Initiative: Recruit, Retain, Develop and Reward IT Professionals

The University of Georgia relies on the effective use of technology to achieve institutional goals in research, instruction, public service and outreach and administration. This requires qualified technology professionals to design, implement, maintain and continuously improve solutions for infrastructure, applications, security, instructional technologies, productivity and communication. For example, UGA's data integration efforts to improve the capture and reporting for accreditation, decision-making, research and instruction are projects that are critically important to the mission of the university and require highly skilled and institutionally knowledgeable IT professionals.

The existing UGA practices concerning compensation, training, career development and retention of IT professionals have created a crisis situation for the university as indicated by the following:

- UGA currently has a 25% attrition rate of IT professionals within the first 6 years of employment (Industry and Higher Education norms are 10-15%)
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that IT professionals will be the largest occupation demand through 2010 with higher than average demand over all occupations through 2012. This timeframe coincides with network, infrastructure, data integration and extended education projects under consideration and in preparation for SACS review in 2009.
- Rising industry demand is accelerating UGA's turnover and qualified replacement candidates, at current compensation levels, are harder to locate.

UGA's current compensation for IT professionals is lower than our most competitive employers (Georgia Tech and Board of Regents), as well as for the Atlanta, Regional and National IT industry markets. This contributes to higher turnover, less skilled applicants for vacant and new positions, and risk to information and instructional technology maintenance and improvement practices. Replacement of a valued IT professional can cost between 25 and 100% of the position's annual salary. This does not include the loss in productivity, institutional knowledge, IT workforce skills, as well as the added burden to loyal personnel who assume the duties of the lost position during the transition period. High attrition rates significantly degrade operational and organizational efficiencies and retard or eliminate measurable sustainable returns on investment in technology and personnel.

Additionally, UGA's policy concerning promotions, classification and reward do not provide a career path opportunity for IT professionals. This forces our high performers to leave the University for fair market compensation and career growth. Finally, our training in focused, mission critical applications, security, systems and network support is minimal to non-existent and puts projects supporting business functions at risk.
Strategy: Develop a 5 year Plan to Achieve Fair Market Compensation for IT Positions across Campus

The purpose of this strategy is to develop a sound plan which would successfully move the salary ranges for IT professionals around campus into a range that is comparable with our closest competitors.

Impact and Outcomes
The successful identification and implementation of this strategy will aid in reducing the overall rate of turnover in some of UGA’s most critical IT areas and allow the retention of needed institutional knowledge and skills base within the IT community.

Costs
The financial cost for implementation of such a strategy is estimated to be $1.4 million over the 5 year period of enactment. Additional costs will necessarily be incurred as market salary ranges are updated after the initial plan is adopted and implemented.

Action Plan/Timeline
1. Overhaul UGA IT position titles and descriptions to more closely align with market counterparts. (Completed Jan. 05)
2. Complete a market study of comparable IT salary ranges and identify closest competitors. (Completed Jan. 05)
3. Build new salary ranges for each IT position classification. Interim salary ranges developed for re-classification Jan. 05)
4. Identify the extent to which UGA IT salaries are deficient within each classification. (Complete based on interim ranges, Jan. 05)
5. Design a financial plan to align current IT salaries with the competitive market salaries.
6. Communicate plan and requirements to Dean’s, Department Heads, Principal Investigators for Research Projects, and other senior administrators who supervise and budget for IT staff.
7. Attain administrative financial support to enact plan.

Proposed Start Date: October 2004
Proposed Completion Date: January 2010

Codicils
This strategy will necessarily need cooperation across all of the campus IT departments, the CIO’s office, as well as the cooperation and sanctioning from the Office of the Provost and the VP for Human Resources.
Strategy: Identification and Documentation of a Competitive Compensation Philosophy

This strategy will lay the foundation to both align UGA IT salaries competitively with market and other academic institution IT salaries in UGA’s market area and keep those salaries aligned through time. This strategy will be designed and managed using data-driven analysis of both UGA IT salaries and industry/competitor institution IT salaries.

Impact and Outcomes

When fully implemented, a competitive compensation philosophy will allow UGA to address a major factor in retention of qualified IT staff, thus reducing the rate of staff turnover. This will have the effect of both increasing UGA IT efficiency (as measured by the increased rate of successfully completing projects on time and a measurable decrease in emergency events related to IT infrastructure) and reducing the costs associated with the rehiring process.

Costs

Action Plan/Timeline

1. Clearly articulate the compensation strategy for the University. (examples: the University of Georgia will be competitive with the median of the Atlanta Regional market of companies of revenue size of $500 million - $1 Billion annually or the University of Georgia will be competitive with Research-1 Institutions in the Southwest US).
2. Establish a benchmark consistent with the compensation strategy.
3. Develop a process for annual review and adjustment of competitive salary structures.
4. Develop compensation and raise determination practices that manage to the midpoint of the salary structure.

