



NMU Action Project Declaration

Title: Enhancing Employee Retention and Engagement

Systems Portfolio Category 3: Valuing Employees

Planned Project Launch Date: December 1, 2016

Target Completion Date: June 30, 2018

Update Target: March 1 – June 30, 2017

Sponsor: Human Resources Department/Finance and Administration Division

1. Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve.

This project will address key programs and processes intended to support greater employee retention and engagement. Specifically, the project will focus on development and implementation of a new employee orientation and on-boarding process, an enhanced employee recognition and reward program, and revised performance evaluation processes for staff employees. These programs will be aligned with NMU's strategic plan, mission, vision and core values.

Key stakeholders are staff and faculty employees, union leadership, managers across all levels, departments and divisions, the Information Technology and Services team, the Business Intelligence team the Communications and Marketing team.

2. Describe your institution's reasons for initiating this Action Project now and for how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's recent or soon-to-be submitted portfolio.

There are a few reasons for initiating this Action Project. First, the 2014 Systems Appraisal identified there were opportunities to improve the NMU processes and programs that are designed to increase employee retention and engagement as well as improve the methods by which the institution tracks the impact and results of these programs.

In addition, NMU 's President, who joined in 2014, has worked over the last two years to develop and finalize the institution's new strategic plan and core values. This project will ensure that key human resource programs and processes are aligned with this new strategic plan and values.

Finally, the University conducted an employee satisfaction survey in December of 2013 which reflected opportunities to improve NMU's current performance feedback and evaluation processes for staff and increase employees' overall satisfaction levels.

The programs and processes identified in this project will take approximately eighteen months to develop and implement.

3. List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress for each goal. Be sure to include formal evaluations when the project progress will be reviewed.

Project Goals	Action Steps	Due Dates
Collect and analyze new hire survey data to develop new Employee Orientation and On-Boarding processes by 7-31-17	Complete benchmarking and data collection of best practice orientation and on-boarding processes	2/28/17
	Survey recent new hires regarding orientation/on-boarding experiences to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement	2/28/17
	Based on survey data, design pilot employee orientation program and on-boarding resources	5/31/17
	Launch orientation pilot and resources	6/30/17
	Collect survey data from pilot participants and modify program and resources as appropriate	7/31/17
Create an updated version of NMU's Employee Recognition and Reward Programs based upon advisory committee recommendations by 12-31-17	Refresh NMU's current individual and team annual recognition program to align to new core values	12/31/16
	Launch revised annual recognition program to campus stakeholders	1/31/17
	Complete benchmarking and data collection of best practice	4/30/17

	peer-to-peer and day-to-day employee recognition programs	
	Create advisory committee of current employees across levels and employee groups to develop a process to solicit on-going feedback regarding recognition program ideas	4/30/17
	Based on data collected, design pilot peer-to-peer/on-going recognition program	7/31/17
	Launch pilot recognition program and collect employee satisfaction data	8/31/17
	Revise program based on data	12/31/17
Create an advisory committee to review data and develop recommendations to improve performance feedback and evaluation processes for non-represented, AFSCME, TOP and AP employees by 7-31-18.	Create advisory committees for non-represented and represented employee groups to provide input into performance feedback and evaluation processes	8/31/17
	Assess and address potential collective bargaining issues related to modifications to the performance evaluation process	9/30/17
	Survey employee groups and managers regarding current processes to identify what is working well and opportunities for improvement	12/31/17
	Complete benchmarking and data collection of best practices related to performance evaluation processes	12/31/17
	Design evaluation process, tools, and resources for each employee group and management	3/31/18
	Develop systems to support evaluation processes	5/31/17
	Collect data from stakeholder groups regarding designs	6/30/18
	Pilot evaluation process and collect satisfaction data	7/31/18

4. Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration.

As noted in goals for this project, numerous stakeholder groups will be involved throughout the design and implementation stages of this Action Project. Surveys will be conducted of relevant employee groups to understand the strengths and opportunities for our current orientation and performance feedback and evaluation processes. Advisory committees will be established to provide guidance and input into the design phases of the recognition program project and the performance evaluation processes. All processes and programs will include a pilot phase to allow for additional opportunities for feedback. Participation will therefore include a cross-section of employees across all levels, including senior leadership, union leadership, and both represented and non-represented employees.

In addition, members of the Communications and Marketing team will assist the Human Resources department in communicating progress of the project and designing supporting communication materials. Members of the Information Technology and Business Intelligence departments will partner with Human Resources to update/design the systems needed to support these programs/processes.

5. Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when.

Progress will be monitored based on whether or not key milestones and deliverables are met as noted above. In addition, the pilot phases of the project will provide the opportunity to collect feedback and assess whether the deliverables successfully meet the needs of employees and managers. An employee engagement survey will be conducted twelve months' post launch to determine if the Project was successful at increasing employee engagement.

6. Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

The success of the Project could be impacted by collective bargaining concerns that may surface specific to revising the performance evaluation processes for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Technical and Office Professional (TOP) and Administrative/Professional (AP) employees. These processes currently differ today and there could be some challenges in working towards a more streamlined and meaningful process for all employee groups. Hopefully these issues can be avoided by including union leaders and employees in the design and feedback phases of the project.

Another challenge that may be encountered is the availability of Information Technology and Business Insights personnel and resources to help design systems to support the recognition program and the performance evaluation processes. If we decide that buying a system(s) to support these processes is more appropriate than building in-house, the project timeframes would likely be lengthened to accommodate appropriate RFP, selection, and systems testing and implementation processes.

7. Provide any additional information that the institution wishes for reviewers to understand regarding this action project.

One of NMU's core values is *Inclusion* and one of the strategies we have in place to support this core value is to "Attract and retain a diverse, exemplary faculty and staff by valuing each person's unique identity, strengths, and contributions."

Ensuring that new hires have a successful orientation and on-boarding experience, creating programs that recognize employees for their day-to-day successes, and developing robust feedback and evaluation processes all have the potential to not only impact overall employee engagement and retention, but also serve to directly support greater Inclusion by valuing the unique identity, strengths and contributions of our employees.