ULEAD Project

The University as an Employer of Choice

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Introduction

Organizations are constantly looking to build and maintain a workplace that attracts potential employees with high-level skills while retaining employees with high performance. (Bellou et al, 2015) These efforts may include using programs, perks, and best practices to market the organization to potential and current employees. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill) is no exception as it strives to find ways to accomplish the goal of attracting and retaining high-quality employees. In the past, major universities like UNC-Chapel Hill were able to attract the best and brightest employees simply by being a major university. In today’s highly competitive employment environment where job aggregators make nationwide job searches fast and relatively low-effort, universities struggle to differentiate themselves and compete for high-quality employees. This competitive environment is particularly true for non-academic (staff as opposed to faculty) positions where job-seekers can readily work in both academic and private industry settings. In this project, we reviewed approaches being currently used by both academic and non-academic large employers to determine what employer branding strategies are being successfully used and what employees find desirable. (Amber et al, 1996) This information was used to identify areas of strength at UNC-Chapel Hill and also to suggest where improvements can be made to improve UNC-Chapel Hill’s brand as an employer of choice. (Ghadeer et al, 2016)

The intended audience for this report includes senior campus management and senior Office of Human Resources (OHR) officials – both central OHR as well as Human Resources (HR) units within individual departments/programs at UNC-Chapel Hill. The target for our project product is prospective and current UNC-Chapel Hill employees. Increasing perceived and the real value of employment at UNC-Chapel Hill will attract and retain talent in the many and highly diverse operational areas inherent in a large research university.

We approached this topic from several directions. We started by reviewing available HR literature to identify what prospective employees find attractive in an employer outside of traditional core benefits like health care and retirement savings to identify areas where UNC-Chapel Hill can differentiate from competing employers. We conducted interviews with multiple individuals at UNC-Chapel Hill within and outside of OHR to broaden our understanding of the current situation at UNC-Chapel Hill and get a sense of what was working and what could use improvement. We then used benchmarking to compare UNC-Chapel Hill to peer institutions and large regional employers for comparison of programs, perks, and best practices to see what already existed and what could be applied at UNC-Chapel Hill to further the institution as an employer of choice. We also utilized the results of the recently released UNC System Employee Engagement Survey to confirm information gained from our other sources.

From all of this information, we developed a set of specific recommendations to utilize employer branding to attract and retain talent at UNC-Chapel Hill within today’s competitive marketplace. We divided these recommendations into those that could be implemented in short (less than one year), medium (1-2 years) and long (2-5 years) term. If implemented, these strategies will have a meaningful impact on the ability of UNC-Chapel Hill to attract and retain desirable employees for the many different types of jobs/professions at work on our campus.
Definition of Employer of Choice

Employer of choice is a well-established concept in the areas of employee relations, business, and human resources. An employer of choice, quite simply, is an employer that employees want to work for, one that employees would choose in a marketplace where employees have job options. Bellou et al (2015) write that the term ‘employer of choice (EOC)’ refers to an employer who attracts the most talented employees by possessing appealing attributes, and “who inspires highly talented workers to join them and stay with them.” (p.1203) Herman and Gioia (2001) argue that, for employers of all types and sizes to thrive, they need the competitive edge that being an employer of choice affords, allowing them to, “locate, attract, optimize, and retain the talent they need to serve their customers.” (p. 63)

Why It Matters at UNC-Chapel Hill

UNC-Chapel Hill is the largest employer in the county, but it is far from the only employment option in the area. The Triangle as a region is home to a wide diversity of local, state, regional, and national companies. Research Triangle Park (RTP) is the largest research park in the nation, and over 60,000 people work in its various companies, labs, and centers. (“Research Triangle Park,” n.d.) There are many higher education institutions, hospitals, and health care systems operating in the Triangle, and Forbes notes that the greater Raleigh metropolitan area is among the growing in the United States. (Sharf, 2018) All of that means that employees in this area, regardless of their type of work, do have choices. Carolina will always attract people just owing to the nature of it as such a large employer in the area, but that passive attraction isn’t enough for optimal performance. For Carolina to do its best, be its best, UNC-Chapel Hill needs to be an employer of choice, the one who attracts top employees, supports them in ways to sustain high performance, and retains them.

An employer benefits from being an employer of choice. Herman and Gioia (2001) describe several positive outcomes from employers beyond just attracting top talent. Marketing and recruitment expenses are reduced, performance quality and productivity increase, turnover declines while loyalty is enhanced, and the company’s reputation grows among external constituents like investors and customers. We can easily see how strengthening a corporate or institutional reputation feeds back into the recruiting and how quickly gains in one area of the organization can power continued or increased gains in other areas.

Conceptual Framework

We worked with the conceptual framework from Bellou et al based on their research into the employee perspective on employer brand and employer of choice. Their research describes the characteristics of an employer of choice from the employee perspective. Bellou and her coauthors synthesized these areas as the most important benefits or organizational characteristics of an employer brand of choice.
Figure 1: Bellou et al, p.1206

Given the institutional and academic context in which we were working, we considered some of their similar areas jointly and focused on 5 of the key areas identified in their framework.

