

University of
Lethbridge



THE PEOPLE PLAN

[2013]

INITIAL STEPS
COMMITTEE REPORT &
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON A PEOPLE PLAN
FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF
LETHBRIDGE

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INITIAL STEPS COMMITTEE
REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS
ON
A PEOPLE PLAN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

Introduction

In July of 2012, the President outlined the terms of reference for this committee and named its members. This report represents the collective work of the following individuals:

Diane Boyle, Support Staff, Information Technology
Elaine Carlson, Senior Administration, Human Resources
Tyler Hayward, Support Staff, Printing Services
Christopher Hosgood, Senior Administration, Faculty of Health Sciences
Barry Knapp, Administrative Professional Officer, Advancement
Jennifer Mather, Faculty, Faculty of Arts and Science
Kim Ordway, Administrative Professional Officer, Financial Services
Aaron Tamayose, Administrative Professional Officer, Disability Resource Office
Jennifer Thannhauser, Faculty, Faculty of Education
Michael Whipple, Administrative Professional Officer, Sport and Recreation Services
Kelly Williams-Whitt, Faculty, Faculty of Management, Calgary Campus

Mandate of the Initial Steps Task Force

To make recommendations for the President's consideration as to whether the University should proceed to develop a people plan, and if so provide comment on the following:

1. *The principles that a people plan should address*
2. *The name of the plan*
3. *The process that should be considered to develop the plan*
4. *The number, purpose and makeup of committee(s) to drive the process forward*
5. *The timing of that process*
6. *Tools that should be employed, and*
7. *A budget for its development.*

In order for the committee to provide comment on the processes necessary for development of a people plan, it was necessary to first create a basic framework or set of principles on which to base the recommendations. To that end, the Initial Steps Committee engaged in guided exploration and consultation intended to clarify the scope of a people plan project. The committee considered the stakeholder groups the plan is intended to address, developed a working definition of a people plan, identified objectives, desired outcomes and key elements that would be addressed by the plan. In addition to this assessment of scope, the committee considered factors that could potentially enable or create barriers to successful implementation of the plan.

As instructed by the President's office, the Initial Steps Committee considered the following issues as it progressed through the development of the basic framework and subsequent recommendations:

- How can we ensure that the people plan we create is an active, living and progressive document; a document that avoids resting on platitudes?
- How can we create a document that is realistic about what can be achieved and avoids creating thwarted expectations?
- How can our people plan provide practical ways to help individuals feel and become more engaged and connected to each other, their work, and the institution, regardless of location, group, or department?
- How can we develop a document that is nimble enough to provide support through the development of the next strategic plan, changing financial circumstances, and a shifting academic and political environment?
- Having turned our minds to the above, how should we proceed with the development of the plan? What tools should we use in the process?

It was understood by the Initial Steps Committee that our role was to develop a framework and process that may be utilized to subsequently develop a people plan. Therefore, the Initial Steps Committee did not define the shared values that should be incorporated into the plan. The Initial Steps Committee encourages subsequent people plan committees to keep the above questions in mind as they proceed with the plan development.

Principles of a People Plan

Stakeholders to be addressed by the people plan: The people plan should address those employed by the University of Lethbridge. For the purposes of this document, these are generally individuals whose work is directed by the University of Lethbridge, at least in part, *and* who are paid for their work through payroll. This includes (but is not limited to) University of Lethbridge academic staff, administrative professional officers, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, senior administration, support staff and teaching assistants.

In reaching this conclusion, it was recognized that we have a distinctly different relationship with the University than other stakeholder groups. Financial dependence on the University means that our needs and goals are often different than, and may in some cases compete with, the needs and goals of other stakeholders. By attempting to be all things to all people, the plan would become diluted and ineffective. To avoid resting on platitudes and to ensure the plan is practical it must have a realistic scope. We come from all levels, functions and departments and are the largest stakeholder group within the University, excluding students. Although our interests are diverse, we share sufficient similarity and core purpose to be addressed in a single plan.

The committee also recognized that the University has already made a commitment to students in the Strategic Plan to give them “the best preparation for their future,” to “develop a culture of

achievement and motivation,” to be “student-centered” and to support their growth “as whole persons.” While some of these commitments may ultimately overlap with the values espoused by an employment-focused people plan, it may not be appropriate for students to utilize the same programs and processes to achieve those ends.

