

ADMN 598 Management Report

A review of productivity, efficiency, and engagement in University Systems

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Executive Summary

University Systems is the information systems department at the University of Victoria responsible for centralized information systems and technology in support of the University's broad objectives in teaching, learning, research, and administration. Systems and technology rapidly change and University Systems employees require not only up-to-date technical skills but also a thorough understanding of the University's business processes the department supports and that are core to the successful achievement of the University's strategic objectives.

The objective of this report is to analyze and recommend solutions to improve University Systems' employee engagement, productivity, and efficiency. The research explores employee perceptions of existing structures related to the concepts of job design; training, professional development, and succession planning; process review; and employee relations. The assessment framework included employee perceptions of the job design process, structure, and associated roles and responsibilities; training, professional development, and succession planning processes; the processes and tools in place for project management, change management, and incident management; and employee relationships between both peers and leaders. Data to support the assessment was gathered through the use of online surveys and in-person interviews, with a total of 64 surveys and 8 interviews being completed out of a possible population of 131 regular staff members.

Overall, the research findings suggest that employees have a positive opinion of University Systems, and value the relationships and people in the department. Research participants consistently emphasized the importance of departmental values, with a strong focus on communication and information sharing, and continuous learning, improvement, coaching, and feedback. Research participants also desired further clarity and structure in the job design process and in understanding the availability of training and professional development programs and opportunities. Research participants largely viewed University Systems processes in a positive light, seeking improvements in the delivery of training on process to new employees. Finally, research participants viewed employee relationships across the department in an overwhelmingly positive light, and sought opportunities for further development. The following six recommendations were developed using feedback from research participants and the results of the literature review to support continuous improvement in the engagement, productivity, and efficiency in University Systems:

Recommendation 1: Establish a central repository of job descriptions for all University Systems positions

University Systems employees identified a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities as their primary area for improvement when questioned about their current positions. Ensuring that every position has an up to date job description that is reflective of current duties will improve clarity for individuals within their existing roles, and address perceived inequalities where roles were previously not well-defined. Establishing a centralized, accessible repository of job descriptions will help to communicate the responsibilities, skills, education, and experience requirements of positions across the department,

clarifying the progression paths between positions and supporting a more robust succession planning process.

Recommendation 2: Develop an orientation process for new University Systems staff that incorporates departmental processes for project and change management

Suggestions for improvement to University Systems processes focused on providing increased training and awareness to new staff in the context of the project management processes, while the change management process elicited suggestions related to increasing the communication around *why* the process is used, and what benefits it may yield. Expanding and formalizing departmental training and orientation processes to incorporate the foundational processes of project and change management will help to increase understanding and develop a shared level of understanding.

Recommendation 3: Establish a consistent performance planning process across University Systems

The University of Victoria Human Resources department provides a framework for performance and development which can be leveraged to support the formalized documentation and planning of employee development goals; however, it has not been used consistently across University Systems. Establishing a consistent department-wide process will support employees who identified they are seeking additional growth opportunities as well as providing a better understanding of the organizational structure and available opportunities throughout University Systems.

Recommendation 4: Create a central repository of training and professional development opportunities and consistent guidelines for access

Employee surveys and interviews revealed a lack of clarity and consistency in access to training and professional development opportunities. The development of a centralized repository of training and professional development opportunities and resources, including both internally and externally facilitated courses and programs will increase awareness of available options. Establishing equitable guidelines for access to professional development funding and resources will increase transparency and work towards addressing the perceptions of inequity that may exist in different areas of University Systems. Consistently integrating the professional development and training plans into the performance development cycle will contribute to creating an environment that supports continuous learning and improvement in employees, while also supporting a more formalized succession planning process by allowing staff and managers to plan the necessary steps to support employee growth.

Recommendation 5: Improve information sharing across University Systems through incident response systems and processes

A desire for improved communication and information sharing was raised throughout survey and interview responses. A desire to standardize on a single platform for incident management was raised by a large number of participants, but would require a substantial investment of both time and funding to review associated business processes and implement a new solution. As an interim solution, increased sharing of information and access across units and systems (with the exception of cases

related to confidentiality) will support the University Systems values of teamwork and communication & information sharing, while also contributing positively to the strengthening of relationships throughout the department. Furthermore, the increased access to information will alleviate some of the concerns cited that relate to lack of access to the necessary information required to perform the duties of their positions.

Recommendation 6: Increase the opportunity for staff to work across teams in University Systems

University Systems staff provided overwhelmingly positive responses when asked to rate the strength of relationships between staff throughout the department. The University Systems leadership team should seek opportunities to continue to build and strengthen relationships across the department, whether it be through formal opportunities and projects, or simply informal gatherings. A varied approach provides an opportunity to increase participation levels amongst all areas of University Systems, including areas which have traditionally had lower participation rates. A strong desire exists with staff to develop these relationships, therefore it is crucial that an awareness remains and ongoing time and support is provided to continue to build upon the success of the team.

Introduction

University Systems is the information systems department at the University of Victoria responsible for centralized information systems and technology in support of the University's broad objectives in teaching, learning, research, and administration. Systems and technology rapidly change and University Systems employees require not only up-to-date technical skills but also a thorough understanding of the University's business processes the department supports and that are core to the successful achievement of the University's strategic objectives.

The recruitment and retention of skilled staff that engage with an organization's mission and strategic objectives requires a good understanding of employee perspectives and concerns. Furthermore, University Systems continues to face an increased demand for services from the University of Victoria community, and as a public-sector organization, is limited in its ability to acquire additional resources. Limited opportunities to address external factors related to compensation and the size of the department as a whole exist, furthering the importance of developing and maintaining an engaged and productive workforce.

The objective of this report is to analyze and recommend solutions to improve University Systems' employee engagement, productivity, and efficiency. The research explores employee perceptions of existing structures related to job design; training, professional development, and succession planning; University Systems processes; and employee relations; and their impact on the workplace.

Organizational Background

University Systems is an administrative department of the University of Victoria in the portfolio of the Vice President Finance and Operations (VPFO), and consists of three sub-departments:

- UVic Online, which provides software development services, database administration, web application support, and identity management for the university.
- Infrastructure Services, which includes network infrastructure and support, as well as data centre services and research computing.
- Academic and Administrative Services, which includes the computer help desk, audio visual and media services, student computing facilities, and desktop support services.

University Systems employs over 170 staff in a mix of management, professional, technical, and administrative functions, including upwards of 40 part-time staff, resulting in a diverse workforce. The department uses formalized methodologies and processes for project management, change management, and information security, and works closely with other administrative departments across campus to support institutional objectives.

University Systems has undertaken several major initiatives in the past five years to establish department wide values, increase employee engagement, and focus on service excellence. In 2012 an exercise was completed under the direction of the then Chief Information Officer to identify current and desired values in University Systems. Opinions were gathered through surveys and the use of the Barrett

values assessment instruments (Barrett Values Centre, n.d.) to understand the most prevalent values and themes, followed by a department-wide exercise to identify the desired set of values moving forward. The desired values were identified as:

- Teamwork
- Accountability
- Customer Satisfaction
- Balance, Home & Work
- Communication & Information Sharing
- Continuous Learning, Improvement, Coaching & Mentoring.

Subsequently, in 2015 the VPFO office conducted surveys of each unit in its portfolio to measure employee engagement and identify opportunities for improvement and areas requiring increased attention. Each VPFO unit was surveyed with the same instrument and results were presented with breakdowns by length of employee service and unit. Responses were also reported for each of the three University Systems sub-departments. The University Systems results suggested high levels of engagement (the highest of all units in the VPFO portfolio), with teamwork, autonomy, and standards and working conditions being particularly strong, and coaching and feedback being the main areas of focus recommended for improvement.

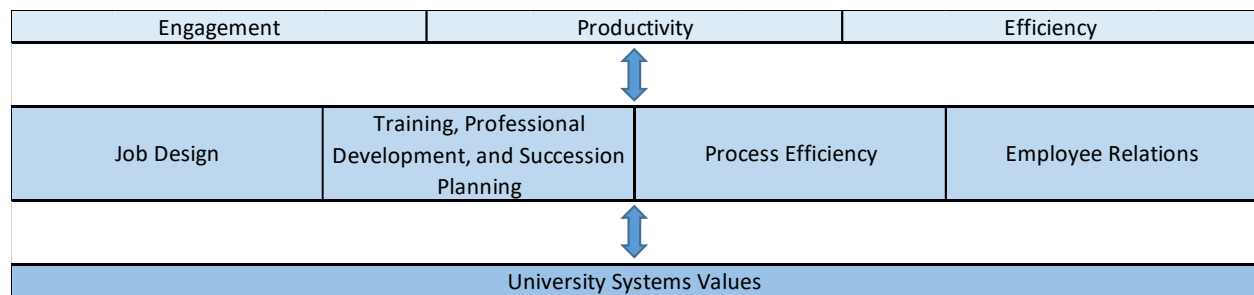
As a concurrent exercise in 2015, all VPFO staff were invited to participate in a service excellence survey to better understand challenges and opportunities for improvement across the portfolio. The broad themes of coaching and feedback, vision of leadership, and long-term employee engagement surfaced as the main areas of focus across the portfolio. Consequently, the VPFO Service Excellence committee was formed to foster a culture of service excellence across the entire VPFO portfolio (University of Victoria, 2017), focusing first on the topic of coaching and feedback. The Committee's mandate was subsequently expanded to include additional initiatives of significance identified through prior surveys and the creation of opportunities for knowledge sharing across units in the portfolio.

The initiatives described above provided insight into the challenges and opportunities of University Systems; however, were conducted using the same approach for each distinct operational unit in the VPFO portfolio. This project builds upon the work completed through these initiatives by focusing on University Systems' unique conditions and environment to identify opportunities for further improvements to productivity, efficiency, and engagement by focusing on specific areas of relevance to the department.

Framework for Review

The literature review provides context and background for the concepts of job design; training, professional development, and succession planning; process review; and employee relations, examining their impacts on employee engagement, productivity, and efficiency. The framework for review focuses on each of these four concepts, with each being studied in more detail to provide context of their impact on the work environment. In addition to understanding the impacts on employee engagement, productivity, and efficiency, each of the concepts is also examined in the context of their role in supporting the University Systems values of teamwork; accountability; customer satisfaction; balance, home, and work; communication & information sharing; and continuous learning, improvement, coaching, and mentoring. Figure 1 describes the framework for review and the relationship between the three dimensions described above.

Figure 1: Framework for Review



Engagement, Productivity, and Efficiency

Kahn defines personal engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s “preferred self” in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional) and active, full role performance” (Kahn, 1990, p. 700). More specifically, three factors influence meaningfulness: task characteristics, where employees were performing “challenging, clearly delineated, varied, creative, and somewhat autonomous duties” (Kahn, 1990, p. 704); role characteristics, where roles carried status or influence, and when individuals “were able to wield influence, occupy valuable positions in their systems, and gain desirable status, they experienced a sense of meaningfulness” (Kahn, 1990, p. 706); and work interactions, where work performance “included rewarding interpersonal interactions with co-workers and clients” (Kahn, 1990, p. 707). More broadly, employee engagement can be considered as a series of elements covering the broad categories of “job satisfaction, organizational commitment, psychological empowerment, and job involvement” (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 7). Employee engagement has also been defined in academic literature as “a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance. Furthermore, engagement is distinguishable from several related constructs, most notably organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and job involvement” (Saks, 2006, p. 602).