We considered **Relationship** broadly to capture both the concept of the Relationships with Colleagues Relationship with Managers. **Recognition** is described as not only having your contributions recognized and valued, but also includes more nuanced dimensions. Examples include welcoming new hires in a way that allows them to feel the importance of their role and having staff having opportunities to use their ideas and creativity in their work. We took **Image** broadly to cover both the idea of Commercial (or Organizational) Image and Social Image; this area covers a sense of an organization’s reputation, the reputation of the work or services it does and its engagement within the community and social responsibility. We considered both Salary and Added Benefits together as **Remuneration**. **Self-Development** includes not only having opportunities to learn and grow but also staff having a sense of the company’s commitment to being a place of ongoing learning, feeling like your development matters to the organization.

The boundaries of these various areas aren’t discrete. Specific organizational gains or shortcomings might impact several of these areas. For instance, a terrific onboarding program would lay the groundwork for gains in the areas of Relationships, Recognition, and Image right away, but could also set the tone for a strong sense of Self-Development.

**Sources of Information**

Our group aimed to identify programs, benefits, and best practices that can help (a) brand UNC-Chapel Hill as an employer of choice in a competitive environment, and (b) attract high-quality employees. Multiple data collection approaches—desktop reviews, in-depth interviews, website reviews, and surveys—were used to gather information on broad array issues that facilitate the
attraction and retention of top talents at UNC-Chapel Hill. The primary sources of information included articles, key informants, websites, and secondary data.

**Literature Review:** Our review of the literature focused on two broad concepts—employer of choice and branding. After an extensive review of a range of models of employee attraction and retention, we identified the mode of Bellou, Chaniotakis, Kehagias and Rigopoulou’s (2015) because it offered the most compelling explanation of employer of choice from the perspective of the employee. Bellou and colleagues’ model emphasized relationship, recognition, image, remuneration, and self-development as key distinguishing characteristics of the most employer of choice. The authors also provide a conceptually sound explanation of how an employer of choice has a higher likelihood of attracting new employees, creating a sense of job satisfaction, and retaining existing employees.

**Key Informants:** Three sets of interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data for the project from the perspective of employers, industry, and employees. Participants were selected because they were considered experts on this subject. The first set of interviews involved key informant interviews with UNC-Chapel Hill leadership namely,
- Linc Butler, Associate Vice Chancellor Human Resource
- Kathy Bryant, Senior Director of Human Resource Communications
- Noreen Montgomery, Senior Director of Employment
- Jessica Pygas, Work-life and Wellness Manager
- Shayna Hill, Chair of the Employee forum

The second set of interviews focused on gathering data on the concept of the employer of choice and branding from an industry perspective. Regina Stabile, FOIA Supervisor, was the key informant interview on this perspective.

The third set of interviews were less structured and focused on gathering data with employees from different departments and schools. The overarching goal of these unstructured interviews was to get insight from employees on the elements that [could] make the university an employer of choice.

An interview guide was developed to guide the data collection process. The interview guide had a set of open-ended questions tailored to the topic of interest (see appendix A-G for a list of questions). The interview guide was designed to solicit open-ended discussions. Additional follow-up questions were built in to facilitate probing of interviewee responses.

**Website Review:** Website reviews (appendix I) were conducted across 15 peer institutions to gather information on the benefits and programs offered by those institutions and which of these perks and programs could be adapted and implemented at UNC-Chapel Hill. The peer institutions were identified by the UNC System as peer institutions for UNC-Chapel Hill. (see appendix H) The key informant interviews corroborated the list of peer institutions. The three focus areas of the website review were (a) core benefits (health insurance, dental, etc.), (b) non-core benefits (tuition assistance, discounts, etc.), and (c) the gaps between UNC-Chapel Hill’s benefits and that of the peer institutions.

**Secondary survey data:** Our project also relied on quantitative data previously collected by UNC System. UNC-Chapel Hill participated in a system-wide survey administered by ModernThink LLC. and aimed at achieving the goal “higher expectation” of UNC System (UNC System Engagement Survey, n.d.) The engagement survey is also in alignment with the strategic framework of “Blueprint for Next” which is specific to UNC-Chapel Hill. The survey consists of questions on employee engagement, job satisfaction, and benefits satisfaction. The survey was
administered in Spring 2018 and will be repeated in Winter 2020. The timely release of the outcome of the employee engagement survey was useful. The survey data focused on areas that the UNC-Chapel Hill has opportunities for growth. The survey was helpful because it confirmed some identified trends from the other sources of information described earlier. It helped to shape some of our recommendations and would be useful in measuring success after the implementation of our recommendations.

