



**DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN RESOURCES**

**JULY 1, 2010 – JUNE 30, 2013
STRATEGIC PLAN**

Introduction

Human resource strategies are **institutional efforts** to support people (leaders, faculty and staff) to contribute to their full capacity and to be fully engaged and aligned with the directions of the University. Well executed human resource strategies bring success to individuals, teams, work units and ultimately, the University. It's at the core of being a high performing organization. This approach is important to the long-term success of the University.

Our collective goal then is to build a culture of high performance, an organization made up of people who are:

- emotionally connected and committed to achievement and the success of the University,
- involved and supported to reach their full potential, and
- engaged in positive, inclusive and healthy work environments.

National trends show that the scope of the human resources role is expanding and that HR services are becoming increasingly instrumental in attracting, engaging, supporting and inspiring faculty and staff to achieve excellence.

Properly selected, engaged and aligned faculty and staff are foundational to Dalhousie's aspiration to becoming the "best" university and it is for this reason that developing excellent human resources is one of seven core objectives of the Strategic Focus.

This strategy document is comprised of 3 elements:

- a) A situation analysis that sets out the external factors, internal factors, and opportunities that will likely impact the Department and therefore was considered in the formulation of the strategy. This analysis is the result of consultations with the University's executive leadership, Deans, HR Forum participants and members of the HR Department itself, as well as reference to contemporary literature and benchmarking of exemplary human resource models.
- b) The second element outlines the preferred future for the Department – developed in light of the situation analysis. It defines the mission, vision, what we want to be known for and our guiding principles. Broadly speaking this is where we aspire to be in 3 – 5 years. It will be a challenge to achieve, but represents a future we are committed to create.
- c) The third element spells out the strategic goals and actions needed to realize our vision. Each goal details concrete results or indicators of success and the actions that, taken together, will enable us to achieve those results.

This strategy is not just an operational plan for the Human Resources department. Elements of the Human Resource Department's operational plan are critical to successfully implementing the strategic University-wide initiatives, but a broader organizational endorsement of these strategic goals will be required if we are truly partnering to develop excellent human resources for Dalhousie University.

Situation Analysis – The Context In Which HR Can Expect to Operate

External Factors

- demographic trends, specifically : aging workforce and concerns about how to manage elimination of mandatory retirement, widening generational differences, increasing diversity, internationalization;
- competitive environment for attracting and retaining students, funding and benefactors of all kinds;
- competitive environment for attracting and retaining superior faculty and staff;
- greater public and internal scrutiny and accountability;
- changing legislation with significant HR implications;
- increasing opportunities/imperatives for inter-institutional cooperation; and
- an economy in upheaval: with potentially severe financial implications on the pension shortfall, on budgets and on anxiety of employees.

Internal Factors

- demand for both decentralization and centralization... although the culture currently favours decentralization (often resulting in inconsistent practices);
- increasing complexity of HR issues, the perception that they are difficult to address and that unions make it more challenging;
- insufficient will, alignment, tools and capabilities to effectively address HR issues, manage performance and stimulate engagement;
- increased expectations among our clients for a comprehensive and contemporary range of services, simplified access to information and support;
- a labour management climate that is currently collegial and stable but with a history of volatility - could be impacted by next rounds of bargaining;
- need for data management and systems that inform effective and timely decision making;
- a range of human resource alignment challenges (changing requirements of the University but difficulty changing people or duties to match, rewards aren't necessarily aligned with strategic objectives, difficulties changing staffing levels and capabilities);
- a changing leadership dynamic (agendas of new leaders coming into play but not fully integrated, increasing recognition of importance of effective leadership, tools and training not currently sufficient);
- changing competency requirements for administrative employees and limited access to opportunities to expand them;
- changing technology platform across campus;
- poorly developed mechanisms to communicate and foster an appreciation of what Dalhousie offers as an employer; and
- perceived to be rule bound – more concerned with enforcement than enabling.

Some Opportunities to Capitalize On

- a new Strategic Focus;
- completion of the workplace survey – leading to an invitation and resources to address some issues;
- pension review committee
- development of a formalized leadership development program;
- build on stable labour relations;
- recent establishment of a distributed HR Forum with great potential for further development.