When viewed holistically and combining elements of the above definitions, it is clear that employee engagement is critical to the success of an organization, and as a result, information on job design,

training, professional development, succession planning, and employee relations will provide meaningful insight into employee levels of engagement and allow for opportunities for improvement to be identified. Conversely, a workforce that is not engaged or motivated is less likely to achieve organizational objectives as a result of reduced productivity and output. University Systems uses a number of industry standard best practices that have been adapted to suit its environment, and are aimed at increasing productivity and efficiency through the application of consistent and repeatable processes. Nevertheless, Moreland's warning that when employees "are in positions that fail to match their inherent skills or interests, or they do not receive proper training to meet the requirements of their positions, it is very difficult for them to become and remain engaged with their jobs" (Moreland, 2013, p. 57), is relevant to all workplaces including University Systems.

Within British Columbia there has been a recent focus on centralization of services through initiatives like the Post-Secondary Administrative Service Delivery Transformation (ASDT) initiative, with institutions working together to share "ideas, best practices, expertise and resources, with a focus on improving the delivery of post-secondary education administration and other supporting functions across the province" (Government of British Columbia, n.d.). Efficiencies are sought for IT services through organizations such as BCNET, British Columbia's shared information technology services organization for colleges, universities and research institutions that works with members to "build value through collaboration, drive down costs, maximize efficiencies and further the mission of our members" (BCNET, 2018). Consequently, University Systems is in a position to further the above provincial objectives through the efficient delivery of IT services, with the potential to contribute more broadly to the other institutions in the sector.

Job Design

Job design can be defined as the "identification of job duties, characteristics, competencies, and sequences taking into consideration technology, workforce, organization character, and environment" (Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, & Bulmash, 2013, p. 69), which in the case of the complex and rapidly changing University Systems technology environment is foundational to the definition of roles and responsibilities. A study conducted by Shantz et al. revealed that employees who hold jobs "that offer high levels of autonomy, task variety, task significance and feedback are more highly engaged" (Shantz, Alfes, Truss, & Soane, 2013, p. 2608) and that "the way jobs are designed has the potential to ignite a sense of enthusiasm in people and propel them to higher levels of performance" (Shantz, Alfes, Truss, & Soane, 2013, p. 2621), reinforcing the significance of proper job design as a core element in the success of any organization, serving as the "central link between employees and the organization" (Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, & Bulmash, 2013, p. 69), and having a significant impact on employee engagement, productivity, and efficiency.

Proper job design can contribute substantially to organizational efficiency, with task specialization being a key strategy for workers to limit the scope of their tasks resulting in higher output (Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, & Bulmash, 2013, p. 70). While this approach has been traditionally applied industrialized engineering environments, the same principles are often applied to specialized knowledge workers, whereby employees limit the scope of their work to areas of expertise dependent upon both interest and aptitude. In University Systems, the organizational structure is largely supportive of this

configuration, with job specializations existing within each of the sub-departments. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Schaufeli et al. found that increases in job demands such as overload, emotional demands, and work-home interference, combined with decreases in job resources such as social support, autonomy, feedback, and opportunities to learn predict employee burnout. Conversely, “increases in job resources predict work engagement” (Schaufeli, Bakker, & van Rhenen, 2009, p. 893).

University Systems has a relatively small number of job descriptions (fewer than 20) that are shared by its 170+ employees. Information was sought to understand whether roles and responsibilities aligned with existing job descriptions and employee expectations, and whether meaningful gaps exist. Further review focused on job variety, challenges, and rewards that are present inside the existing structure and roles.

Training, Professional Development, and Succession Planning

Employee development is “the process of enhancing an employee’s future value to the enterprise through careful career planning” (Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, & Bulmash, 2013, p. 279), and encompasses a variety of tasks and programs that may contribute to improving the skills and performance of employees. Understanding employee motivation, and focusing employee development opportunities and programs provides the potential to assess future capability and align with the demands of the organization (Mayo, 2000, p. 532).

Employee training plays an important role in maintaining employee effectiveness and improves employee morale, contributing to better long term HR planning (Tansky & Cohen, 2001, p. 286). Training may be both formal and informal; however, it is important to understand whether employees are familiar with existing programs and opportunities, and whether they are enabling staff to perform to their full potential. Training and professional development programs and opportunities were reviewed from the perspective of developing skills and competencies within existing roles, as well as opportunities for advancement. Familiarity with and availability of established training and development opportunities was also evaluated, and the presence of formalized succession planning systems considered.

Process Review

University Systems operates within the broader context of a higher education institution, which makes use of a robust framework for policies and procedures at the institutional level. While University Systems staff have varying levels of interaction and familiarity with institutional policies, additional policies, procedures, and processes have been developed, and in many cases staff utilize the departmental processes on a daily basis.

University Systems utilizes a mature project management methodology based upon the Project Management Body of Knowledge, a global set of standards, guidelines, rules, and characteristics for project, program, and portfolio management (Project Management Institute, 2018), which has been adapted to meet the needs of University Systems and the University of Victoria as a whole. Similarly, a formal change management methodology is used to minimize risk and impact to the University of Victoria of changes made to production enterprise information systems, and to ensure that all changes are recorded, evaluated, planned, tested, approved, implemented, and communicated to clients in an

appropriate manner, based upon Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) best practices for IT Service Management (Axelos, n.d.). Finally, a series of tools, processes, and procedures are used to support trouble-ticketing (the processes used to enable end users to report issues and interact with IT staff to resolve issues), which consist of several different technology platforms across different parts of the department. Information was sought for each of the three above University Systems processes to understand whether they are supporting the effective and efficient delivery of services, and where changes may be beneficial.

Employee Relations

The Leader Member Exchange (LMX) theory, first proposed by Graen and colleagues, focuses on the dyadic relationship between a leader and a member (Gerstner & Day, 1997, p. 827), and provides a foundation for the assessment of “job performance, satisfaction with supervision, overall satisfaction, commitment, role conflict, role clarity, member conflict, and turnover intentions” (Gerstner & Day, 1997, p. 827). The strength of relationships between employees and their manager was assessed using a series of questions adapted from available LMX research (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 236) and expanded to include additional analysis of the relationships between immediate team members, and other units and sub-departments in University Systems. While both the culture and organizational policies and processes may impact which dimensions of the LMX relationship are emphasized (Dienesch & Liden, 1986, p. 630), the questions provide a solid foundation for assessment and the identification of potential areas of strength or concern with employee relationships. Further information was sought to understand if relationships are contributing positively to the work environment, and where opportunities for change or improvement exist.

Methodology

Research Design

The research approach consisted of mixed methods for the collection of data from University Systems employees. An electronic survey was the primary instrument and gave participants an opportunity to provide feedback using primarily quantitative measures, but also included questions meant to elicit additional detail and examples of strengths, challenges, and opportunities in support of the research objectives. A survey was used as the primary instrument because it allows participants to provide anonymous feedback about any problematic or challenging areas, reducing or eliminating the fear of negative repercussions.

In person interviews were also used to elicit responses to inform the research questions. The interviews allowed participants to share more detailed stories of positive or challenging experiences. The responses to open-ended interview questions and subsequent probing questions combine with the survey responses to form a comprehensive view of University Systems' strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

Samples

Surveys

The survey invitation was sent to a total of 131 staff, which consisted of all regular salaried employees in the department excluding the primary researcher, and the client for the project (Chief Information Officer). While the department also includes an additional 40+ casual and hourly staff, the length of service of these employees, combined with their lack of exposure to many of the processes in the department did not make them suitable for inclusion in the sample group and they were therefore excluded from the invitation. The survey questions are included in Appendix C.

The FluidSurveys online survey platform was used to collect responses, with individualized invitations distributed to participants via the functionality built into the application, and additional configuration completed to allow for a maximum of one response per invitee. The survey platform was also configured to anonymize responses to prevent the researcher from identifying those who participated. The survey was conducted over a period of 31 days from September 13, 2017 to October 13, 2017, with staff receiving one reminder sent via the FluidSurveys platform two weeks before the survey end date.

The participation rate was very close to the original objective of 50%, with nearly 49% (64 out of 131) participants completing the survey. An additional 14 surveys were partially completed but were not included in the results to conform to the process described in the consent form. Respondents were optionally asked to self-identify their sub-department and length of service at the University of Victoria, with 63 of 64 completed surveys responding as requested.

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by sub-department. Participation was highest in UVic Online with a 64% participation rate, followed by Academic and Administrative Services at 50%, and Infrastructure Services at 27%.

Table 1: Survey participation by sub-department

Sub-department	Invitations	Participants	Participation rate
Academic and Administrative Services	58	29	50.0%
Infrastructure Services	34	9	26.5%
UVic Online	39	25	64.1%
Total	131	64	48.9%

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by length of service and sub-department. The categories for length of service were designed to correspond to prior surveys in the event that there is a desire to compare results in the future. The 8+ years of service group of respondents is significantly larger than the others reflecting the reality that there are a large number of long serving employees in the department.

Table 2: Survey participation by length of service and sub-department

Length of service	Academic and Admin Services	Infrastructure Services	UVic Online	Total
0-3 years	4	2	7	13
4-7 years	4	0	7	11
8+ years	21	7	11	39
Total	29	9	25	64

Interviews

An invitation was sent to all University Systems employees on August 23, 2017 to participate in an interview, which included a total of 177 individuals including the same population selection used in the surveys plus part-time employees who were part of the departmental list. To mitigate any perceived or real impact related to power-over relationships between the researcher and potential participants, the invitation was distributed by University Systems' administrative support staff in a manner similar to other departmental mailings. Invitees were provided with the high-level context for the research along with the informed consent form, which included additional details related to confidentiality and anonymity. Interested parties were instructed to contact the researcher or academic supervisor to schedule a time for the interview. A total of 8 employees volunteered to participate. Interviews were conducted in September and October of 2017, each taking approximately 1 hour to complete. Participants were employed by both UVic Online and Academic and Administrative Service, with the length of service of interviewees ranging from under 1 year, to approximately 16 years. No interviews were conducted with Infrastructure Services employees, as no one from that sub-department volunteered to participate. The interview questions are included in Appendix D.

Measures

The survey focused on the collection of quantitative data, asking participants to rate their level of agreement with statements on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" through to

“strongly agree”. Questions were developed corresponding to the four subject areas developed as part of the framework for review, aiming to assess characteristics related to job design; training, professional development, and succession planning; process review; and employee relations. Additional questions were included giving participants the opportunity to provide examples in each of the areas that were especially positive or challenging, as well as opportunities for change or improvement.

Interviews questions were designed to cover the same four topic areas as defined in the framework and covered in the surveys. Questions were structured to allow for more discussion through the provision of qualitative examples related to successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in each of the four subject areas, and allowed for additional probing to clarify examples and obtain more detail as required.

Analysis

Content analysis was completed for each open-ended survey and interview question and involved a full review of responses, with an aim to identify any underlying themes or primary issue in each response. Responses with similar themes were grouped together, with the primary theme identified, corresponding examples taken from the full responses, and the frequency of occurrences noted for each theme. The most common themes were then used to inform both the discussion and recommendations.