**UNC-Chapel Hill Strengths and Gaps**
After triangulating and synthesizing the information gathered from the multiple sources identified above, we identified some assets and areas for growth at UNC-Chapel Hill. These strengths and gaps are by no means an exhaustive list; they are the ones that this group has chosen to focus on in this project.

*Identified Strengths*
These identified strong suits are the foundations that could propel implementation of recommendations or could form the foundation to launch other recommended initiatives. We identified that current employees are the most potent tool for attracting potential employees to the University. UNC-Chapel has employees with a diverse set of experiences and from different backgrounds; this diversity is paramount to attracting talented employees who appreciate diversity in the workplace. Employees at UNC-Chapel Hill also seem connected to the mission of the University and are proud to be associated with the great cause of UNC-Chapel Hill. Employees also value their autonomy and how their jobs fit their skills.

Similarly, the University has existing well-defined structures and systems in place. Some of the current systems include clear channels of communication that enhance communication between and within departments. Above all, the location of UNC-Chapel Hill is excellent, as it provides access to many amenities in the larger Triangle area, and offers opportunities for families. It is also worth noting that UNC-Chapel Hill leadership have taken steps to assess and address issues of employee engagement on campus.

*Identified Gaps*
In spite of the strengths of UNC-Chapel Hill, there are areas for growth. The identified gaps are opportunities for the University to make strides towards becoming an employer of choice. One of the gaps identified is the lack of a prominent employer presence on the website. The current presence of UNC-Chapel Hill as an employer on the main webpage makes it difficult for potential employees to identify jobs and benefits for employees. It is difficult to navigate the webpage to “jobs and careers” from UNC-Chapel Hill main page. The difficulty in the website navigation could send unfavorable messages about how UNC-Chapel Hill values its employees. Also, employees seem to have different “understanding” of what it means to be an employee at UNC-Chapel Hill. Employees identified with their departments or schools but lacked a central identity as an employee of UNC-Chapel Hill. Thus, UNC-Chapel Hill needs a cohesive message on what it means to work at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Likewise, there are gaps in benefit offerings at UNC-Chapel Hill compared to other peer institutions. Notwithstanding the challenges and complexities around issues relating to benefits, there could be improvements around the non-core benefits. For example, there could be improvements around tuition benefits and the increase in discounts that are available to employees. It is worth noting that employees were not aware of all of the benefits currently
available to them and therefore may not be utilizing these benefits. Improving employee knowledge of benefits currently available could be the first step to identifying what employees are interested in and therefore what needs to be added, continued, and improved, or discontinued.

The final gap we identified was lack of employee collaboration. We define a lack of employee collaboration as the limited involvement of employees in making decisions on issues that affected them. Employees indicated that they did not have input into changes that influenced them, suggesting that they do not necessarily have buy-in in changes that ultimately affected them. The lack of collaboration with employees could create a disconnect with the University as a whole even if employees felt connected to their departments or schools. An improvement in this area could lead to an increase in overall employee engagement.

Recommendations

Based on our data sources and identified gaps, we came up with a set of short term, medium term, and long-term recommendations that would work best at UNC-Chapel Hill. We identified three recommendations per term, for a total of nine recommendations. In coming up with our short and medium-term recommendations, we focused on utilizing existing tools or channels and minimizing costs, whereas our long-term recommendations would require more resources. We will now discuss our short, medium, long-term recommendations in further detail.

Short Term (less than one year)
Our short-term recommendations are those that we believe can be implemented in less than one year. The first short-term recommendation is to have a more prominent employer presence on UNC-Chapel Hill’s (www.unc.edu) homepage. To best illustrate this, below is a screenshot of the very bottom of our current homepage:
In the lowest right-hand corner, you will see “Working at Carolina,” which is the only employer presence that exists on the main page. This placement can be difficult for a potential applicant to find or navigate to and therefore we may be missing out on highly-qualified applicants.

In contrast, below is a screenshot of the University of Wisconsin’s homepage:

There is a much larger employer presence centrally located on their homepage. For a potential applicant, this is easy to find and navigate to and could contribute to a larger qualified applicant pool for the organization. Therefore, we propose that UNC-Chapel Hill have a prominent presence which means a more visible, easy to find employer presence to attract applicants. Creating a prominent employer presence could be as simple as adding a “Jobs” tab at the top of the homepage.

Our second short-term recommendation is to have a more attractive, easy to navigate benefits page. From our website reviews of UNC-Chapel Hill’s 15 peer institutions (see Appendices H and I), we found that many of our peers had a more attractive and informative benefits page that listed and clearly explained their core and non-core benefits. Core benefits are those such as health insurance, retirement, and dental; whereas, non-core benefits are those such as tuition waivers, child care, and discounts and perks.

