

DN – Ballou

My response for activity 4 is below. The issues are ones identified by our group as having a high level of concern among staff in libraries and departments. (Our group contained 3 people from libraries and 3 from departments.) I apologize that all the actions are sort of the same: better communication, but that seemed to be the most important thing in resolving of all of the issues.

Issue: Need for better communication. This includes longer timelines for sharing, providing opportunities for feedback, and providing information about who is making the decision.

My action: I will make sure to repeat the information, whatever it is, in every format that I can - one-on-one meetings, staff meetings, regional meetings, and in routine conversations. I also need to get the LM, ALMs, and LLs to fully understand the message to the point that they can explain it completely. I can use time in our regional meetings to work toward this.

My staff's action: The LMs and ALMs can also be better about repeating the message at every opportunity in much the same way that I will.

Issue: Staffing concerns. This includes times over the past year when many locations have had extreme, crisis-level shortages, new positions whose role is not fully understood yet, and a slow process for hiring.

My action: I need to communicate better about open positions and where we are in the process, continue to help clarify the role of new positions such as lead librarians, empower and encourage LMs and ALMs to work on the interviewing process for any open positions as much as they are trained and ready to do, and to be as available as possible to assist with interviews whenever that is needed within my region.

My supervisor/library administration actions: Clarify what changes are coming for Human Resources, especially given the existing staff shortages there, and how that might possibly improve/speed up the hiring process.

Issue: Staff feeling undervalued. The areas specifically noted within our group as causes were the staff perception of turnover, especially of some long-term employees, loss of the staff recognition dinner, and the 'corporatizing' of the library system. A concern was expressed among some staff that business plans, metrics, and changes in titles such as 'chief' rather than director are all indicators that the system only cares about the bottom line and not about people.

My action: Although I may not always be able to explain an employee departure, I can clarify understanding of the changes with the business plans and metrics and share more about the plans for continuing staff appreciation in different ways. And, I can remain cognizant of this concern and do my best to routinely show that I value the work and input from all.

My supervisor/library administration actions: Explain more about the purpose of moving to a business model and of changes that may not seem significant such as the change in title to "chief."