Quantitative results were also analyzed, capturing the total number of responses for each question, as well as the mean value of responses and standard deviation to identify any potential discrepancies. Bivariate analysis of responses by length of service of the respondent and by sub-department was conducted to identify significant differences across groups which were then used to inform the discussion and subsequent recommendations.

Findings: Review of Issues

Survey participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements related to each of the areas of job design; training, professional development, and succession planning; process review; and employee relations. A total of 64 responses were received, with mean values presented for each question. Standard deviation is also included when displaying average scores filtered by response groups; however, it is important to note that the significance of differences between response groups may be more easily manipulated by a small number of outlier responses.

Job Design

Table 3 provides a detailed breakdown of employee ratings of job design attributes. Participants were asked whether the responsibilities of their current position were well defined, as well as whether the responsibilities of their current position remain aligned with the role that they were originally hired for. Responses were overall positive with a mean score of 3.8 and 3.6 respectively. Participants were also asked whether there is sufficient variety in tasks within their current position, which resulted in a mean score of 4.2 reflecting general agreement and satisfaction with the characteristic, and 84% of responses indicating “agree” or “strongly agree”. Finally, participants were asked whether their position affords the opportunity to perform both challenging and rewarding work, with mean scores of 4.3 and 4.1 respectively, with the majority of respondents choosing “agree” or “strongly agree”.

Table 3: Employee ratings of job design attributes

Variable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
The responsibilities of my current position are well defined.	2 3.1%	7 10.9%	9 14.1%	32 50.0%	14 21.9%	Total: 64 Mean: 3.8 Std. Dev: 1.0
The responsibilities of my current position align with the role I was hired for.	2 3.1%	11 17.2%	9 14.1%	30 46.9%	12 18.8%	Total: 64 Mean: 3.6 Std. Dev: 1.1
I have sufficient variety in job tasks within my current position.	1 1.6%	3 4.7%	6 9.4%	27 42.2%	27 42.2%	Total: 64 Mean: 4.2 Std. Dev: 0.9
My current position affords me the opportunity to perform challenging work.	0 0.0%	4 6.3%	4 6.3%	23 35.9%	33 51.6%	Total: 64 Mean: 4.3 Std. Dev: 0.9
My current position affords me the opportunity to perform rewarding work.	1 1.6%	5 7.8%	4 6.3%	28 43.8%	26 40.6%	Total: 64 Mean: 4.1 Std. Dev: 1.0

Table 4 presents bivariate results by sub-department, with only minor differences reported by Infrastructure Services, noting that responsibilities are generally more well-defined. Employee ratings are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 representing “strongly agree”.

Table 4: Employee ratings of job design attributes by sub-department

<u>Academic and Admin Services</u> (n=29)	<u>Infrastructure Services (n=9)</u>	<u>UVic Online</u> (n=25)	<u>Total (n=64)</u>
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	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
The responsibilities of my current position are well defined.	3.7	1.3	4.0	0.9	3.7	0.8	3.8	1.0
The responsibilities of my current position align with the role I was hired for.	3.5	1.2	4.0	0.9	3.6	1.1	3.6	1.1
I have sufficient variety in job tasks within my current position.	4.3	0.9	4.0	1.0	4.1	0.9	4.2	0.9
My current position affords me the opportunity to perform challenging work.	4.3	0.9	4.1	1.1	4.4	0.8	4.3	0.9
My current position affords me the opportunity to perform rewarding work.	4.2	0.8	3.8	1.2	4.1	1.0	4.1	1.0

Bivariate distributions of the responses based upon length of are summarized in Table 5. In general, the lowest scores were recorded by the group with 0-3 years of service. Opportunities to perform both challenging and rewarding work were highest amongst the group with 4-7 years of service, as well as a significantly higher perception of the alignment of their responsibilities with the role for which they were originally hired.

Table 5: Employee ratings of job design attributes by length of service

	<u>0-3 years (n=13)</u>		<u>4-7 years (n=11)</u>		<u>8+ years (n=39)</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
The responsibilities of my current position are well defined.	3.8	0.7	3.8	1.0	3.7	1.1	3.8	1.0
The responsibilities of my current position align with the role I was hired for.	3.6	1.0	4.1	0.7	3.5	1.2	3.6	1.1
I have sufficient variety in job tasks within my current position.	3.9	1.0	4.4	0.5	4.2	1.0	4.2	0.9
My current position affords me the opportunity to perform challenging work.	4.2	0.7	4.5	0.5	4.3	1.0	4.3	0.9
My current position affords me the opportunity to perform rewarding work.	3.9	1.0	4.4	0.5	4.1	1.0	4.1	1.0

Training, Professional Development, and Succession Planning

Participants were asked a series of questions related to their familiarity with various training and professional development opportunities available in University Systems and for the University of Victoria as a whole, and their awareness of any form of succession planning that occurs in the department.

Training. Survey respondents were asked to rate their agreement with whether they received sufficient on the job training when they began their position, and whether they regularly observe formalized on-the-job training. The distribution of results is included in Table 6. When asked about their own training, a total of 56% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 22% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 22% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked whether they observed on-the-job training for new hires, a total of 38% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 38% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In both cases, mean scores of 3.5 and 3.3 respectively reflect a mixed experience cross the department.

Table 6: Summary staff perceptions of training programs

Variable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
When I began my current position in University Systems, I received sufficient on-the-job training.	2 3.1%	12 18.8%	14 21.9%	27 42.2%	9 14.1%	Total: 64 Mean: 3.5 Std. Dev: 1.1
I regularly observe formalized on-the-job training for new hires.	2 3.1%	14 21.9%	24 37.5%	14 21.9%	10 15.6%	Total: 64 Mean: 3.3 Std. Dev: 1.1

Bivariate distributions of the responses based upon length of are summarized in Table 7. A slightly higher average was scored by the middle length of service group (4-7 years); however, with both the newer and longer term employees recording lower scores there is no observable trend based upon length of service.

Table 7: Perception of training programs by length of service

	<u>0-3 years</u> <u>(n=13)</u>		<u>4-7 years</u> <u>(n=11)</u>		<u>8+ years</u> <u>(n=39)</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
When I began my current position in University Systems, I received sufficient on-the-job training	3.7	1.2	3.9	0.8	3.3	1.4	3.5	1.1
I regularly observe formalized on-the-job training for new hires	3.1	1.3	3.6	1.0	3.2	1.0	3.3	1.1

Table 8 presents bivariate results by unit, with Academic and Administrative Services scoring the highest average by a small margin.

Table 8: Perception of training programs by sub-department

	<u>Academic and</u>		<u>Infrastructure</u>		<u>UVic Online</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	<u>Admin Services</u>		<u>Services (n=9)</u>		<u>(n=25)</u>			
	<u>(n=29)</u>		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
When I began my current position in University Systems, I received sufficient on-the-job training	3.6	1.0	3.4	1.1	3.3	1.1	3.5	1.1
I regularly observe formalized on-the-job training for new hires	3.5	1.2	3.0	0.9	3.1	1.0	3.3	1.1

Participants were also asked about training they have received from different sources, with the distribution of responses presented in Table 9. Self-directed training was the most common with 93% of participants having access, followed by 91% for university-wide training, and 81% for department-delivered training. The highly-specialized nature of the work in University Systems explains the focus on self-directed training as courses may simply be unavailable at the department or University level given both the level of expertise required and the narrow audience.

Table 9: Employee access to training programs

Variable	Yes	No	
Department-delivered training (i.e. technical courses)?	52 81.3%	12 18.8%	Total: 64
University-wide training (i.e. HR courses)?	58 90.6%	6 9.4%	Total: 64
Self-directed training?	60 93.8%	4 6.3%	Total: 64

Professional Development. Survey respondents were asked to identify which sources of professional development funding had been accessed, with a detailed breakdown of responses provided in Table 10. More than half of respondents have received some form of departmental-sponsored or personal professional development; however, only one third have made use of central professional development funding. The lower participation rate may be a result of additional restrictions in place on the types of purchases, or simply lack of awareness or familiarity with the program, as the funding is available to the same group of individuals who have accessed personal professional development funds. Additionally, 45% of participants indicated they have accessed awards-based funding, which may include University-wide awards such as the annual President's Distinguished Service Awards, or the University Systems Living Values Awards which are awarded semi-annually. Finally, 42% of respondents indicated they have used personal funds to further their professional development opportunities.

Table 10: Employee access to professional development sources

Variable	Yes	No	
Department-sponsored programs or funding?	36 58.1%	26 41.9%	Total: 62
Personal professional development funding?	39 61.9%	24 38.1%	Total: 63
Central professional development funding?	20 32.8%	41 67.2%	Total: 61
Award-based funding (i.e. Living Values, PDSA)?	28 45.2%	34 54.8%	Total: 62
Self-funding?	26 42.6%	35 57.4%	Total: 61

Participants were also asked to identify whether any barriers existed in preventing access to professional development resources, with results provided in Table 11. While the majority responded “no” to each of the options presented, “time” was identified by nearly half of the respondents as a barrier, followed by “alignment with job responsibilities”, and finally “money or funding”.

Table 11: Employee barriers to professional development

Variable	Yes	No	
Time?	30 46.9%	34 53.1%	Total: 64
Money or funding?	16 25.0%	48 75.0%	Total: 64
Alignment with job responsibilities?	21 32.8%	43 67.2%	Total: 64

Process Review

A series of questions were used to assess the participant’s familiarity with each of the given processes, as well as whether they felt the benefits were clearly articulated and understood, if the process added value, and was efficient or bureaucratic. For each set of questions, the average scores (on a scale of 1 to 5) are displayed, with 1 reflecting “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”, along with further distributions both by sub-department and length of service to identify any significant differences that may exist across groups.

Project Management. Participants were asked a series of questions about their familiarity and experiences with University Systems project management processes, with a summary of responses by sub-department included in Table 12. Additional questions revealed that small number of participants lacked of familiarity with the processes; however, the vast majority provided insight into their

experiences using the processes as both a project manager, as well as in the capacity of a project team member.

Table 12: Employee perceptions of project management processes by sub-department

	<u>Academic and Admin Services (n=29)</u>		<u>Infrastructure Services (n=9)</u>		<u>UVic Online (n=25)</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
I am familiar with the Project Management methodology	4.2	0.7	3.9	1.3	4.1	1.0	4.1	0.9
The benefits of the Project Management methodology are clearly articulated	4.3	0.6	3.7	0.5	3.9	1.0	4.0	0.8
The majority of University Systems staff understand the benefits of the Project Management methodology	3.3	1.0	3.4	0.7	3.2	0.8	3.3	0.9
Project Management processes add value to the organization	4.2	0.9	4.3	0.7	3.9	0.9	4.1	0.9
Project Management processes are efficient	3.8	0.9	2.9	0.9	3.1	0.9	3.4	1.0
Project Management processes are bureaucratic	3.1	1.3	3.8	0.8	3.6	0.9	3.3	1.1

Table 13 presents bivariate results by length of service, with employees having the shortest length of service also being least familiar with processes and having the highest perception of bureaucracy. Conversely, the group with 8+ years of service recorded both the highest score for familiarity with the methodology and lowest average for perception of bureaucracy.