Currently, our benefits webpage (https://hr.unc.edu/benefits/) does not have too much color, appealing pictures, or succinct explanations/definitions that would aid a prospective employee who is perusing potential employers’ websites to make an employment decision. From our interview with Kathy Bryant, former Senior Director of HR Communications, we learned that from August 2017 to August 2018, the OHR website received 1,838,259 page views (K. Bryant, personal communication, September 27, 2018). Therefore, we think it is imperative that UNC-Chapel Hill revamped the benefits webpage to make sure we are capitalizing on what we already offer. We recommend that UNC-Chapel Hill look to peers who are doing this well. For example,
through our website reviews, one peer who we identified as having an exemplary benefits page, was University of Michigan (https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness).

Our third and last short-term recommendation is to create employee focus groups. The purpose of these focus groups would be to develop initiatives that will further address the issues that were identified from the results of the UNC System Employee Engagement Survey. Employee focus groups focus on a “bottom-up” approach as opposed to a “top-down” approach, which can enhance communication between different levels of employees and instill a longer-term culture change where employees feel more empowered and engaged. A possible implementation method for this could be similar to the method used in rolling out ConnectCarolina in which Major Organizational Unit Leads (MOUs) and HR Officers identified employees in each School/Division to help lead the change.

Medium Term (one to two years)
For our medium-term recommendations, we foresee these implemented within one to two years. Our first and most important medium-term recommendation is to promote a central identity that defines what it means to be an employee of UNC-Chapel Hill and fosters a sense of belonging at this institution across all employees and all departments. During interviews with our fellow employees, we found that there is not a universal understanding of what it means to work here, what we all share regarding core values, and why we are all here. A prime example of this is the lack of definition in the term “The Carolina Way.” “Carolina Way” is a well-known phrase many students, staff, and faculty have encountered. However, the phrase means something different to every individual. When interviewing employees on what it meant to them, we received a wide range of varied responses.

One way we propose to address this identity issue is through the “Carolina Blue” campaign. Our interview with Noreen Montgomery, Senior Director of Employment and Staffing, informed us that the “Carolina Blue” campaign has been tremendously successful as a marketing tool in the new employee orientation program (N. Montgomery, personal communication, September 27, 2018). Therefore, we suggest that the “Carolina Blue” campaign be utilized to develop and define common employee values and remind us that we are all on the same team. We recognize that there are on-going campaigns such as “Blueprint for Next” that perhaps this can be tied into, but nothing currently exists that solely focuses on targeting employees.

Our second medium-term recommendation is to retool existing communication channels to highlight the discounts and perks available to employees. Through our interviews, we found that many employees, particularly those that have not gone through the new employee orientation program, do not know about the various discounts and perks we offer such as cell phone carrier, wholesale membership, hotel, and travel discounts. One avenue to better communicate these is through the Total Compensation Statement, an overview of the financial value of employer-provided benefits that all employees receive on an annual basis. Currently, there is only a reference/link on the back of the statement to discounts and perks. Instead, we recommend adding a section or creating an insert that lists all the discounts and perks available and the dollar amount in potential savings an employee could earn. Another existing communication channel that could be used to highlight discount and perks is the WorkWell monthly newsletter. WorkWell newsletter is a digital monthly newsletter to UNC-Chapel Hill faculty and staff from the Office of Human Resources. According to Jessica Pyjas, Work-Life & Wellness Manager,
the newsletter has been well received and read by employees (J. Pyjas, personal communication, September 27, 2018).

The third and last medium-term recommendation is to incorporate employee engagement strategies into Blueprint for Engaged Supervisor Training (BEST). BEST is a required in-person training for supervisors of SHRA permanent employees that covers some topics that mainly focus on policies and procedures about their role as a supervisor at UNC-Chapel Hill. We recommend adding a section to the BEST that gives supervisors tips on how to better engage employees. For example, as we learned in our ULEAD program when holding meetings, supervisors should ask themselves the following questions: 1.) Are the right people present? 2.) Is anyone missing that should be here?

Also, during meetings, supervisors should also ask for input from the least senior employee first. This inclusive approach encourages information sharing, idea generation, employee buy-in, and also contributes to a long-term culture change in which increased communication between leadership and employees promotes teamwork and ultimately employees’ sense of belonging to the greater institution.

Long Term (two to five years)

Admission for Employee Dependents: With 80% of responders to the UNC System Engagement Survey stating “I am proud to be part of this institution” (UNC System Employee Engagement Survey, N.D.) it stands to reason that many of the children of faculty/staff would consider UNC-Chapel Hill when choosing post-secondary education for multiple reasons, including but not limited to:

- The reputation of the institution
- Rigorous academic programs at UNC-Chapel Hill
- Option to live at home and thus reduce the cost of a college education

As a highly regarded, competitive university it has never been easy to obtain admission to UNC-Chapel Hill. Becoming more difficult, even for in-state residents like the children of faculty/staff. In-state acceptance rates at UNC-Chapel Hill have fallen from 53% in 2014 to 41% in 2018. (Meeks, 4/18/2018)(Class Profile 2018, N.D.). Contributing factors to this decline in acceptance rates include:

- Increasing number of applications
- UNC-Chapel Hill focus on rural county admissions

Increasing number of applications are likely attributable to multiple factors, including the strength of the economy in recent years. UNC-Chapel Hill’s focus on and commitment to rural county admissions is very positive – making the resources (UNC-Chapel Hill) that all North Carolinians contribute to through their tax dollars available to citizens across the state.

