE award seems to recognize those who have served the University for a longer period, though there have been exceptions in the last 10 years. CAP suggests the creation of a “Young AP” award, or one that would recognize a creative or innovative project compared to service.
7. Verbal pats-on-the-back are always welcomed, yet we know that many times supervisors forget that all it takes is a “thanks” and “well done” to lift the spirits.
8. An AP Appreciation Day could be held in conjunction with the annual AP Service Recognition Banquet, usually occurring in April.
9. Flex time. Consider a 4-day workweek option (Four 10-hour days versus five 8-hour days), or encourage department heads to allow changing the daily hours that an AP works, essentially the starting and quitting time. We realize there is flexibility and discretion, but CAP feels many supervisors are unaware that the option exists.

We view these recommendations as positive approaches toward improving morale. We realize that some of these “boosters” may not be available to all APs due to job and department responsibilities. We also recognize that some of these items come with a real dollar cost that may not be feasible in the present budget climate. However, we would hope to revisit these in the future and consider them more of a long-range approach.

Council members welcome the opportunity to work with you on these and other suggestions. One of our current term goals is to develop a stronger working relationship with you and the campus administration. Please do not hesitate contacting us concerning these suggestions or any other matter related to Academic Professionals on this campus.

Sincerely,

David Robson, Chair  
Council of Academic Professionals

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