Finally, attempting to address the needs of all stakeholder groups with a single plan would add a degree of complexity that may be difficult to navigate. For example, it is already necessary to consider existing handbooks and the collective agreement when developing people plan policies and programs. Including students, alumni and other stakeholders would necessitate even broader integration of existing processes in other legal documents such as the academic calendar.

Based on the determination that the people plan should be focused on those employed by the University of Lethbridge, following are the results of the committee’s deliberations with respect to the definition, objectives, key elements, outcomes, and factors that may influence success of the program:

Proposed Definition: A people plan is both a statement of shared values and a strategy for enacting those values in order to provide the foundations for individual and thus collective success across all groups.

The ultimate goal of the people plan should be to provide the foundation for satisfaction and a culture of community - a precondition for the success of the University as a whole and the Strategic Plan in particular. The committee believed that the values incorporated into the plan provide a common language for the development of a sense of community regardless of location, group or department. Engaging in collaborative development of those values will increase buy-in and thus the likelihood of meeting the objectives of the people plan. A statement of values on its own, however, was insufficient to meet the requirement that the people plan be realistic and practical. Therefore the definition we developed also indicates that the people plan should include mechanisms for enacting the espoused values.

The approach to the plan should be bold and intentional in its presentation and feel. We should feel empowered, part of something bigger than our role, proud and motivated when reading the document. It must be written or presented in such a way that it becomes a way of life and a standard. If it is burdensome, boring, feels forced or lacks inspiration, it may fail.

Objectives of the People Plan:

- To foster and promote respect, communication and collegiality.
- To define us as a community and set expectations on how we work together.
- To be mindful of the Strategic Plan
- To foster a positive, healthy and inclusive work environment.

Appendix 1 contains a table of Objectives, Outcomes and Measures that the steering committee may find helpful as they work through development of the plan. Appendix 4 contains examples of “people plans” from other Canadian universities that we thought the committee may find helpful as they develop the content, communication and implementation process for the people plan.

Key Elements of a people plan:

1. A statement of intent that describes, in a clear, bold and intentional way, the importance the University places on its people. This should be profound and must be supported by all groups, but in particular senior administrators. An example of such a statement would be:

We are a rich university because of our people; we stand for each other and we cannot succeed individually unless we succeed together.

The purpose of the statement is to link everyone's success together. This would also help describe the intent of the people plan and set expectations.

2. A statement of shared values and commitments to one another, developed through consultation with community stakeholders, and which may also include:
 - a. Shared goals, purpose, and guiding principles about how we work toward our common goals. It defines our purpose as a group.
 - b. An approach for managing talent that provides guidance for decisions related to hiring, training and development of people.
3. Commitment to operate in a manner that reflects our shared values.
4. Provision for people-centered systems and opportunities for the voicing of concerns and suggestions, collaboration and communication, such as:
 - a. Communication hubs:
 - i. Online tools that promote connection with colleagues, including an employee portal.
 - ii. Two-way communication to post and invite feedback on value statements, philosophies, best practices and other relevant items.
 - iii. Easy access to supports.
 - b. Dedicated physical spaces that promote socializing, collaboration and communication.
 - c. Programs designed to increase exposure between areas, disciplines and campuses. For example, the committee could recommend a University problem-solving group where a challenge being faced by the University is identified and cross functional teams submit recommendations for solving the issue.
5. Identification & implementation of best practices in respectful, ethical employment.
 - a. Ongoing research into best practices that may be adopted by the University of Lethbridge to ensure continuous quality improvement.
 - b. Development of programs that promote knowledge about, and facilitate adoption of, best practices.
6. An expanded orientation program (on all campuses) that introduces shared values, programs and supports available to all, as well as the diverse community at the University. This should include direction to resources that are available to help people transition into their roles.
7. Clearly defined roles, expectations and development opportunities for all work including part time and temporary, so that we can better perform our own roles and understand the roles of others.
8. Provide for enhancement of systems for mental, emotional and physical health.