Table 13: Employee perceptions of project management processes by length of service

	<u>0-3 years (n=13)</u>		<u>4-7 years (n=11)</u>		<u>8+ years (n=39)</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
I am familiar with the Project Management methodology	3.5	1.5	4.3	0.6	4.3	0.6	4.1	0.9
The benefits of the Project Management methodology are clearly articulated	3.8	1.1	4.2	0.6	4.1	0.8	4.0	0.8
The majority of University Systems staff understand the benefits of the Project Management methodology	3.4	1.0	3.3	0.8	3.2	0.9	3.3	0.9
Project Management processes add value to the organization	4.3	0.9	4.2	0.9	4.0	0.9	4.1	0.9

Project Management processes are efficient	3.6	0.9	3.5	0.9	3.3	1.0	3.4	1.0
Project Management processes are bureaucratic	3.7	1.0	3.4	1.1	3.3	1.0	3.3	1.1

Change Management. Participants were asked a series of questions about their familiarity and experiences with University Systems change management processes with bivariate results by sub-department included in Table 14. The vast majority of respondents had some level of experience or familiarity with the processes, and were able to contribute through the sharing of various experiences in their responses to the questions.

Table 14: Employee perceptions of change management processes by sub-department

	<u>Academic and</u>		<u>Infrastructure</u>		<u>UVic Online</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	<u>Admin</u>		<u>Services (n=9)</u>		<u>(n=25)</u>			
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
I am familiar with the Change Management methodology	3.9	1.1	4.1	1.4	4.1	0.9	4.0	1.0
The benefits of the Change Management methodology are clearly articulated	4.0	0.8	4.1	0.8	3.8	0.7	3.9	0.8
The majority of University Systems staff understand the benefits of the Change Management methodology	3.4	0.9	3.8	1.0	3.6	0.6	3.6	0.8
Change Management processes add value to the organization	4.2	0.7	4.8	0.4	3.7	0.7	4.1	0.8
Change Management processes are efficient	3.9	0.9	4.1	0.8	3.5	0.9	3.8	0.9
Change Management processes are bureaucratic	3.0	1.1	2.9	1.1	3.0	0.8	3.0	1.0

Table 15 presents bivariate results by length of service, with employees having the shortest length of service also being least familiar with processes. Perceptions of bureaucracy, benefits, and efficiency of the processes were largely consistent across groups.

Table 15: Employee perceptions of change management processes by length of service

	<u>0-3 years</u>		<u>4-7 years</u>		<u>8+ years</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	<u>(n=13)</u>		<u>(n=11)</u>		<u>(n=39)</u>			
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
I am familiar with the Change Management methodology	3.5	1.2	4.5	0.7	4.1	1.0	4.0	1.0

The benefits of the Change Management methodology are clearly articulated	3.8	0.9	4.2	0.4	3.9	0.8	3.9	0.8
The majority of University Systems staff understand the benefits of the Change Management methodology	3.5	0.8	3.8	0.4	3.5	0.9	3.6	0.8
Change Management processes add value to the organization	4.1	0.8	4.1	0.8	4.1	0.8	4.1	0.8
Change Management processes are efficient	3.9	0.8	3.8	1.0	3.7	0.9	3.8	0.9
Change Management processes are bureaucratic	3.0	1.0	3.3	1.0	2.9	1.0	3.0	1.0

Incident Management and Trouble ticketing. Participants were asked a series of questions about their familiarity and experiences with University Systems incident management processes and trouble ticketing tools and systems, with a summary of responses by sub-department included in Table 16. All respondents had some level of familiarity with the tools and associated processes; however, depending upon the nature of their role, exposure to the full suite of tools was inconsistent.

Table 16: Employee perceptions of incident management and trouble ticketing by sub-department

	<u>Academic and</u>		<u>Infrastructure</u>		<u>UVic Online</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	<u>Admin</u>		<u>Services (n=9)</u>		<u>(n=25)</u>			
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
I am familiar with the incident management processes and trouble-ticketing systems	4.2	0.6	4.3	0.5	4.3	0.6	4.3	0.6
The benefits of the incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems are clearly articulated	4.2	0.7	3.6	1.0	3.7	0.9	3.9	0.9
The majority of University Systems staff understand the benefits of the incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems	3.8	0.8	3.7	1.2	4.0	0.5	3.9	0.8
Incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems add value to the organization	4.3	0.7	4.4	0.5	4.3	0.5	4.3	0.6
Incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems are efficient	3.4	1.1	3.5	1.4	3.4	0.9	3.4	1.0

Incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems are bureaucratic	2.8	1.1	2.6	1.2	2.7	0.9	2.7	1.0
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Table 17 presents bivariate results by length of service, with perceptions of bureaucracy being highest in the group having the least number of years of service. Familiarity with processes and tools, as well as the perceived benefits were highest amongst the group with 4-7 years of service; however, the group also recorded the lowest average scores when asked to rate the efficiency of processes, making the results inconclusive.

Table 17: Employee perceptions of incident management and trouble ticketing by length of service

	<u>0-3 years</u>		<u>4-7 years</u>		<u>8+ years</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	<u>(n=13)</u>		<u>(n=11)</u>		<u>(n=39)</u>			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
I am familiar with the incident management processes and trouble-ticketing systems	4.2	0.6	4.6	0.5	4.2	0.6	4.3	0.6
The benefits of the incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems are clearly articulated	3.8	1.0	4.2	0.9	3.9	0.8	3.9	0.9
The majority of University Systems staff understand the benefits of the incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems	3.9	0.6	4.2	0.8	3.7	0.8	3.9	0.8
Incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems add value to the organization	4.3	0.5	4.5	0.5	4.3	0.6	4.3	0.6
Incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems are efficient	3.5	1.1	3.1	1.3	3.5	1.0	3.4	1.0
Incident management tools and trouble-ticketing systems are bureaucratic	3.5	1.0	2.5	1.0	2.5	0.9	2.7	1.0

Employee Relations

Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements based upon the Leader Member Exchange (LMX), as well as additional questions meant to assess the strength of the relationship with different facets of the department, including supervisor/manager, immediate team, sub-department, and University Systems as a whole with bivariate results by sub-department provided in Table 18. Very minor differences were observed across sub-departments, with the average of responses consistently falling between the “agree” to “strongly agree” range. A slight decrease was

observed when employees were asked if their manager recognized their potential, and whether their manager would “bail them out” at the manager’s expense; however, the average scores remained positive, falling slightly below “agree” on average.

Table 18: Perceptions of employee relations by sub-department

	<u>Academic and</u>		<u>Infrastructure</u>		<u>UVic Online</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	<u>Admin</u>		<u>Services (n=9)</u>		<u>(n=25)</u>			
	<u>Services (n=29)</u>		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
My manager is satisfied with the work that I do	4.1	1.0	3.9	0.9	4.1	0.7	4.1	0.8
My manager understands my job problems and needs	4.1	1.0	4.1	1.3	4.0	0.6	4.1	0.9
My manager recognizes my potential	4.0	1.0	3.9	1.3	3.8	1.0	3.9	1.0
My manager would use their power to help me solve problems in my work	4.4	0.9	4.4	0.5	4.2	0.7	4.3	0.8
My manager would “bail me out” at their expense	3.7	1.0	3.8	0.7	3.6	0.9	3.7	0.9
I have enough confidence in my manager that I would defend and justify their decisions if they were not present to do so	4.3	0.8	4.6	0.5	4.0	0.7	4.2	0.8
I have a positive relationship with my manager	4.2	1.0	4.6	0.7	4.3	0.6	4.3	0.8
I have a positive relationship with my immediate team members	4.2	0.9	4.3	0.7	4.5	0.5	4.4	0.7
I have a positive relationship with the members of my department	4.1	0.9	4.3	0.7	4.3	0.6	4.2	0.8
I have a positive relationship with the University Systems team	4.1	0.9	4.3	0.7	4.2	0.6	4.1	0.8

Table 19 presents bivariate results of perceptions of employee relations by length of service which yielded only minor differences in perception across groups.

Table 19: Perceptions of employee relations by length of service

	<u>0-3 years</u>		<u>4-7 years</u>		<u>8+ years</u>		<u>Total (n=64)</u>	
	<u>(n=13)</u>		<u>(n=11)</u>		<u>(n=39)</u>		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
My manager is satisfied with the work that I do	4.2	0.7	4.0	0.8	4.1	0.9	4.1	0.8
My manager understands my job problems and needs	4.3	0.9	4.0	0.8	4.0	0.9	4.1	0.9
My manager recognizes my potential	4.1	0.9	4.3	0.8	3.8	1.2	3.9	1.0
My manager would use their power to help me solve problems in my work	4.5	0.5	4.5	0.7	4.2	0.9	4.3	0.8
My manager would "bail me out" at their expense	3.5	0.5	3.8	0.7	3.7	1.0	3.7	0.9
I have enough confidence in my manager that I would defend and justify their decisions if they were not present to do so	4.4	0.7	4.1	0.5	4.2	0.9	4.2	0.8
I have a positive relationship with my manager	4.5	0.7	4.3	0.8	4.2	0.9	4.3	0.8
I have a positive relationship with my immediate team members	4.5	0.7	4.6	0.5	4.3	0.8	4.4	0.7
I have a positive relationship with the members of my department	4.5	0.7	4.5	0.5	4.1	0.8	4.2	0.8
I have a positive relationship with the University Systems team	4.4	0.7	4.2	0.6	4.1	0.8	4.1	0.8

As a final question, participants were asked to rate whether they enjoy working in University Systems, with bivariate results by sub-department provided in Table 20. The results were overall very positive with a mean score of 4.4, averaging between "agree" and "strongly agree" with negligible differences observed in responses by each of the three sub-departments within University Systems.

Table 20: Employee enjoyment by sub-department

	<u>Academic</u>		<u>and</u>		<u>Admin</u>		<u>Infrastructure</u>		<u>UVic</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Services</u>		<u>Services</u>		<u>Online</u>		<u>Services</u>		<u>Online</u>		<u>(n=64)</u>	
	<u>(n=29)</u>		<u>(n=9)</u>		<u>(n=25)</u>							
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
I enjoy working in University Systems	4.5	0.7	4.4	0.5	4.3	0.7	4.4	0.7	4.4	0.7		

Bivariate distribution of responses by length of service is presented in Table 21. Again, only minor differences were observed across the different groups reflecting a high overall level of satisfaction with the work environment.

Table 21: Employee enjoyment by length of service

	<u>0-3 years</u>		<u>4-7</u>		<u>8+ years</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>(n=13)</u>		<u>years</u>		<u>(n=39)</u>		<u>(n=64)</u>	
	<u>(n=13)</u>		<u>(n=11)</u>		<u>(n=39)</u>		<u>(n=64)</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
I enjoy working in University Systems	4.5	0.8	4.7	0.5	4.3	0.7	4.4	0.7

Findings: Suggestions for Improvements

Additional questions asked through surveys and interviews were aimed at developing an understanding of both the strengths and challenges in University Systems in each of the four areas of the framework, with opportunities provided to make suggestions for how the various processes or elements could be improved. Similar lines of questioning were used in both surveys and interviews (as described in Appendix C and Appendix D), with results combined in the findings section where appropriate.

