

Stakeholder Interview Process

Process

- Five group interviews were facilitated by Mercer with support from the University of Vermont HR Team and Steering Committee.
- Interview questions were provided in advance to give participants context for the discussions
- The following pages outline the key themes that surfaced through the interview process
- Select comments related to each theme are also provided

Sessions

- Group #1: President, Provost, & Academic Deans
- Group #2: Senior Administration Leadership
- Group #3: Human Resources
- Group #4: Union Leaders
- Group #5: Managers

Stakeholder Sessions – Core Questions

Current State & UVM Needs

- What are the key strategic imperatives for UVM or your particular college/school/division related to managing talent in the next 1 to 4 years?
- What changes do you anticipate in the human resources management strategy (e.g. remote/hybrid work, organizational changes, staffing models, performance focus)

Total Compensation Philosophy

- How important is compensation program consistency across individual colleges/schools/divisions? What would be reasons for not having program consistency?
- Is the competitive labor market different for specific disciplines or functions (i.e. where you compete for talent)?

Attracting & Retaining Staff

- What elements of the current compensation & classification program enable or hinder UVM from successfully recruiting, retaining, and engaging staff?
- Which system titles/job titles pose particular recruiting and retention challenges?
- What do you believe candidates find attractive above potentially joining UVM?
- Why do you feel current staff are leaving UVM?

Project Outcomes

- What are the most important outcomes you would like to see from this project?
- Do you have any recommendations related to the compensation & classification programs?
- What questions haven't we asked that would be important and/or what other information may be useful as we proceed?



Stakeholder Sessions – Findings

Current State & UVM Needs

Key Findings

- Many of the current classifications are out of date and too broad
- There are inequities between the pay of staff in different colleges performing the same work (staff move around for pay)
- There are many unique job variations for similar roles across campuses (e.g. academic advisors) which leads to difficulty creating a consistent and easily administered career path
- Supervision plays too big of a role in career advancement - there is a need for more levels to recognize individual contributor advancement
- The classification system needs to have more rungs and ladders and clear guidelines that help employees understand how their position fits within the broader system

Selected Comments

Used to have too many job classifications but now have broad job classifications that make it difficult to advance.

Greatest challenge for staff people strategy is insufficient progression/ladder – need more rungs on the ladder

Employees have seen significant growth in their job without associated growth in level or pay (e.g. increased volunteers managed from 2 to 200 and added responsibility of managing a budget)

It is a problem that we have broad pay bands with different scopes of responsibility included in same band and yet pay is primarily determined by years of service



Stakeholder Sessions – Findings

Total Compensation Philosophy

Key Findings

- Compensation system does not reward expertise due to broad classifications and focus on years of experience
- Recruiting nationally has changed due to remote work – need to strategically manage work models and apply appropriately at UVM
- Benefits, substantial work, culture, and work life balance are important elements of total rewards for some employees. Many candidates are more focused on pay than benefits which limits the competitive advantage associated with our benefit programs
- Centralized versus decentralized decision making should be addressed in the compensation philosophy
- Branding of the total reward package may help to attract good quality candidates

Selected Comments

Great benefits but pay and road to advancement is not competitive

We lost people to State of Vermont and Dartmouth College but two came back for better work life balance

UVM needs compensation philosophy and branding to attract quality candidates

UVM positives are that staff have significant role in initiatives, benefits are good, generous time off, and a great culture



Stakeholder Sessions – Findings

Attracting & Retaining Staff

Key Findings

- Unable to recruit and keep talented faculty and staff (especially diverse talent) due to low pay, limited advancement opportunities, and high cost of housing and childcare in the area
- PTO, Tuition Remission, UVM community, substantial work and ability to affect change, closeness to nature/small town are attractive to some and help to attract and retain good employees
- Often times have to hire at an entry level to be able to attract talent (recent undergrads) – desire to bring new ideas and talent into the organization
- UVM has not done a good job branding the positives (especially to diverse candidates)
- A centralized talent acquisition function would be helpful in supporting a more competitive recruitment process
- Police Officer attrition 3x state average

Selected Comments

Staff that want to stay at UVM zig zag through UVM to increase salary as they often cannot advance in their own unit

Remote work options at other companies has made it difficult to attract for some positions

We need more progression but also need to differentiate between positions that are currently listed in the same classification but perform different responsibilities.