While both factors contributing to the decline in in-state acceptance rates are admirable, an unintended consequence is likely that it is becoming more difficult for students from less rural counties to gain admission at UNC-Chapel Hill. The inability to gain admission more heavily impacts the children of faculty/staff since the counties immediately surrounding UNC-Chapel Hill (like Orange, Wake, Durham) are less rural, and also where many if not most of UNC-Chapel Hill faculty and staff reside.

To help offset this and provide an additional (revenue neutral) benefit to faculty/staff at UNC-Chapel Hill we are proposing a clearly defined and rigorous “Guaranteed Admission” program
for tax-dependent children of current UNC-Chapel Hill staff and faculty. Such programs are not without precedent in other public university systems. For example (Smith, October 2013):

- Texas Education Code §51.801-51.809 states that each public university shall admit high school students from the state of Texas who graduate in the top 10% of their high school class
- California State University System “guarantees admission to a student’s local CSU campus if they meet defined system admissions requirements.”
- Florida “Talented Twenty Program” guarantees admission to students at (at least) one of the 12 state universities in Florida for students who succeed in K-12 public schools
- Iowa guarantees admission to any public university in Iowa for in-state students who score above a cutoff on their “Regent Admission Index” which takes into account class rank, standardized test scores, and number of completed courses in core areas (English, math, natural science, social science, foreign language)

Proposal – Guaranteed admission to UNC-Chapel Hill for any dependent of a current UNC-Chapel Hill faculty/staff member (at least five years’ service at the time of application) who meets or exceeds defined academic statistics for admitted first-year students from the previous year. The specifics of the criteria will need to be critically examined before implementation, but suggested minimum criteria include class rank, GPA, and standardized test scores. By way of example, the fall 2018 incoming first-year students at UNC-Chapel Hill had the following statistics:

- 78% were in the top 10% of their high school graduating class
- Middle 50% of incoming students had SAT scores between 1320-1500

These types of statistics could form the basis of criteria for admission under this proposed program to ensure that the high academic standard for admission at UNC-Chapel Hill would not be adversely affected by the program. One possible example would be that a dependent of an eligible employee would have to have academic metrics equal to or exceeding the average of enrolled first-year in-state students the previous academic year. This proposal carries no cost (revenue neutral) to the University but should increase the choice of access to the flagship campus of the UNC System for dependents of faculty and staff. Guaranteed admission to UNC-Chapel Hill could also lead to cost savings for faculty/staff (also at no cost to the University) if those dependents chose to live at home after the required first year of on-campus housing for new students with less than 30 hours of college credit is fulfilled. This proposal would require the leadership, support and ultimately implementation of the Office of the Vice Provost for Enrollment and Undergraduate Admissions. Given that this would be a benefit for faculty/staff of UNC-Chapel Hill involvement of and support of the Office of Human Resources would also be required. Even though the proposal is revenue neutral and of limited scope, we estimate this change would take 2-5 years to implement fully.

Expand Tuition Benefits
UNC-Chapel Hill has an existing Tuition Waiver Program (Tuition Waiver Policy, N.D.) for all active permanent employees maintaining 75% time or greater. In summary, this program allows an employee to take up to three appropriations-funded courses per academic year at any constituent institution of the UNC System (based on course space availability and approval of their supervisor). This program does not cover courses that are primarily receipt-supported, and classes must be taken outside of the employee’s work schedule. Expanding tuition benefits is an excellent opportunity for employees to advance their education at little to no cost to the UNC
System since it is essentially opening up “unfilled” seats in existing classes to employees. Participation is somewhat limited by the need to take classes outside of the employee's work schedule since as a primarily full-time student institution most instruction at UNC-Chapel Hill and many constituent institutions takes place during the normal business hours when most employees work.

We are proposing two modifications to this Program based on information collected through literature review, interviews and review of offerings at peer institutions. These two proposed modifications are:

a) *Expanded Educational Institution Options for Employees*

For employees only, make available the option for reimbursement of up to the monetary (or credit hour, whichever is less) equivalent of 3 classes per year at a non-UNC System school, including trade schools or community colleges. Expanded educational options create the opportunity for employees to earn credentials for licensed trades and skilled/vocational work (like electrical, HVAC, other trades). There are many jobs at UNC-Chapel Hill which require these skills, and the current Tuition Waiver Program does not provide those employees the same opportunity to advance in their career areas as employees working in fields trained through standard undergraduate or graduate academic programs.

