Creating a Focus on Careers and Development at Indiana University

Indiana University human resources has embarked upon a multi-year project to redesign the university's classification structure for all staff positions across its seven campuses. The goal is to create a consistent, fair and fiscally responsible job framework that empowers staff to self-direct their careers while strengthening the university's ability to attract and retain talent.

And they're doing it all in-house.

We spoke with Betsy Larson and Nick Sexton of Indiana University (IU)'s compensation team about the project, which is currently in the design phase and will be rolled out beginning in January 2020.

Q: What was the catalyst for changing IU's classification structure?

A: While IU has changed exponentially over the past several years, our classification and compensation structure has not been updated in more than a decade. There was no overarching philosophy or approach to our class and comp structure, the number of job titles was excessive and inconsistent, and there was a lack of flexibility to reward employees. We also found through a listening tour of our seven campuses that employees felt there was a lack of transparency from HR about how we make compensation decisions and a lack of understanding of classifications.

Q: What is the goal with the new job framework model?

A: We want to create a job framework that is clear, consistent and transparent and that will empower staff to navigate what's next in their career journey. The new framework will provide a way for employees to make informed decisions about advancing their careers; tools for employees to see how their job relates to other jobs across the university so they can explore career and development opportunities; and tools to help managers to make informed decisions about pay, advancement and development for their employees.

Q: What will the framework look like?

A: Staff jobs will be organized by function and families, and we'll be moving to consistent titling and away from a title for every individual. We're also creating new salary ranges that are tied to the market (we currently have very broad salary ranges), developing new role descriptors which will be focused on the role vs. specific tasks (as many of our role descriptors are now) and developing core and career-level competencies for each staff position.

We're also creating new career structures (there are three: non-exempt individual contributor, exempt individual contributor and people leader) with career leveling, and we're not building hierarchy into the job titles — this is because we want the employee to focus on the role and his or her career, not on simply gaining the next title. Job titles and naming conventions will be consistent within job families.

When all is said and done, every staff employee will have a new job function, job family, career level, job title and role descriptor.

One of the biggest changes is that we'll be moving away from "manager" and "director" titles and to the title descriptor "leader." What we've found is that the "director" title often gets in the way of employees advancing to the next level. For example, if someone is using a director or associate or assistant director title (which in our current classification structure is sometimes not representative of the level of work they're doing), it can impede them from moving onward or upward to another role because maybe that role doesn't have that title attached to it. We want to remove those "artificial" barriers.

Q: Who in HR is leading the project?

A: Our compensation team is at the helm. Currently, we have five individuals from our comp team working on building out the job functions and creating the role descriptors. When these are drafted, we'll be working with our HR partners across all of our campuses to vet them.

Q: How are you communicating the new job framework to IU stakeholders?

A: We've conducted several listening sessions to educate staff and other stakeholders about the project, to ask for feedback and to answer questions. From the beginning, we've been intentional about transparency, and we've brought employees along with us in real time. We also have a website dedicated to the project where employees can go to see an overview of the project, see the new job functions and families, see a timeline, submit questions and provide feedback. cupa-hr

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To learn more about Indiana University's Job Framework redesign project, visit **hr.iu.edu/redesign**. For resources on classification and compensation in general, check out the Class and Comp toolkits in CUPA-HR's Knowledge Center (**www.cupahr.org/ knowledge-center/toolkits**).