Proposed Start Date: 
Proposed Completion Date: 

Codicils

As above, this strategy will also need the cooperation of all campus IT departments, the CIO’s office, and the cooperation and sanctioning from the Office of the Provost and the VP for Human Resources.
Strategy: Development of HR/IT Advisory Council

The purpose of this strategy is to design and promote a council that will be solely devoted to the HR issues that surround IT employment and retention at UGA. This group would be primarily responsible for annually reviewing the IT jobs model, evaluating the results of implementation, and providing recommendations for training, compensation and job descriptions based on industry and/or market requirements.

Impact and Outcomes
The successful implementation of this strategy will result in continuing and updating the sound principles with which the original policy has been developed. It will insure that the UGA IT staffing strategy is continually updated to reflect the changing IT environment.

Costs
The financial cost for implementation of this strategy is minimal. However, IT leadership and HR leadership time requirements will be substantial because of the continuing need for updating and evaluation.

Action Plan/Timeline
1. Decide on the makeup of the council (e.g., what departments/areas of campus should representatives come from)
2. Design result oriented measures to judge policy impact
3. Design process to keep UGA IT positions current with industry, both in terms of compensation and skill level.
4. Implement the HR/IT council in UGA HR operations

Proposed Start Date: 
Proposed Completion Date:

Codicils
This strategy will be a cooperative effort between Human Resources and UGA IT departments.
Strategy: Develop HR Policy to Support Performance Management, Career Development, Retention, Promotion and Reclassification

The purpose of this strategy is to both design a performance management system for the accurate measurement of personal job performance and to promote a career development path to affect retention rates. This policy will focus on identifying core competencies of IT personnel and the results attained.

Impact and Outcomes
The successful identification and implementation of this strategy will allow UGA to accurately identify those individuals who are performing at a high level and those who are not. This will lead to appropriate reward and identification of individuals who may need increased training and/or mentoring in their work. This strategy will also improve IT value through measures based upon project evaluation of initiatives identified in UGA strategic planning and preparation for accreditation and program review (timely delivery, within budget, business solution effectiveness, security, reliability) due to increased skill and professionalism of IT staff.

Costs
The financial cost for implementation of this strategy is minimal. However, IT leadership and HR leadership time requirements will be substantial as the policy process is fully vetted.

Action Plan/Timeline
1. Design a performance management system through literature and market review.
2. Work with HR to reconcile policy change recommendations with UGA’s current HR policies.
3. Meet with campus IT staff to discuss implementation issues.
4. Implement performance evaluation system to reward and recognize IT professionals aligned with results of achieving equity with Ga. Tech and BOR salary

Proposed Start Date:
Proposed Completion Date:

Codicils
This strategy will need cooperation between Human Resources, Deans, Department Heads, Research Units and UGA IT departments.
Strategy: Creation of a Centralized Funding Source for Training and Development

The purpose of this strategy is to design a training and development program targeted to keep IT staff at UGA competitive with respect to skills. This program will be directed to the skills and competencies required of IT professionals and aligned with performance management and career development.

Impact and Outcomes

The successful implementation of this strategy will lead to increased training and development opportunities which are tied to IT standards and skills/core competencies of job classifications. The goal of this strategy is to increase these types of training opportunities by 10% each year for 3 years. Not only will this strategy lead to improvement in one of the primary indicated categories that lead to staff retention, but it will also lead to a more highly trained IT workforce.

Costs

Financial cost for the implementation of this strategy will vary depending on the extent to which the policy is embraced by the administration. Typical technical and managerial training costs exclusive of travel can range from no direct cost for on-line education or UGA Training Center offerings to $300-$1800 dollars for specific professional seminars and certification tracks.

Action Plan/Timeline

1. Create a resource that identifies the skills required of each IT position and training opportunities currently offered on campus. (Complete 2/05.)
2. Designate a training stipend for IT professionals based on certificates and/or skill sets required of position. For example: $500 per year for entry level or UGA provided training and $1500 for specialist, principal and leadership training. would be centrally housed by Training and Development and used to take advantage of economy of scale and standards identified by the university.
3. Complete a literature and market review to identify the most effective training plans for IT.
4. Engage consulting agencies to help identify effective training programs.
4. Implement training in cooperation with T&D.

Proposed Start Date: 
Proposed Completion Date: 

Codicils
This strategy will entail cooperation between the HR/IT Advisory Committee, the Training and Development Center, and Office of the Provost.