We recognize this change would take a revenue non-intensive program (current costs are primarily administrative for program management) into one that incurs a real cost to the institution. Estimated total monetary value per academic year for a single employee can be estimated by looking at tuition cost at UNC-Chapel Hill for three classes (at three credit hours/class):

Full-time student tuition per year (minimum 24 credit hours/year) at UNC-Chapel Hill = $8986.50 (Tuition and Fees 2018-2019 Academic Year, 8/10/2018)

($8986.50)/24 credit hours = $374.44/credit hour

Three classes per academic year at three credit hours/class = 9 credit hours/year

($374.44/credit hour)(9 credit hours/year) = $3369.93 per year monetary value to the employee

The cost is a substantial sum of money per employee, but these potential costs could be cut drastically by stipulating that this “non-UNC System” benefit is only available if there is no equivalent class offered within the UNC System. This stipulation would limit the options to institutions like community colleges and trade schools, which often have very different course offerings at much lower per credit hour costs.

By way of example, Wake Technical Community College in-state tuition is currently $76.00/credit hour (Tuition and Costs, 10/29/18). Thus, the same nine credit hours/year at Wake Tech would be: ($76.00/credit hour) (9 credit hours/year) = $684.00 per year monetary value to the employee

While this is still a real cost to the institution, it is a reasonable investment in employee development. For perspective, recent legislative action raised the minimum wage for most full-time state employees (which includes all full-time employees at UNC-Chapel Hill) to $15/hour, or $31,200/year. For this *lowest-paid* employee at UNC-Chapel Hill, $684 represents an investment of 2.2% of the employee’s annual salary for a professional development benefit which can improve both morale and work performance of the employee through increased knowledge level. This investment will also send a clear message to the employee that they are valued, which will have a positive effect on retention – one of the hallmarks of an employer of choice. Given the high costs of turnover (20% of annual salary for workers earning less than
$50,000 annually) (Boushey and Glynn, 11/16/12) this maximum 2.2% investment in the employee, education is likely actually to be revenue positive.

b) Extend Tuition Waiver Program to Spouses and Dependents

As previously stated, the existing employee Tuition Waiver Program requires limited revenue—it essentially opens up "unfilled" seats in existing classes, and thus real costs to the University are limited to the administrative costs to manage the program. The benefit is limited to up to three appropriations-funded courses per academic year at any constituent institution of the UNC System (based on course space availability) (Tuition Waiver Policy, N.D.).

We propose to extend this same tuition benefit to spouses and dependents of eligible full-time employees that have at least five years' service at the beginning of the academic year. This benefit could only be used by one person (employee, spouse, or dependent) in any given academic year and would have the same requirements as the existing policy, including obtaining admission through the appropriate admissions office. Extending this same benefit to a spouse or dependent would add some cost to the program through increased administrative cost—this is based on the presumption that more employees would take advantage of the benefit if it were open to spouses or dependents. The magnitude of increase is difficult to determine. That said, the benefit to the employee's family would be substantial by allowing family members to advance their education, which benefits the entire family, including the employee. This proposal would have the same benefits on morale, work performance, and likely retention as described above for Expanded Educational Institution Options for Employees.

This proposal would require the leadership, support and implementation of the Office of Human Resources would be critical. The increased administrative burden for the two proposals along with the increased real costs for the Expanded Educational Institution Options for Employees would have to be managed and supported by the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. With the budgetary implications of this proposal, we estimate this change would take 2-5 years to implement fully.

Childcare Feasibility Study

While the University offers employees access to a child care resource and referral service, there is not currently a facility on-site that offers child care services adequate to the size of the population and for the specific needs of the campus communities. We are recommending the University conduct a feasibility study designed to examine the operation of an on-site child care facility staffed in part by students enrolled in the study of childcare development and education and other related fields of study. A facility is needed with a cost structure and space sufficient for all employees to have the option of utilizing the program and to operate at hours that would meet the needs of campus employees who may work an 8-hour day or a 12-hour day.

Conducting the feasibility study around an onsite childcare facility may be completed by a variety of consultants specializing in that work. The analysis of the needs and feasibility would cover topics around child care competition and pricing in the area and the community of faculty, staff and students as well as the surrounding tenant community to be served. Additionally, opportunities to support of the academic programs by providing prospects for students to gain work experience would merit consideration. A review of studies completed for universities resulted in reports that detailed costs of design and engineering for the construction of the facility through management and operational costs once the facility is up and running. (Browning, 2014; Mills Consulting Group, 2015)
The cost of conducting the study itself will be subject to a wide range, influenced by a number of factors like regulation, competition and scope of the project. According to Ground Floor Partners, and industry consultant, the trend around 2% of the projected budget of the proposed center. While the study cost is subject to a wide range of variances, there may be opportunities to leverage some internal expertise to undertake some or all of the analysis.

Measures of Success/Evaluation

We looked to the UNC System Employee Engagement Survey conducted last February for perspective on measures for our success. The Survey results compare those from respondents at UNC-Chapel Hill against those from the UNC System generally and from the 2017 Honor Roll, a group of highest scoring institutions identified by ModernThink. We considered samples from three categories where there were statements where UNC-Chapel Hill scored less than optimally: Compensation, Benefits & Work-Life Balance; Communication; Collaboration.