Job Design

Interview participants were asked to identify what specifically they enjoy most about their current role and working in University Systems. Several themes emerged from the interview responses, with the most prevalent being related to “people” which was noted by all interviewees in some form. One interviewee noted that “staff are all approachable and great to work with” and several others had positive descriptions of project team dynamics, including “when a team gels together and starts talking the same language” and overall satisfaction when a shared focus is present. Several responses also indicated a focus on client interaction, with enjoyment being gained from making clients happy and having regular interaction outside of the University Systems department.

A secondary theme was a focus on problem solving and delivering results which was identified in 6 of 8 interviews. “Getting new products out the door and providing new functionality” was provided as well as well as several statements related to enjoyment from the process of problem solving itself, and gaining satisfaction from the complexity of the work. Several other subjects were raised individually, including overall variety in the type of work, working in partnership with client areas to have strategic discussions around upcoming priorities, developing junior team members, and an alignment with the type of work, with one respondent noting that “I get to do what I like, and I have a personal interest in the area that I work”.

Participants were asked through surveys and interviews what, if anything they would change about their current role, with responses grouped into themes and summarized in Table 22. The most common responses were related to improved definition of roles and responsibilities, which was noted in both surveys (10) and interviews (3), with responses ranging from straight forward suggestions such as updating job titles to more accurately reflect duties, all the way through to responses which suggest that job descriptions are either non-existent, or substantially out of date. The second most frequent response was from individuals seeking more opportunities for growth or additional responsibilities. Additional responses referenced having too many responsibilities or too much bureaucracy; however, were only provided three times each.

Table 22: Changes sought in current role

Theme	Number	Examples
<i>Better definition of roles and responsibilities</i>	13	<i>Updated job description and job tile, alignment with experience and org structure, clarity of prioritization processes</i>
<i>Growth / more opportunities</i>	9	<i>Technical design work, management/leadership opportunities, specialization</i>

Additional responses were categorized into themes that did not directly express a desire for change. These included a total of 9 responses related to the responsibility of others outside of the respondents control as well as 10 responses indicating that current duties are sufficient and do not require any change.

Training, Professional Development, and Succession Planning

Interviewees were asked whether they received sufficient training when they began in their current role, and 50% of respondents responded that they did not receive any formal training. When probed further, it became apparent that there may be additional context which contributed to this scenario, namely that the individuals were in more senior roles and it is expected that they would already possess the skills necessary for the job. Furthermore, additional prompting for these individuals revealed that at least a rudimentary amount of orientation to departmental policies was provided; however, participants indicated that more would have been preferred. For those who indicated training did occur, job shadowing was the most frequently cited example. For example, a software developer indicated that they sat with a more senior developer to observe how the individual would implement changes in a specific software development environment to understand documentation, process, and steps required, and then once they were comfortable with the process, roles would be switched to validate that tasks were performed correctly. Additional support was provided in this example in the context of books and documentation if required, allowing for different learning styles to acclimate the individual to the environment. Several individuals also commented on the project management training available, and how it provided the necessary context for processes and documentation in the University of Victoria's project management environment, but that a gap existed for those who wish to learn or understand the more fundamental skills of how to manage a project.

Interviewees were asked to identify any training or professional opportunities that they had witnessed or participated in, that resonated as either particularly positive or challenging. The most frequent response related to a specific instance of training related to the Agile software development methodology which was cited by 50% of respondents. The training was a 2 day course which was located on campus but away from the typical work environment, which allowed participants to focus and stay away from regular work duties. When asked what parts of the training made it a success,

numerous examples were provided, including the fact that it contributed to team building, by “bringing together people from different environments who wouldn’t normally interact”, and it was viewed as a “safe environment where the team could get to know each other”. Additionally, it was stated that the team could “develop a set of common experiences that could be drawn upon when the team started to work on a project in the future”. At the more practical level, the training was viewed as a success because it was delivered by a strong facilitator, had an appropriate mix of activities and instruction, and didn’t require any particular domain expertise for participants, making it more accessible to a broader group of staff. Others enjoyed the training because it also related to professional development, in that it allowed for additional certification exams to be taken to demonstrate successful mastery of course content.

Another common theme that emerged through interviews was participation in training with other groups of individuals. One interviewee explained the positive experience associated with going to a conference, in that they are “surrounded by people who are using same tools, doing the same type of work as you, but they have a different point of view, or attack the same types of problems we face in different ways. It broadens perspectives on how you can tackle those problems in the future in the context of your own workplace”. Similar themes emerged from other interviewees in the context of training courses delivered through Human Resources. They noted that HR courses provide the opportunity “to meet people from across campus and get exposure to their worlds. It also helps to expose us (University Systems) to them, and that we aren’t all just moles living in the basement” (a reference to the physical location of the vast majority of University Systems staff). Similarly, it was noted that the courses provide opportunities to help build relationships with other staff who may have attended the same training, by forming positive associations through the exercises or content of the session.

Table 23 provides a summary of themes identified by participants who were asked to identify what opportunities for improvement exist in the way that University Systems coordinates or delivers training and professional development to staff. The most common theme identified in responses was a desire for improved clarity and transparency in how training and development opportunities are made available to staff, with responses including “the squeaky wheel gets the grease” and that “people who ask get, and those who don’t ask, don’t get offered”. A total of 7 responses indicated that the current offerings are sufficient and no change is required.

Table 23: Improvements in the delivery of training and professional development

Theme	Number	Examples
<i>More clarity and equity</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Staff aren’t aware what is available, how can it be accessed, transparency around how much funding is available</i>
<i>Expand opportunities and internal offerings</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Bring in more external trainers, provide access to web-based offerings</i>

*Remove barriers for
term employees* 5

*Improve access to funding, creates opportunities for
regular employment*

One example provided in two interviews, but not raised in survey responses, is the idea of more direct linkage of training and professional development goals to an individual's performance and development plan. One interviewee noted that "my experience so far, there is very little performance planning, therefore managers don't know where people want to go, and therefore can't match opportunities to where people want to go. If more performance planning then we would know where people want to go, and what would help." This perspective was echoed by another interviewee who stated that performance planning was critical to the process, and that it "draws on job expectations, and causes employees to plan what they need to succeed." Conversely, the same interviewee noted that it can also be followed up on by leadership, and creates further equity through the application of a consistent process. Additionally, it was noted that if there is a departmental expectation that there is a specific skill or focus identified by the department as a priority (University Systems values and the VPFO service excellence initiatives were identified as examples), then leadership should be tying these commitments to training opportunities to both ensure that they are priority, and also that they can be reasonably achieved by staff.

Survey respondents were asked "how could University Systems improve succession planning within the department?" While a small number of responses indicated that current processes were sufficient, the vast majority identified potential areas for improvement. Several key themes emerged in the responses, with the most frequent again being related to the performance planning process, with responses ranging from the straight-forward suggestions that succession planning be directly incorporated into the performance planning process, to more specific recommendations including doing a better job of identifying and understanding what employees want to do longer term, and more concrete steps to assist them in developing an approach to get there.

Finally, survey respondents were asked to identify any additional training they received, and while more than 50 responses were provided, the responses highlighted options that largely fell within the above categories, including HR and departmental training, as well as self-directed training through webinars, books, and specialized courses. Also noted were one-on-one and small group training sessions with peers, and attendance at conferences.

Process Review

Interviewees were provided with the opportunity for open-ended discussion, where they were asked to identify any processes that they wished to discuss, including examples of which processes were beneficial and which created challenges. Project management processes were cited most frequently as an effective process by a total of 5 participants, in that it helps to organize work, provide context to stakeholders, and aid in prioritization of work and overall objectives. Change management processes

were also referenced by 3 interviewees as a positive set of processes, with examples referencing improved testing, communication, and sign-off.

When asked to explain which processes presented challenges, there was no consensus, and a wide array of responses were provided. Processes external to University Systems, including the completion of Privacy Impact Assessments and associated privacy processes were cited three times, while specific elements of the change management process were noted by two interviewees. Project management was only identified in a single instance, with the interviewee explaining the challenge resided with the focus on the process rather than the project deliverables themselves, explaining that the Project Review Committee has often been perceived as a group that has a default perspective of needing to be convinced that a project is a good idea and needs to be completed rather than being available to assist, explaining it feels like “convince me we should approve this, rather than how can I help you get this done”.

Survey questions were focused on three process groups prevalent across University Systems, which allowed for a broader perspective of successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in each area. Additional feedback related to these specific processes captured through interviews has been combined into the respective section.

Project Management. Survey respondents were asked “what can be done to improve understanding of the University Systems Project Management methodology and associated processes?” with responses summarized in Table 24. There were 40 total responses received, including a small number of whom suggested that either the current means were sufficient, or that they lacked enough familiarity with what was currently offered to provide a meaningful suggestion. Of the remaining responses, the desire for expanded training was the most frequently cited example, being provided by 10 respondents.

Table 24: Suggested improvements in understanding of the project management methodology

Theme	Number	Examples
<i>Expanded training</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Basic/introductory training for new employees, training for project team members (not PMs), training for project stakeholders and clients</i>
<i>Improved communication of benefits</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Improve buy-in with leadership and clients, consistency across different units in Systems</i>
<i>Reduce bureaucracy</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Focus on documentation instead of deliverables, frequently changing processes</i>

Participants were asked to identify where the project management methodology has been helpful in achieving objectives. Numerous examples of specific project successes were cited; however, the methodology itself was also cited as being beneficial in improving the results of whatever was being delivered. “Having a well thought out plan is a good roadmap to completing any project, and ensures you’re delivering something the client actually wants” aligned with several other responses explaining that the planning process helped to define project scope, while the methodology helps to control the agreed upon scope to allow the team to complete the work.

Survey participants were also asked to provide examples of where the methodology or processes have created challenged in achieving objectives. While a total of 40 responses were provided, the perception of bureaucracy and a lack of buy-in were the only themes that emerged, being cited by a total of 11 and 4 respondents respectively. Several responses also cited project budget/cost challenges; however, these were largely in the context of how much funding was available, which for the purposes of the review will be considered out of scope as budgetary constraints go well beyond the project management methodology and processes.

Participants were asked for suggestions on how to improve the project management methodology, and other than the previously mentioned themes of increased training and reduced bureaucracy which were identified as ways improve understanding, two other themes were identified. First, three responses suggested improvements be made to the resource allocation process for projects, which ranged from suggested revisions to the document review process, all the way through to a more cohesive view at the departmental level to support better resource planning, and ultimately prioritization to ensure projects are completed in a reasonable time frame. Second, several responses suggested further consultation about future changes to the methodology and process. One respondent noted the PMO Advisory Committee (an internal committee consisting of a cross-section of experienced project managers who contribute feedback to the ongoing refinement and evolution of University Systems project management processes) as a great example of this, while others expressed a desire to be consulted further, including a pointed suggestion to have a facilitated session with a specific team to understand how the process works (and doesn’t work) for them specifically, and considering modifications to the process as a result, with the suggestion that the team may as a result feel more ownership over the process and be motivated to use it.