We can emphasize generous vacation and winter break, family tuition package, etc... but a lot of early career people want cash



Stakeholder Sessions – Findings

Project Outcomes

Key Findings

- Transparent structures and systems with the right amount of training and support so that employees can understand how their job fits into the broader system and managers and HR are equipped to consistently and equitably implement the system
- More individual contributor levels in order to provide opportunity for career growth associated with increased responsibilities and job complexity
- Some participants would like to see pay equity based on years of experience and others would like to see more freedom to reward knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Salary ranges with appropriate range widths (not too wide) based on market data
- Job classifications that align with the market and the work performed at UVM (more distinct disciplines in some job families and broader classifications for some disciplines)

Selected Comments

Classification system with more rungs and ladders

Current classification system puts people in the same job classification that have very different levels of responsibility and complexity

Salary ranges need to be much tighter and be more aligned with the relevant market

Pay and road to move up needs to be improved



Stakeholder Sessions – Findings

Classification Related Issues

Key Findings

- The complexity within Research administration is not recognized appropriately in the current system
- Research Specialist and Administrative Professional are examples of classifications that are too broad
- Senior levels often includes differing levels of responsibility and complexity due to lack of an advancement next step
- Medical staff and some extension roles at UVM function like faculty at other institutions (e.g. publishing, presenting at conferences)
- Some job families may need greater delineation of disciplines (e.g. libraries, research, administration, student services) then exist today
- Library has a lot of staff in same classification doing different work
- Titles and Classifications often do not align with the work performed, external comparisons, and/or market data

Selected Comments

Would like to see skill/responsibility based job descriptions rather than task based

College of Ag created tiers for outreach professionals because a large range of duties. A lot of people in extension are PIs

Some maintenance classifications are too specific

Would like to see Research broken down into specialties (e.g. Biomedical, Physics, Statistics)



Stakeholder Sessions – Findings

Compensation Specific Issues

Key Findings

- Clinical research is paid more externally and thus difficult to recruit utilizing general research pay band
- PT Nursing Salaries have not keeping up with opportunities elsewhere
- Extension Outreach Employees are substantially underpaid in comparison to market
- Compensation for IT positions is not competitive
- The prevalence of Bio Tech companies in the area make recruiting for laboratory technicians difficult especially with certain credentials (electrical engineering)
- Compression may exist in some areas due to staffing difficulties (e.g. skilled trades, custodians) inflating entry level wages

Selected Comments

Salary ranges need to much tighter and be more aligned to the position

Marketing and Instructional Design (many remote) are competitive market spaces

Have to utilize a build philosophy due to pay rates

Example of a new plumber hired at a higher rate than current employee with same level of experience



Stakeholder Sessions – Findings

Policy Related Issues

Key Findings

- Need greater clarity regarding the factors driving pay increases (e.g. levels of work, time in job, knowledge)
- Reclassification is not consistently applied and managed and the workflow is bureaucratic (central vs local) and some believe there is a resistance to reclassifying roles
- The broad pay bands are limiting as there is often a lack of ability to hire above the midpoint
- Policies need to be updated and consistently applied. We need to have a culture change
- The right balance of central vs unit resources should be determined in order to gain efficiencies.
- Developing excellent managers may help to retain and attract top talent
- 40 hr. and 37.5 hr. positions and non-exempt jobs paid both salary and hourly add administrative burdens

Selected Comments

Needs to be a culture change to ensure all leaders play by the same rules and there is respect for the process

The justification process within the classification process is not efficient or effective

Some supervisors do not know how to grow and develop their employees which leads to turnover

Need appropriate consideration of where to have certain roles – central or in the unit