We compared UNC-Chapel Hill’s scores with the 2017 Best in Class scores. As the survey will be repeated in 2020, revisiting the institution’s scores should identify if performance gaps have been closed.

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Current Score</th>
<th>2017 Honor Roll</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compensation, benefits &amp; work life balance</td>
<td>o This institution benefits meets my needs</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>o Changes that affect me are discussed prior to being implemented</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>o We have opportunities to contribute to important decisions in my department</td>
<td>58</td>
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Conclusion

In the past, major universities like UNC-Chapel Hill were able to attract the best and brightest employees simply by being a major university – in today’s competitive business environment universities struggle to differentiate themselves and compete for high-quality employees. This competition is particularly true for non-academic staff positions where job-seekers can readily work in both academic and private industry settings. To assess the position of UNC-Chapel Hill in this environment, we reviewed HR literature, interviewed HR and other professionals both within and outside of the institution. We then benchmarked offerings at UNC-Chapel Hill in comparison to institutions selected in 2011 by the General Administration of the UNC System as official peers for UNC-Chapel Hill to evaluate programs, perks, and other non-core benefits at those institutions to see what could be applied at UNC-Chapel Hill to further the institution as an employer of choice. We also utilized the results of the recently released UNC System Employee Engagement Survey to confirm information gained from our other sources.
From this information, we developed a set of specific recommendations to utilize employer branding to attract and retain talent at UNC-Chapel Hill within today's competitive marketplace. We divided these recommendations into those that could be implemented in short (less than one year), medium (one-two years) and long (two-five years) term.

UNC-Chapel Hill has many strengths as an employer, but our research identified some areas where we can improve. By implementing some or all of these recommendations, UNC-Chapel Hill will improve its ability to attract top talent and skills; enhance employee engagement; increase job satisfaction and improve retention. All of these areas are critical for UNC-Chapel Hill to be considered an employer of choice.
References


Appendix A: ULEAD Meeting with Jessica Pyjas, Work-Life & Wellness Manager

September 27, 2018

Questions:

1. How do you see the relationship between attracting and retaining employees? And how do you see your role (your group’s role) supporting those areas?

2. How have we/you measured the effectiveness of particular efforts or campaigns?

3. What are the challenges that you’re seeing with work/life and wellness?

4. How do you see the balance between central OHR and embedded HR units in terms of these areas?

5. What do you see coming next in your area (what’s in the pipeline)?

6. Do you monitor the efforts of peer institutions or competitors? How do you benchmark our own strategies against theirs?

7. Are there any benefit programs/perks you are aware of that UNC employees are wanting/asking for?

8. Do you feel that UNC employees have a good understanding of all the benefits offered to them by working here?

9. Some other institutions have held a Benefits Fair for their employees. What are your thoughts on the effectiveness of this as an organizational strategy?

10. What do you think we could be working on or doing better when it comes to retaining employees?
Appendix B: ULEAD Meeting with Kathy Bryant, Sr. Director of HR Communications
September 27, 2018

Questions:

1. How do you see the relationship between attracting and retaining employees? And how do you see your role (your group’s role) supporting those areas?

2. How have we/you measured the effectiveness of particular efforts or campaigns?

3. What are the challenges that you’re seeing with HR communications?

4. How do you see the balance between central OHR and embedded HR units in terms of these areas?

5. What do you see coming next in your area (what’s in the pipeline)?

6. Do you monitor the efforts of peer institutions or competitors? How do you benchmark our own strategies against theirs?

7. Does UNC have a specific messaging/branding campaign that is ongoing?

8. What are some different things UNC HR has been doing to get our name out there?

9. What do you think we could be working on or doing better when it comes to communicating to our employees?
Appendix C: ULEAD Meeting with Noreen Montgomery, Senior Director of Employment & Staffing

September 27, 2018

Questions:

1. How do you see the relationship between attracting and retaining employees? And how do you see your role (your group’s role) supporting those areas?

2. How have we/you measured the effectiveness of particular efforts or campaigns?

3. What are the challenges that you’re seeing with employment and staffing?

4. How do you see the balance between central OHR and embedded HR units in terms of these areas?

5. What do you see coming next in your area (what’s in the pipeline)?

6. Do you monitor the efforts of peer institutions or competitors? How do you benchmark our own strategies against theirs?

7. Are there platforms outside of the traditional UNC job posting board that UNC is or could be using to advertise positions? Have they been successful?

8. Have you/your group found in person marketing (like job fairs) to be a successful recruiting strategy? Why or why not?

9. Some peer institutions have a link to their job listing prominently displayed on the institution home page. What are your thoughts on the effectiveness of this as an organizational strategy?