Change Management. Survey respondents were asked “what can be done to improve understanding of the University Systems Change Management methodology and associated processes?” with 37 total responses received. The only theme that emerged in responses was related to training and awareness. Some individuals indicated a lack of awareness or familiarity with the process due to having never attended a meeting or being involved in the process, but the majority suggested a more formal introductory process could be delivered, both in the context of new staff, as well as in a less formal setting such as a “lunch and learn”. Several responses were surprised by the link included in the survey itself to the methodology, explaining that while they been familiar with the process itself, they did not realize that it was documented in detail, as they were only familiar with the list of changes to be reviewed at the weekly meeting.

Participants were also asked to identify areas where the Change Management process has been beneficial, with two main themes arising. A total of 12 survey responses explained that the requirement to follow the formalized process resulted in a more robust system implementation, given the requirement to explain what testing had occurred prior to the change being implemented. Others explained that capturing lessons learned from previous changes of a similar nature resulted in improvements moving forward. An improvement to communication and overall awareness was also recognized as a primary benefit by a total of 4 respondents, with most explaining that the centralized process allowed for all of the units in Systems to be made aware of upcoming changes, understand the impacts, and raise any potential concerns that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Survey participants were also asked to provide examples of where the methodology or processes have created challenges in achieving objectives. While a significant number of responses (8) suggested that there were no challenges with the change management process, two general themes emerged. Some concern was expressed around the scheduling of meetings and approvals, as well as the sequencing of dependent tasks, which was noted by 5 individuals. Software development examples were provided whereby there are a number of dependencies related to client communication, resources scheduling for out of hours installation, testing, and client sign-off can result in challenges that may not be understood by other meeting attendees, but can result in delays that will cause frustration with client areas who perceive the delays as bureaucratic in nature. Similarly, concern was raised about the use of “emergency” changes when the deadline is missed for “normal” installs, in that it may send the wrong message to those who are not familiar with the process.

Participants were also asked what improvements could be made to the change management methodology. Most felt the current process was satisfactory, with remaining responses focused primarily on creating more awareness and familiarity with the processes through training opportunities. One specific suggestion related to the change management processes was provided suggesting that “we are not in the business of advertising CAB” and wondering “who is the advocate or champion for the change process?”, and going further to suggest that it would be helpful to explain *why the process is valuable* both to the institution and the individual, rather than simply *why it must be done*, and that this could be aided by providing further examples of where it has been beneficial in the past.

Incident Management and Trouble ticketing. Survey respondents were asked what opportunities exist to improve the incident management tools and processes used in University Systems, with the previously identified challenge of having too many disparate systems being the main area of focus. The most common response, which was provided by a total of 16 individuals, was that the department should standardize on a single tool, with no consensus on which specific system should be used. Responses suggested that individuals had strong preferences; however, the responses were largely split evenly among each of the three systems. Other suggestions focused on how the department could better utilize the existing tools, either through improved processes or clarity of responsibilities, as well as the previously identified suggestion of reducing barriers between teams and ensuring visibility across the separate systems by everyone involved to maximize information sharing in the department.

Participants were asked to provide any examples where the tools or processes for trouble-ticketing and incident management have been beneficial in achieving objectives, and nearly all of the responses indicated that the available tools were crucial to ensuring proper communication between staff within their own units, with the same comments being presented by those who use RT, HOMER, and JIRA, even though there is minimal integration between these separate systems. For staff who use the RT system, this was expanded to indicate that it fostered collaboration and communication between the groups using this system. A smaller number of comments also suggested that these tools were beneficial in allowing for improved communication with clients and customers from across campus.

Finally, participants were also asked to provide examples of where the methodology or processes have created challenges in achieving objectives. The overwhelming majority of comments expressing frustration over the number of different systems in use, the separate processes and procedures associated with each of them, a lack of clarity or understanding of the rationale for disparate systems, and challenges coordinating work and client responses across all of the systems.

Employee Relations

Survey respondents were asked what opportunities exist to strengthen relationships in each of the employee groups with a variety of responses received, but no single recommendation emerged from responses. Increased team building, and opportunities to work across teams and outside of the normal working relationships was identified as one method to improve the relationship across the department but no specific initiatives or opportunities were provided. Several responses were also consistent with the University Systems values, specifically communication and information sharing, with a desire to improve the understanding of what other members of the department do as part of their work through initiatives such as existing lunch and learn programs. One consistent underlying theme was a positive view of the work culture in University Systems, with staff working together on common objectives, although several responses suggested a focus on department-wide strategy or major projects would be beneficial.

Interviewees were asked to discuss both positive and challenging relationships that may exist across different groups in University Systems, as well as providing suggestions on how relations could be improved. The majority of positive examples were related to cases inside an individual's immediate team, or scenarios where cross-functional teams were working towards a shared objective. Challenges were largely identified primarily on the basis of lack of regular interaction between units, but also because different units have distinct cultures and priorities, with one participant explaining that there are different cultures in UVic Online, Infrastructure, and Academic and Admin services, which can result in conflict. For example, they cited the UVic Online group and the focus on building new applications and services, whereas infrastructure is responsible for maintenance of services, which results in an inherent conflict due to conflicting priorities. The suggestion was made that while the conflict might not be completely eliminated, improved understanding of individual group objectives and priorities will help to reduce any tension or conflict that may exist between units.

As a final question, survey respondents were provided with an opportunity to submit any additional comments or considerations that were not previously discussed. Closing comments were largely

positive, with much emphasis placed on the strength of relationships within existing teams, and a desire to continue to build upon strengths with the broader team. Several additional issues were presented that were largely addressed in other portions of the survey, including references to succession planning and the associated challenges with retention and development of staff.

Discussion

Two main themes emerged through survey and interview responses, which permeated through all of the topic areas being discussed. First, the strength of the relationships and the positive view of people and relationships throughout the department was consistent throughout responses, and was reflected through all-around high scores in questions surrounding employee relations, including when filtered by both sub-department and length of service. Additionally, *people* was referenced on numerous occasions as what individuals enjoyed most about their work in University Systems, and also came through as a strength when providing positive examples for training interactions and successful processes.

Secondly, minor culture differences across the department could be observed through responses when filtering results based upon the Academic and Administrative Services, Infrastructure Services, and UVic Online teams. More favourable views of processes were consistently observed within Academic and Administrative Services, while a focus on teamwork emerged most frequently in examples provided by UVic Online. Finally, no major themes emerged from Infrastructure Services, which may be explained by the lower participation rate in both the surveys and interviews. Modest differences in scores were observed across sub-departments, as well as based upon length of service; however, despite the differences, responses were primarily positive and reflected a favourable view of the department with no major challenges identified and generally minor suggestions for improvement.

Finally, several additional themes emerged that aligned with and further reinforced the findings from previous VPFO employee engagement and service excellence surveys. The employee engagement surveys conducted in 2015 recognized overall high levels of engagement for University Systems staff, as well as strengths in the areas of teamwork and working conditions, all of which remained positive through the surveys and interviews conducted as part of the current research project. Additionally, prior service excellence surveys identified long term employee engagement as an area of focus for improvement, which was also reflected through minor differences in scores obtained for employees with more than 8 years of service when surveying employee relationships with their leader or manager, suggesting ongoing opportunities for improvement remain. Conversely, while coaching and feedback was previously identified through both employee engagement and service excellence surveys as an area of focus, it was not mentioned in the most recent survey and interview responses, which may suggest that the conditions have either improved, or there are other areas that are viewed as a higher priority for improvement.

Job Design

Responses assessing elements of job design were positive overall; however, “the responsibilities of my current position are well defined” and “the responsibilities of my current position align with the role I was hired for” were not as consistently positive, with 14% and 20% respectively indicating either “strongly disagree” or “disagree” when providing responses. The lower scores on this question were consistent with open-ended questions seeking opportunities for improvement, whereby a desire for better role definition was mentioned a total of 13 times, and a desire for growth mentioned 9 times. Conversely, Infrastructure Services recorded higher scores on these questions, suggesting that there

may be opportunities to leverage some of the structure in place within this sub-department across the rest of University Systems.

Job variety, as well as the opportunity to perform both challenging and rewarding work were viewed more consistently in a positive light across the department. Average scores were rated 4.2, 4.3, and 4.1 respectively, which was also consistent with responses obtained through open-ended questions and interviews, where participants were largely satisfied with the nature of the work being performed. Average scores in this section were noticeably higher with the group having a length of service of 4-7 years; however, the scores decrease again with an increase in length of service which do not reflect a long term trend of improvement and may require further investigation.

Training, Professional Development, and Succession Planning

Views of training programs were not consistent across the department. Responses were largely neutral when assessing whether training was received when starting in the current position, as well as when asked whether it is regularly observed. When broken down by length of service there were also minor differences, with the longest serving employees (8+ years) recording the lowest scores; however, the medium service (4-7 years) recorded the highest average scores, resulting in no visible trend of improvement to coincide with length of employment. When broken down by sub-department, Academic and Administrative Services recorded the highest scores by a small margin which may be explained by the presence of more formalized training in units such as the Computer Help Desk which are accustomed to regular staff turnover, and therefore rely upon formalized training programs. Conversely, interviews revealed a lack of formalized training when beginning in more senior roles, for which a higher proportion of such roles exist within UVic Online and Infrastructure Services, which may contribute to the slightly lower average score.

When evaluating professional development opportunities, a majority of respondents indicated they had received some form of funding, with varying levels of participation in the different sources available. Barriers to professional development were also probed, with time being the most prevalent response which is in alignment with sentiments regarding workload that were a common theme throughout survey and interview responses. Additionally, positive experiences with training and professional development that were provided as examples were largely attributed to the positive interactions with people involved, whether it be trainers, co-workers, or others from across campus.

In the context of training and professional development, improved clarity was the primary theme that emerged, whether it be in the context of knowing which opportunities were appropriate for the role, or simply knowing about funding options and training or professional development programs. The topic of succession planning resulted in similar suggestions related to general improvements in opportunities through both training and performance planning, as well as awareness and clarity of what opportunities may exist. Finally, there was also a linkage to improvements to the job design process, with suggestions surrounding the organizational structure, and identifying clearer pathways to transition between roles.

Process Review

Surveys and interviews revealed a mostly favourable view of University Systems processes. Results for Project Management were generally positive, with Academic and Administrative Services having the most favourable view of processes, recording the highest averages for familiarity, clear definition of benefits, efficiency, and the lowest average scores for perception of bureaucracy with the processes. The Project Management Office is organizationally located within the Academic and Administrative Services unit, which may contribute to positive scores. When reviewing scores based upon length of service, the short term employees (0-3 years) recorded the lowest averages for familiarity, clear definition of benefits, efficiency, and the highest average score for perception of bureaucracy. These averages are consistent with suggestions provided surrounding expanded training opportunities for those who are unfamiliar with the processes, which are likely to be primarily newer employees who have not yet been exposed to the processes through the regular course of their duties.

Change Management scores were also largely positive, with the outlier being the UVic Online group who recorded lower scores when asked whether the processes add value to the organization, and when assessing the efficiency of the process. Practically speaking, the change management processes are used most heavily by UVic Online staff, which may suggest fatigue with the process that may not exist in other sub-departments who do not make as frequent use of the processes and tools. When viewed based upon length of service, results were largely consistent, with minor differences for the short term employees (0-3 years) when asked to rate their familiarity with the processes; however, this can similarly be attributed to the fact that employees may simply have not had as much time to make use of the processes.