Our Mission

We lead, support, and partner with the University community in developing excellent human resources for Dalhousie.

Our Vision

A working and learning environment at Dalhousie where employees are engaged, supported and inspired to achieve excellence.

To realize this vision, Human Resources will advance its ability to:

- be customer focused, flexible and highly collaborative;
- be progressive in the services we deliver and the way we deliver them;
- provide HR advice and expertise that is responsive and valued;
- actively enable employees to advance professionally, personally and in their contributions to the University; and
- function as a team that is supportive, spirited, creative and continuously learning.

Our Guiding Principles

We are guided in our teamwork, decisions and actions by the principles of....

- ✓ **Service** – by optimizing the value we bring to the university, being progressive in our approaches, responsive to our clients and colleagues and taking ownership of challenges.
- ✓ **Integrity** – by being honest, reliable, respectful, ethical, fair and following through on commitments.
- ✓ **Caring** – by listening to others, acting with compassion, and expressing appreciation.
- ✓ **Excellence** – by setting our service standards high with a willingness to take risks and continually expand our capabilities so that we can achieve them.
- ✓ **Collaboration** – by establishing and strengthening partnerships, and aligning our activities for the best results.
- ✓ **Communication** – by keeping each other informed, sharing what we are thinking and doing, and addressing issues directly and constructively.
- ✓ **Community** - by being engaged, welcoming diversity of all kinds and contributing to a positive working and learning environment.

Our Strategic Goals

To realize our mission and vision, we will pursue the following strategic goals:

1. To strengthen policies and practices that attract, engage, develop and sustain faculty and staff who are the best in their field.
2. To build human resource skills, competencies and expertise across Dalhousie University.
3. To cultivate a healthy, vibrant and achievement-oriented workplace.
4. To enhance HR processes, practices and infrastructure to provide high levels of service quality.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

1. To strengthen policies and practices that attract, engage, develop and sustain faculty and staff who are the best in their field, we will...

- lead reforms of the university pension plan;
- share the results of the workplace survey and pursue opportunities to strengthen engagement and address issues in response to findings;
- review and respond to concerns related to job evaluation;
- explore more progressive/flexible approaches to compensation;
- strengthen orientation and support programs for new employees;
- enhance professional development, career advancement and job enrichment programs; and
- improve branding/marketing of Dalhousie as an exemplary place to work – publicity materials, a more effective website;

2. To build human resource skills, competencies and expertise across Dalhousie University, we will...

- develop and implement a leadership program – fostering the skills, knowledge and approaches needed to optimize productivity and achievements in both academic and administrative units;
- develop and maintain a website with relevant and easy to use human resource information and tools for administrators, faculty and staff;
- develop, monitor and report on appropriate human resource metrics to inform senior leadership decision making;
- provide a regular orientation and training sessions for those involved in human resource management; and
- expand and strengthen the HR Forum – a distributed network of individuals with responsibility for human resource matters.

3. To cultivate a healthy, vibrant and achievement-oriented workplace, we will...

- promote and facilitate incorporation of performance enhancement tools and practices amongst academic and administrative units;
- develop and implement an organizational health and employee wellness strategy - optimizing effectiveness of the Employee and Family Assistance Program;
- regularly communicate the achievements and the vibrancy of the Dalhousie community thereby strengthening emotional commitment to the success of the University;
- develop recognition and reward systems that acknowledge the contributions of all who work at Dalhousie;
- research and promote effective people practices to support the creation of environments that are highly productive and rewarding to work in;
- expand capacity to assist with human resource planning; and
- further strengthen relations with our employee groups - partnering to proactively and constructively address labour management issues.

4. To enhance HR processes, practices and infrastructure to provide high levels of service quality, we will...

- strengthen our relationship with other departments across the university – moving to a partnership model based on mutual understanding, collaboration and support;
- align human resource goals and priorities between the University's Strategic Focus, the HR Department and units across campus;
- create broader awareness of how Human Resources can assist units/individuals;
- establish a strong service culture within the Department - engage in regular consultation, feedback and needs assessment that informs our directions and priorities, improving the integration of services and facilitating more effective and consistent human resource practices; and
- streamline our processes, optimizing the use of technologies.