- a. Programs that promote and maintain health, prevent disease and disability, and provide security, accessibility, and support in the event of illness or injury.
 - b. Education and training on safety, mental health, and wellness.
 - c. Training to support specific responsibilities that affect groups such as department chair, facilitator, and investigator.
9. Provision for systems that foster collegial interaction, which are effective, easily accessed and transparent.
 - a. Encourage collegial behaviour and competencies.
 - b. Provide training to support these behaviours and competencies, such as conflict resolution, respect in the workplace and diversity.
 - c. Provide alternative dispute mechanisms, which are in addition to and operate in conjunction with existing grievance and complaint procedures.
 10. Ongoing assessment (e.g., needs assessment, use of existing surveys, interviews) to determine what we do well and where we need to improve.
 11. Assignment of responsibility for each element of the people plan in order to ensure accountability and ongoing maintenance of the policies and programs that arise from the plan.
 12. Evaluation mechanisms to provide ongoing assessment of the people plan to ensure it is active, living and progressive.
 13. Realistic assessment of costs and allocation of resources that recognizes the contribution of the people plan to our success and the potential gains associated with improved systems.
 14. A list of priorities for the first cycle of the people plan.

Success Factors:

Factors identified that may **inhibit** the success of a people plan include the following:

- Fear, mistrust or cynicism based on negative experience in the past, current budget issues or the belief that the people plan is a fad.
- Complacency and resistance to any change that may increase workload, affect power/political balance, or constrain the behavior of decision-makers.
- Lack of consensus regarding shared values.
- Insufficient resources to plan, implement and maintain the program.
- An overly-vague plan that does not include an implementation strategy or takes too long to implement. Such a plan would not be accepted by the community and will waste resources.
- Lack of communication, transparency and collaboration with all affected stakeholders.
- Difficulty implementing people plan programs equitably across all three campuses.
- An overly ambitious plan that creates unrealistic expectations.
- Lack of support and implementation from senior administration. Without adequate support, the plan will not be realistic.
- Unenthusiastic presentation throughout all stages of the process, which is not motivating.
- Lack of buy-in by all groups. If we do not agree that we are here to achieve the University's priorities, acceptance may be more difficult.
- A plan encouraging segregation, differentiation between the groups and individualization. The words related to consensus and sharing will then not relate to people.

- Too much communication without adequate content. This will desensitize people to the topic.

Factors identified that may **enable** success of a people plan include the following:

- Clear purpose and scope.
- Consistent, effective communication and inclusive consultation.
- Evidence of the people plan guiding decisions.
- Identification of plan champions.
- Allocation of adequate resources.
- Support from organizational leaders (including union and association leaders) who buy in to the values and who lead by example.
- A practical/realistic plan with tangible results that are communicated broadly.
- A sense of optimism and readiness for change.
- Collaborative labour relations.
- Effective marketing of the plan before, during and after implementation.
- Creative solutions to identified needs.
- Transparent processes for plan development.
- Focus on the ‘ground breaking’ aspect of the people plan and its ability to enhance this institution and how we work together: The people plan is new and vibrant and sets us apart.
- Recognition that a people plan is a plan for continuous improvement.

Proposed Name of the People Plan

- *Inspirando Lux* or ‘Inspiring Light’ (syntax to be verified)
- Slogan that may reflect the objective and purpose of the plan: This is *OUR U*

Process for Development

The Committee:

Successful strategic plans arise from the work of a committee, and the people plan will be no different. However, because this plan is dedicated in particular to those employed by the University of Lethbridge, regardless of whether we are academic or non-academic, our level of authority, or our years of service, we propose the following, slightly different, approach:

- That we have a steering committee of 10-13 members who are appointed by the President from names put forward by the association, union, joint council, HR, GSA, other groups and by individuals themselves. The selection will not only be based on a broad range of perspectives including group, service, age, gender, faculty or department, student experience, function, and campus, but also on the premise that its success depends on individuals who have the University’s best interests at heart, who can function well in a committee setting, and whose time is not already consumed by several other committees.

This size and makeup supports the development of a strong, engaged committee where all voices can be heard and considered, and consensus can still be reached.

- That the steering committee be composed of 3 faculty members, 3 support staff (including 1 Exempt Support Staff), 2-3 APOs, 2 senior management, 1 graduate student and 1 Post-Doctoral Fellow. For the sake of continuity, we recommend that some of the members be selected from the membership of the Initial Steps Task Force.
- That the steering Committee be chaired by one of its members, either elected by the group OR appointed by the President
- That the steering committee be supported by 3-4 subcommittees, each of which is chaired by a different member of the steering committee. The subcommittees allow for the work to be spread out amongst additional members, for expansion of direct involvement, and for election of interested individuals to participate in less demanding roles or roles best suited to their talents. It is not without some risks, such as possible resentment from being placed in a lesser role, or lack of integration. This would need to be considered in its management. (Appendix 2), OR
That the Committee be expanded to 20+ members and the work be divided amongst the members.
- That the AVP-HR act as a sponsor and champion for the work of the steering committee, providing support, direction, resources, and encouragement.