Finally, results for Incident Management tools and processes were also largely positive, nonetheless in this case there were no meaningful variances by sub-department or length of service, suggesting a more consistent viewpoint and level of understanding across the department. Conversely, challenges in this area were related to the number of disparate tools, processes, and systems, with no single system being identified as the most favourable or problematic which can be attributed to the fact that the tools vary across the department.

Consistent across all three processes, although more prevalent in the areas of Project Management and Change Management, was a desire to continue to work on improving awareness and familiarity with the processes in the context of new employees, as well as identifying champions or proponents of the respective processes to ensure they continue to be viewed favourably across the department.

Employee Relations

When reviewing the questions based upon LMX factors, results were overall positive with only minor variances in responses when viewed by both sub-department and length of service. Several comments spoke to changes in leadership positions which limited respondents' ability to provide comprehensive responses, and may contribute to the slight variants across the department. With the exception of the question asking whether employees felt their leader would "bail them out" at their own expense, responses were overwhelmingly positive, averaging higher than 4.0 when viewed by sub-department, length of service, or holistically, reflecting strong relationships through the department.

Analyzing relationships across various levels of the department also yielded positive results overall, with very minor increases in the average scores based upon the proximity and frequency of the team being evaluated. Immediate team members received the highest average score when asked whether the relationship is viewed in a positive light, followed by members of the individual sub-department (Academic and Administrative Services, Infrastructure Services, UVic Online), and finally University Systems as a whole; however, even the lowest score averaged 4.1, reflects a favourable view of relationships across the department. This theme was echoed throughout survey and interview responses, with people and relationships being listed as positive attributes of the department, and cited as a main reason that employees continue to work for University Systems.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this report was to continue to build upon the success of previous initiatives aimed at improving the work environment throughout University Systems and increasing employee engagement, efficiency, and productivity. The use of surveys and quantitative measures allowed for both the validation of elements that are viewed favourably across the department and the identification of topics where room for improvement exists. Additional qualitative, open-ended survey questions, and more comprehensive interviews provided the opportunity to leverage the experience of staff throughout University Systems to understand in more detail specific issues and successes, as well as capturing meaningful suggestions for improvement to continue to develop and refine the organizational culture of the department.

University Systems staff provided constructive feedback throughout the surveys and interviews, and their suggestions and comments formed the basis for the recommendations of the report. The topics of job design; training, professional development, and succession planning; process review; and employee relations provided a framework and served as a guide to help shape the scope of recommendations. The University Systems values, primarily communication and information sharing, and continuous learning, improvement, coaching, and feedback were a common thread in suggestions and areas of focus identified by staff, who were consistently seeking ways to improve the work environment in University Systems with a continued emphasis on these values. Together, the findings provided support for the development of six recommendations aimed at improving the employee engagement, efficiency, and productivity in University Systems.

Recommendation 1: Establish a central repository of job descriptions for all University Systems positions

When asked to identify what changes individuals would like to see in their current role, the most frequently cited response was to have a better definition of roles and responsibilities within their current position, which was identified by a total of 13 respondents across surveys and interviews. Additional suggestions came from individuals seeking clarity in the types of opportunities that may be available, overall organizational structure, or growth within their existing roles. While the University of Victoria requires a formal job description to be established before vacancies are filled, an observable gap exists with existing positions that have evolved over time with organizational and technological change whereby the job descriptions are no longer representative of duties, creating ambiguity and uncertainty for staff.

Ensuring that every position has an up to date job description that is reflective of current duties will improve clarity for individuals within their existing roles, and address perceived inequalities where roles were previously not well-defined. Establishing a centralized, accessible repository of job descriptions will help to communicate the responsibilities, skills, education, and experience requirements of positions across the department, clarifying the progression paths between positions and supporting a more robust succession planning process. Furthermore, an inventory of job descriptions contributes to an environment where the right individuals are hired into positions by aligning duties in quantifiable and

more concrete terms (Moreland, 2013, p. 59), while also being in alignment with the department values of communication and information sharing, as well as continuous learning, improvement, coaching, and mentoring.

Recommendation 2: Develop an orientation process for new University Systems staff that incorporates departmental processes for project and change management

Opinions of both the project management and change management processes were favourable across the department, although a sizeable deficit in ratings was observed for both processes for staff with between 0 and 3 years of service when asked to rate their level of familiarity with the processes as well as whether they felt the benefits were clearly articulated. Suggestions for improvement to both processes focused on providing increased training and awareness to new staff in the context of the project management processes, while the change management process elicited suggestions related to increasing the communication around *why* the process is used, and what benefits it may yield.

Organizational training and orientation programs have had a demonstrable positive impact on developing organizational commitment (Klein & Weaver, 2000, p. 47), and can support increased socialization amongst team members, while also orienting employees to both their teams and the broader department culture. When combined with commentary obtained through several interviews where participants explained a lack of formalized training when they first began their positions, as well as the strength of existing introductory and procedural training at the Computer Help Desk, there is an opportunity to both expand and formalize the training and orientation processes to incorporate the foundational processes of project and change management, supporting the values of accountability through the increased ownership of the respective processes, and ongoing improvements to communication and information sharing; and continuous learning, improvement, coaching, and mentoring. Additionally, a more structured orientation process will support an environment where positive relationships between team members can be developed from the outset of employment.

Recommendation 3: Establish a consistent performance planning process across University Systems

When asked to provide suggestions for what could be changed about their existing role, a substantial number of survey and interview participants explained that they are seeking additional growth opportunities as well as a better understanding of the organizational structure and available opportunities throughout University Systems. A similar theme was brought forward by respondents when asked how the delivery of professional development or training opportunities could be improved, with a total of ten responses explaining that a more formalized process outlining the availability and access to opportunities would be beneficial to support planning, while also improving the perception of fairness and equity in determining which staff have access to training and professional development resources.

The University of Victoria Human Resources department already provides a framework for performance and development which “provides a structure for setting goals, providing ongoing feedback and coaching, and identifying ways to support learning and development” (University of Victoria, 2018) which can be leveraged to support the formalized documentation and planning of employee

development goals. While the process and documentation has existed a variety of forms for a number of years, the process has not been used consistently across University Systems. In formalizing the use of the Performance Development Cycle, a consistent, structured foundation for a career development program that is common knowledge among all employees (Tansky & Cohen, 2001, p. 295) can be leveraged to both increase the accountability of employees through the identification of measurable development goals and learning objectives, while also supporting ongoing departmental development needs for a more robust succession planning process in University Systems.

Recommendation 4: Create a central repository of training and professional development opportunities and consistent guidelines for access

Survey results revealed that while the vast majority of staff had access to training resources, and a smaller majority also had access to a variety of professional development programs, there was a still a desire by many to have a better understanding of what options and opportunities are available, having been cited by 10 respondents as an area for improvement through the survey process. Interviews also yielded several examples of strong training and professional development opportunities; however, the underlying challenge of a lack of clarity of available options and perceived inequity in the allocation of funds remained.

The development of a centralized repository of training and professional development opportunities and resources, including existing campus resources such as Human Resources and University Systems, combined with externally facilitated courses and programs will increase awareness of available options. Establishing equitable guidelines for access to funding and resources will increase transparency and work towards addressing the perceptions of inequity that may exist in different areas of University Systems. Finally, integrating the professional development and training plans into the performance development cycle will contribute to creating an environment that supports continuous learning and improvement in employees, while also supporting a more formalized succession planning process by allowing staff and managers to plan the necessary steps to support employee growth.

Recommendation 5: Improve information sharing across University Systems through incident response systems and processes

Another underlying theme brought forward throughout the commentary and suggestions for improvement was a desire for improved communication and information sharing across University Systems. When discussing the use of incident management systems, tools, and processes, the most frequently cited suggestion was the desire to consolidate usage on a single system or technology platform for incident management across the department. While this would be an opportunity to support standardization, it would require a substantial investment of both time and funding to review associated business processes and implement a new solution, an interim solution was suggested but a number of individuals, who advocated for increased sharing of information and access across the various units and systems. Current business processes are inconsistent in University Systems, with some units having access to view or contribute to other areas, whereas in other cases there is a lack of both awareness and access to view information.

With the exception of cases related to confidentiality, opening access to the various incident management tools and systems will support the University Systems values of teamwork and communication & information sharing, while also contributing positively to the strengthening of relationships throughout the department. Furthermore, the increased access to information will alleviate some of the concerns cited that relate to lack of access to the necessary information required to perform the duties of their positions, thereby improving employee's abilities to support the University Systems value of customer satisfaction.

Recommendation 6: Increase the opportunity for staff to work across teams in University Systems

When asked to rate whether they had a positive relationship with members of their immediate teams, sub-department, and University Systems as a whole, responses were overwhelmingly positive in all groups, which was supported by comments provided through both the surveys and interviews whereby "the people" were the most frequently mentioned reason why staff enjoy working in University Systems. Several responses also noted that there are subtle differences in culture, motivation, and objectives across the three sub-departments, and that relationships could be strengthened through additional time dedicated to understanding these differences, and providing opportunities to work together on common objectives.

No single suggestion resonated to provide such opportunities; however, the University Systems leadership team should seek opportunities to continue to build and strengthen relationships across the department, whether it be through formal opportunities and projects, or simply informal gatherings. A varied approach provides an opportunity to increase participation levels amongst all areas of University Systems, including areas which have traditionally had lower participation rates. A strong desire exists with staff to develop these relationships, therefore it is crucial that an awareness remains and ongoing time and support is provided to continue to build upon the success of the team.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Invitation Letter

Dear University Systems employee,

As an employee of University Systems and a Master of Public Administration student at the University of Victoria, I will be conducting research reviewing productivity, efficiency, and engagement factors within University Systems. The research is being conducted both to meet the requirements of the course ADMN 598 in order to satisfy my program requirements, and to identify opportunities from improvement within University Systems.

Participation in this research is critical to the success of both the ADMN 598 project, and will provide opportunities for employees to identify potential areas of improvement within University Systems.

Participation in the research, both in the form of in-person interviews and web-based surveys, is completely voluntary, and participants can withdraw at any time, with partial responses being discarded and destroyed. Employment, standing, and relationships within the department will not be affected in any way, whether individuals choose to participate or not, nor will information about who has participated be shared with the client.

Interviews are projected to take approximately 60 minutes, while surveys will take between 15 and 60 minutes depending upon the level of detail provided. Both the interviews and surveys will address a number of subject areas related to the productivity and efficiency within University Systems, as well as overall employee engagement. Subject areas will include training and professional development opportunities and programs in place, job design, employee relations amongst different groups, and an assessment of a number of University Systems processes.

Any information collected through the interview process will be treated with full confidentiality, and responses will not be identified at the individual level in the final report. In addition, any personally identifiable information collected through interviews will be removed to maintain the anonymity of responses.

Please find attached to this message an informed consent form for participation in this research project.

If you agree to participate in the interviews, please respond via email and scheduling arrangements will be made shortly thereafter.

If you are willing to participate in the interview, but would prefer to be interviewed by a neutral 3rd party, please contact Bart Cunningham (bcunning@uvic.ca) directly to arrange an interview.