10. What do you see as areas of growth/improvement for UNC when it comes to attracting potential employees?

11. What are strategies your group is using to target diversity in UNC’s recruitment efforts?
Appendix D: ULEAD Meeting with Shayna Hills, Employee Forum Chair
October 2, 2018

Questions:

1. How do you see your organization’s role in supporting attraction and retention of employees?

2. How do you assess the needs and/or concerns of employees?

3. What are challenges that you’re seeing or hearing from employees?

4. Are there any benefit programs/perks that UNC employees are wanting/asking for?

5. Do you feel that UNC employees have a good understanding of all the benefits offered to them by working here?

6. From an employee perspective, what are your thoughts on how we (the University) can better brand ourselves to attract and retain high quality employees?

7. Are there any strategies that Employee Forum is engaged in or will be engaging in to enhance employee overall satisfaction?

8. What do you think we could be working on or doing better when it comes to retaining employees?
Appendix E: Meeting with Linc Butler, Associate Vice Chancellor, Human Resources

September 4, 2018

Questions:

1. What role does OHR play in a central recruitment/retention policy making?

2. Are there units within UNC that have been identified as handling recruitment/retention well? How are these units identified? Who else should we talk to?

3. What categories/divisions/types of staff are the known priorities (e.g. IT professional)?

4. What information (or analysis) would help decision makers?

5. What types of information have proven useful in your experience? (e.g. surveys, exit polls, data on hiring trends)?

6. Some HR/hiring functions are not centralized. How does this impact setting priorities or implementing new services?

7. What kinds of organizations do we benchmark ourselves against?

8. How do you see the balance of focusing on employee engagement/satisfaction (retention) and prospective employee outreach (recruitment) in being an Employer of Choice?

9. Where do you think Carolina is stronger (recruitment vs retention)?
Appendix F: ULEAD Meeting with Regina Stabile, FOIA Supervisor/FOIA Public Liaison and Privacy Act Coordinator, National Institutes of Health

October 4, 2018

Questions

1. How do you perceive the efforts of your organization in attracting and retaining the best talent in employees?

2. How do you think your organization measures or assesses the needs and/or concerns of employees?

3. What are the challenges that you are seeing or hearing from employees in your group?

4. Do you know all the benefit programs/perks that are available from your organization?

5. From an employee perspective, what are your thoughts on how your organization can better brand itself to attract and retain high quality employees?

6. From management perspective, what sort of efforts and engagement is ongoing aimed at retaining your highly skilled staff?
   a. Are there any strategies in which management is engaged aimed at enhancing employee overall satisfaction?

7. What are some effective steps that could result in retaining good employees?
Appendix G: ULEAD Meeting with Chris Williams, Director Student Affairs IT, UNC-Chapel Hill
October 5, 2018

Questions

1. How do you perceive the efforts of your organization in attracting and retaining the best talent in employees?

2. How do you think your organization measures or assesses the needs and/or concerns of employees?

3. What are the challenges that you are seeing or hearing from employees in your group?

4. Do you know all the benefit programs/perks that are available from your organization?

5. From an employee perspective, what are your thoughts on how your organization can better brand itself to attract and retain high quality employees?

6. From management perspective, what sort of efforts and engagement is ongoing aimed at retaining your highly skilled staff?
   a. Are there any strategies in which management is engaged aimed at enhancing employee overall satisfaction?

7. What are some effective steps that could result in retaining good employees?
Appendix H: System Identified UNC-Chapel Hill Peer Institutions

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Peers

| Peer Institution                                    | City           | State | IPEDS
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|-------
| *University of California-Berkeley                 | Berkeley       | California | 110635
| *University of California-Los Angeles              | Los Angeles    | California | 110662
| *University of Southern California                 | Los Angeles    | California | 122981
| Northwestern University                            | Evanston       | Illinois   | 147767
| Johns Hopkins University                           | Baltimore      | Maryland   | 162928
| University of Maryland-College Park                | College Park   | Maryland   | 162286
| *University of Michigan-Ann Arbor                  | Ann Arbor      | Michigan   | 17976
| University of Minnesota-Twin Cities                 | Minneapolis    | Minnesota  | 175066
| Duke University                                     | Durham         | North Carolina | 198719
| *University of Pennsylvania                        | Philadelphia   | Pennsylvania | 217062
| *University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus        | Pittsburgh     | Pennsylvania | 215293
| The University of Texas at Austin                   | Austin         | Texas      | 228778
| *University of Virginia-Main Campus                 | Charlottesville| Virginia   | 234076
| *University of Washington-Seattle Campus            | Seattle        | Washington | 236948
| *University of Wisconsin-Madison                    | Madison        | Wisconsin  | 240444

15 Total Peers
12 *Carried Over From 2006
3 New in 2011
3 Aspirational Peers
5 Private Peers

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For discount and perks page, benefits page, benefits and total page, job positions (same as UC Berkeley & elsewhere programs), otherwise, benefits (on side bar) has a link to employee child care (lots of discounts, premium plan, tuition tax savings, Long-Term Care Insurance, Life insurance, In sickness, In injury, Family Care & Long-term care, spending accounts, flexible spending accounts, retiree health insurance, etc).
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