# 'ACTION CONVERSATIONS:' REPORTING TEMPLATE

**Date, Time, and Place of Conversation**: Wednesday, October 1, 2014

**Duration of the Conversation:  1:00 p.m. -2:00 p.m.**

**Conveners: Sarah Blakeslee, Annette Heileson, Sandra MacNevin**

**Moderator**: Sandra MacNevin

**Reporter**: Joanne Davis

**Number of Participants**: 7 participants including facilitator and recorder

**Type of Participants**: staff, managers

## Theme # 5 – Staff Renewal

**The major ideas / proposed actions / implementation steps/ assessment of priorities emerging from this conversation are:**

1. **Professional Development:**
   - Staff present suggested that ongoing professional development and training be offered to employees to better prepare staff for advancement to higher positions on campus.
   - It was noted that the CSU system offers a two-day professional development conference each year with breakout sessions on different topics and areas.   It was suggested that our own campus offer a one-day professional training event each year modelled after the CSU system wide conference, to allow for networking on campus and ongoing professional development in a variety of areas.
   - It was noted that staff benefit from the two day CSU system wide professional development conference; and to assist staff who want to attend, it was suggested that registration, travel and hotel costs be covered for staff who wish to attend.   This would increase staff morale

and also benefit the university as staff receive advanced training, and it would also serve as an avenue of advancement for staff as they receive new knowledge to move upwards in jobs/classifications at the university.

- It was suggested that a survey be conducted with staff to determine their professional development needs and interests.
- In order for staff to advance to higher classifications, perhaps they might receive certificates for completing various professional development and training sessions offered on campus.
- It was also suggested that HR publish a career ladder for ASAs and ASCs to AAS positions so that staff know what experiences they will need to move forward in their careers.
- It was recommended that ASC's and ASA's meet regularly through some kind of centralized Academic Affairs' mechanism to share information and keep up on policy changes related to schedule building, workload, departmental budgets, RTP process, etc. and also to learn of possible resources and best practices that would assist them in carrying out their responsibilities.
- The recommendation was made to possibly stagger the processes noted above so that staff are not inundated with these tasks all at the same time (e.g. schedule building, workload, etc.). Perhaps timelines and project planning frameworks might be developed in the Office of the Provost, PRAE, and Faculty Affairs to better coordinate and plan for these processes in consultation with ASC staff in Academic Affairs.
- It was suggested that a website be created in Academic Affairs to share the minutes of such meetings (AA/S meetings; ASC meetings and ASA meetings [if the latter are created]) and to share information that all of the staff need to know regarding deadlines, changes in policies and practices, etc.
- The ASC's noted that they would like to be consulted when new policies or procedures are implemented. Staff also noted that because policies and procedures are changing so quickly, it would be helpful to have

more consistency in accessing the needed information in a timely manner.

- The ASC staff present also noted that it would be helpful if they received regular correspondence from AAS staff.
- It was also suggested that subject matter experts be identified and shared with ASC's and ASA's in the colleges and that they be available (on a voluntary basis) to consult and share their knowledge with ASC and ASA staff, particularly new hires.  It was also suggested that perhaps retired annuitants might work with the University to offer professional development and training to ASAs and ASCs and new AAS's.
- It was also suggested that staff work closely with the Division of Academic Affairs leadership and HR to improve the staff onboarding process.   Onboarding of Academic Affairs' staff who serve as ASC's for example, might have training sessions on how to complete travel requests, etc.
- It was also suggested that a web page be developed that includes frequently used forms, so that staff are not having to search on multiple and often out-of-date web pages.
- Staff also noted the need for mentors to help new hires as they begin their positions at the university or in the division of academic affairs.
- It was suggested that a one-page directory be developed for ASC's that would provide information on various processes and areas with information on who the responsible person is for that area/process and how they might be contacted (phone number and email).  This one page directory would serve as an important resource for new staff.
- It was also suggested that an online Academic Affairs manual be developed and posted online for staff to consult on various policies, processes in the Division, similar to the Department Manual that is posted in PRAE for curricular and other issues (Planning, Resource Allocation and Evaluation unit of Academic Affairs).
- It was also suggested that CMS training be offered to new staff.

- It was also suggested that Faculty Affairs convene budget training workshops for the ASC's and ASA's.
- Note that staff recommended that staff who participate in various training and professional development sessions be provided with a certificate of completion.  These training sessions provide staff with job skills that they need for career advancement and the certificate provides staff with a record of achievement in training in specific areas.

2. **Technological Tools to Support Staff:**
   - Staff noted that the TLP program is a great resource – not only for faculty, but also for staff.
   - Staff noted that they need training in web design development beyond just the introductory phase, as more and more they are being called upon to update unit websites and add information on a regular basis and work on redesign – and staff need the training and skills to maintain websites.
   - Staff noted several other examples of technological training that would be helpful, including the following software programs:  advanced Excel, advanced Outlook, Google Docs, etc.
   - Staff noted that they have a difficult time getting tech support to help them in their offices when a problem arises.
   - Staff suggested that laptops or I-pads be provided to staff to take minutes at meetings, etc. so they are able to be more efficient with their time.

3. **Staff Wellness**
   - Staff noted that sitting at a desk for 8 hours a day is not healthy, and suggested that workshops be offered to staff to give them ideas on how to handle these kinds of work situations and build in more physical movement during the day.
   - Other workshops that were suggested include nutrition workshops and sessions on ergonomics and stress reduction sessions.

- It was suggested that workshops could be held at noon at a centrally located building space on campus.
- It was suggested that email "blasts" might be sent out once a week with suggestions on ergonomics and movement at one's work station or other wellness communications.
- It was also noted that staff would like to receive more support from supervisors to allow them to attend these workshops and sessions when offered.
- Staff noted that they would like use the Rec Center and would like to see the University cover the costs for staff to use the Rec Center for staff wellness.

4. **Building Community as Part of Staff Renewal**
   - Staff noted the successful "Koffee and Kudos" program and noted that they would like to see more of these kinds of programs at the University that show staff appreciation.
   - It was noted, however, that not all staff can find the time to attend these events.
   - It was suggested that the Division of Academic Affairs might host regular events that include team building activities and getting to know one another events, and it was noted that the Division of Student Affairs does this regularly for all staff. Otherwise we have each department and college operating autonomously without much face to face interaction.
   - The Student Affairs Division meets once a month and this was identified as a best practice on campus for building community within a division.
   - It was suggested that we hold more campus-wide events at Chico State to show our pride in the University and for our faculty, staff and administrators to model this for our students.