Thank you,

Scott Thompson
MPA Candidate
School of Public Administration
University of Victoria
250-721-7679
srt@uvic.ca

Appendix B: Letter of Information for Implied Consent

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *A review of productivity, efficiency, and engagement factors in University Systems* that is being conducted by Scott Thompson.

Scott Thompson is a Graduate Student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by email at srt@uvic.ca, or telephone at 250-721-7679.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Public Administration. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Bart Cunningham. You may contact my supervisor by email at bcunning@uvic.ca, or telephone at 250-721-8849.

This study is also being conducted for a client, Wency Lum, Chief Information Officer at the University of Victoria.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to identify opportunities for improving the work environment within the University Systems organization at the University of Victoria, with a focus on evaluating factors and conditions within the existing organizational structure that may impact employee engagement, productivity, and efficiency in the way that services are delivered.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it aims to review the manner in which job design, training, professional development, and relations between different groups within the University Systems organization occurs. In addition, several University Systems processes will be reviewed in order to obtain information related to the perceived levels of efficiency and understanding of each process. Together, the information will be used to identify opportunities for improvement within the University Systems organization aimed at increasing efficiency, productivity, and employee engagement.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a full-time employee of University Systems, and the study aims to include broad representation from the department.

What is involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include the completion of a web-based survey consisting of approximately 30 questions, which may take between 15-60 minute to complete depending upon the level of detail provided.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, in the form of a time commitment which may take up to 60 minutes to complete.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include the opportunity to provide anonymized feedback to the department with the intention of identifying opportunities for improvement within the organization to create an improved workplace.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you withdraw from the study, any partial responses provided through the survey will remain due to the anonymous nature of the survey.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

The researcher may have a relationship to potential participants as supervisor/employee. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, respondents are encouraged to restrict the use of information which may identify individuals when providing responses, in order to maintain the anonymity of responses.

Anonymity

In terms of protecting your anonymity, participants are encouraged to limit the use of identifying information when providing responses, however any data used in the results will be anonymized as needed. Individual survey responses will not be attributed back to respondents, and raw data will not be shared with the client or any external parties. Data used in any final reports will be aggregated to the organizational unit level to maintain anonymity.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by limiting access to survey results to only the researcher and supervisor. Individual responses will not be shared with anyone else in University Systems or at the University of Victoria, and responses cannot be attributed back to an individual within the department.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

- Completion of the ADMN 598 Masters Project Report and Defense

- Creation of a report summarizing key findings to be distributed to University Systems staff upon completion of the project
- Potential for results to be used in an academic article

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of upon completion of the research project, with electronic records destroyed 4 years after the completion of the project.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include

- Researcher: Scott Thompson, srt@uvic.ca, 250-721-7679
- Supervisor: Dr. Bart Cunningham, bcunning@uvic.ca, 250-721-8849

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

By completing and submitting the questionnaire, **YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED** and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Please retain a copy of this letter for your reference.

Appendix C: Survey Questions

Introductory Questions

Overview: The survey will consist of a series of questions covering different subject areas where opportunities for improvement within University Systems may exist.

1. In which area of University Systems are you presently employed? (Systems Leadership, UVic Online, Academic and Administrative Services, Infrastructure Services)
2. How long have you been employed in University Systems?

Job Design

To begin, we will now discuss factors related to job design, roles, and responsibilities within your current position.

3. The responsibilities of my current position are well defined.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. The responsibilities of my current position align with the role I was hired for.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. I have sufficient variety in job tasks within my current position.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. My current position affords me the opportunity to perform challenging work.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. My current position affords me the opportunity to perform rewarding work.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. What would you change about the responsibilities of current role?

Training and Professional Development

Moving on, we will continue by discussing your experiences and familiarity with training and development opportunities within University Systems. In this context, *training* refers to specific programs or instruction (formalized or informal) that relate to the skills and knowledge required to perform the job duties of your position. *Professional Development* refers to any programs or instruction (formalized or informal) that relate to skills and knowledge development aimed at advancing opportunities within the organization, or acquiring increased knowledge or expertise in a particular subject area.

Training

9. When I began my current position in University Systems, I received sufficient on-the-job training.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. I regularly observe formalized on-the-job training for new hires.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. Do you receive regular training as part of your current role? What form does this take?

12. Have you had access to any of the following training opportunities in your current role:

- a. Department-delivered training (i.e. technical courses)? (yes/no)
- b. University-wide training (i.e. HR courses)? (yes/no)
- c. Self-directed training? (yes/no)
- d. Any additional examples?

13. Have you received funding for any Professional Development in the form of:

- a. Department-sponsored programs or funding? (yes/no)
- b. Professional development funding (personal)? (yes/no)
- c. Professional development funding (central)? (yes/no)
- d. Award-based funding (i.e. Living Values, PDSA)? (yes/no)
- e. Self-funding? (yes/no)
- f. Others?

14. Have you experienced any barriers to Professional Development opportunities in the form of:
- a. Time? (yes/no)
 - b. Money/funding? (yes/no)
 - c. Alignment with job responsibilities? (yes/no)

15. Does any form of succession planning take place within your department? Please elaborate.

16. Are there any ways that the department could improve the delivery and availability of training and professional development opportunities?

Process Efficiency

This section will include discussion of several process groups within University Systems to assess the perceived efficiency and level of understanding. The following processes will be questioned, with the same line of questioning for each:

- Project Management
- Change Management
- Trouble-ticketing

17. I am familiar with the University Systems Project Management process.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. The benefits of the University Systems Project Management process are clearly articulated.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

19. The majority of the department understands the benefits of the University Systems Project Management process.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

20. What can be done to improve understanding?

21. Any additional work created by the process yields an equivalent or greater amount of value in exchange for the additional effort required

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

22. This process is efficient.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

23. This process is bureaucratic.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

24. Can you provide any examples where this process has been beneficial in achieving objectives?

25. Can you provide any examples where this process has created challenges?

26. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this process?

27. I am familiar with the University Systems Change Management process.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

28. The benefits of the University Systems Change Management process are clearly articulated.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

29. The majority of the department understands the benefits of the University Systems Change Management process.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

30. What can be done to improve understanding?

31. Any additional work created by the process yields an equivalent or greater amount of value in exchange for the additional effort required

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

32. This process is efficient.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

33. This process is bureaucratic.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

34. Can you provide any examples where this process has been beneficial in achieving objectives?

35. Can you provide any examples where this process has created challenges?

36. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this process?

Employee Relations

Moving on, we will now discuss the relationship between different levels of the organization. To provide consistency the following terminology will be used:

Manager: the individual to whom you have a formal reporting relationship

Team: the peers with whom you share a manager (example, Development Services, Data Centre Services)

Department: the peers with whom you share a director (example, UVic Online, Infrastructure)

University Systems: all staff in the organization who report to the Chief Information Officer

37. Manager

a. My manager is satisfied with the work that I do.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

b. My manager understands my job problems and needs

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

c. My manager recognizes my potential

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

d. My manager would use their power to help me solve problems in my work

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

e. My manager would “bail me out” at their expense

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

f. I have enough confidence in my manager that I would defend and justify their decisions if they were not present to do so

1	2	3	4	5
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

g. I have a positive relationship with my manager
1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

38. I have a positive relationship with my immediate team members
1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

39. I have a positive relationship with the members of my department (Uvic Online, Infrastructure, Academic and Admin Services)?
1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

40. I have a positive relationship with the University Systems team?
1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

41. Which team/relationship do you identify most strongly with?
 42. What opportunities exist to strengthen relationships with each area:
 a. Manager
 b. Immediate team
 c. Department
 d. University Systems

Closing

43. I enjoy working in University Systems
1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

44. Finally, do you have any other feedback or suggestions you would like to share about the work environment within University Systems?

Thank you for your time today. The results of the surveys will be kept anonymous, and will be compiled along with the results of a series of interviews that will be distributed to all University Systems staff in the near future. The results will be analyzed as part of my ADMN 598 project, and recommendations will be made for improvements based upon the areas identified. A summarized report will also be shared with the department.

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Introductory Questions

Overview: The interview will consist of a series of questions covering different subject areas where opportunities for improvement within University Systems may exist. If there are any questions for which you do not have an example or do not wish to provide a response, please let me know and we can move on to subsequent questions.

1. In which area of University Systems are you presently employed? (Systems Leadership, UVic Online, Academic and Administrative Services, Infrastructure Services)
2. How long have you been employed in University Systems?

Job Design

To begin, we will now discuss factors related to job design, roles, and responsibilities within your current position.

3. What do you enjoy most about your current role and working in University Systems?
4. Since you began, in what ways have the roles and responsibilities changed?
5. Which elements of your position do you find especially rewarding and engaging?
6. What would you change about your current role?

Training and Professional Development

Moving on, we will continue by discussing your experiences and familiarity with training and development opportunities within University Systems. In this context, *training* refers to specific programs or instruction (formalized or informal) that relate to the skills and knowledge required to perform the job duties of your position. *Professional Development* refers to any programs or instruction (formalized or informal) that relate to skills and knowledge development aimed at advancing opportunities within the organization, or acquiring increased knowledge or expertise in a particular subject area.

Training

7. When you began your current position, what form of on-the-job training did you receive?
8. Can you tell me about a time that you observed or experienced a positive training interaction?
9. What about a negative experience?
10. As a department, how can University Systems improve the way training is delivered to both new and existing staff?

Professional Development

11. Can you tell me about your experiences with any form of professional development opportunities?
12. Can you tell me about any particularly positive or negative professional development experiences?
13. As a department, how can University Systems improve the way professional development opportunities are delivered?

Process Efficiency

This section will include discussion of several process groups within University Systems to assess the perceived efficiency and level of understanding. Processes in this context refer to University Systems driven processes such as the Project Management (PMO) methodology, Change Management (CAB) methodology, and the Information Security methodology. This may also include other University-wide policies and processes such as the Information Classification and Privacy policies, and how they relate to University Systems.

14. Can you tell me about a specific process that you have found to be helpful in achieving your work objectives, or the objectives of the department as a whole?
15. Can you tell me about a specific process that you found to be bureaucratic or inefficient in helping you complete your work objectives, or the objectives of the department?
16. Do you have any suggestions on how any University Systems processes can be improved?

Employee Relations

Moving on, we will now discuss the relationship between different levels of the organization. To provide consistency the following terminology will be used:

Manager: the individual to whom you have a formal reporting relationship

Team: the peers with whom you share a manager (example, Development Services, Data Centre Services)

Department: the peers with whom you share a director (example, UVic Online, Infrastructure)

University Systems: all staff in the organization who report to the Chief Information Officer

17. Can you tell me about a particularly positive relationship that you have with any of the groups identified?
18. Can you tell me about a particularly challenging relationship that you have with any of the groups identified?
19. What opportunities exist to strengthen relationships with each area:
 - a. Manager
 - b. Immediate team
 - c. Department
 - d. University Systems

Closing

20. Finally, do you have any other feedback or suggestions you would like to share about the work environment within University Systems?

Thank you for your time today. The results of the interviews will be kept anonymous, and will be compiled along with the results of a survey that will be distributed to all University Systems staff in the near future. The results will be analyzed as part of my ADMN 598 project, and recommendations will be made for improvements based upon the areas identified. A summarized report will also be shared with the department.