Timing:

We recommend that a steering committee be named early in the new year, and then consulted on the makeup of subcommittees. With the expected release of the University Strategic Plan in the fall, the Committee can start its organization and planning in the spring, but allowed to adjust as necessary in the fall. The people plan should be print-ready June 2014; however, as with any strategic plan and as outlined in the Gantt chart (Appendix 3), the work arising from the plan and the monitoring of progress are ongoing.

The Initial Steps Task Force developed a high-level process map to provide an example of the steps we believe the steering committee will undergo through its process. Through it, we envision a four-phase process:

- Phase 1 – Develop the team and statement of intent – agree to a structure and committee members; gain consensus on the overall intent of the people plan.
- Phase 2 – Identify shared values and needs of those of us employed here – data gathering and analysis for internal assessment and external resources; evaluate priorities; communication and collaboration
- Phase 3 – Build the people plan – prioritize needs, build and incorporate key elements, draft the document, communication and collaboration, approve the document through appropriate channels
- Phase 4 – Implement, evaluate and monitor the people plan – University committees, departments and faculties incorporate the priorities; committee determines review and evaluation procedures and future committee needs

In Appendix 3 we have drafted a few example steps for these phases from our discussions and from a full-day retreat that we felt were important for the steering committee to consider. This document is not intended to be prescriptive or encompass the full breadth of work required, but

instead to assist with a skeleton of potential steps and to pass on our discussion results and vision.

Tools and Information Sources

There are many tools and sources of information available to support the Committee in its work. We believe it is important that the Committee:

1. Create an inventory of programs and facilities already offered in support of a strong people culture, such as a teaching load reduction for first year faculty, a wonderful recreation facility, wellness programs, and the Employee Family Assistance Program.
2. Utilize information already available at the University of Lethbridge, such as the campus master plan, the recent Health and Wellness survey, and feedback currently being gathered for the updated University Strategic Plan.
3. Review the work of other organizations toward the development of the people plan – like initiatives, such as Wilfred Laurier University and Red River College. (see Appendix 4)
4. Consider other research regarding engagement and satisfaction, such as the Conference Board of Canada, and materials and supports available through award applications, such as Top 100 Employers.
5. Conduct its own research on our environment through surveys, by focus groups or World Café exercises, and through consultation with
 - a. Professors from our University who are leaders in this field.
 - b. Committees such as the Gender, Equity and Diversity Committee, Health and Wellness Committee, Joint Worksite Health and Safety Committee, and Strategic Planning Committee,
 - c. Executives from groups such as APOs, AUPE, GSA, Joint Council, and ULFA,
 - d. Faculties and departments, including Institutional Analysis

Budget for Plan Development

The Initial Steps Task Force was required to provide suggestions on a budget for consideration. In these times of financial restraint, we have been as fiscally conservative as possible. However, potential costs that should be considered are in Appendix 4.

Conclusion

The University of Lethbridge is a young, maturing institution and with that come times of discovery, reflection and hypothesizing about what we have become and what we want to accomplish. To date, the University community has created visionary plans regarding our overarching Strategic, Academic, Research, Business, and Campus Master plans. While reflecting where these plans have directed our efforts, we believe they are insufficient; they fall short in addressing the largest and most significant asset of our institution - OUR PEOPLE.

During our 45-year celebrations we were told stories of our beginning; stories of struggle passion, collaboration and triumph that defined a culture where together we achieved great things. These stories are the underpinning of our institution and, though some internal stakeholders may feel that a loss in the culture of community has occurred over time, we as an institution need to rise to the challenge; the creation of a people plan can work to re-instill shared values, promote collaboration and repair any lost sense of community felt by some internal stakeholders. The people plan will examine what support mechanisms currently exist for our people and what new alternatives can be implemented to ensure our people can succeed. We want to differentiate our university from others, to be among the best places where people want to work, educate, learn, conduct research and engage in creative activity. We suggest the people plan will do so in a bold and intentional manner.

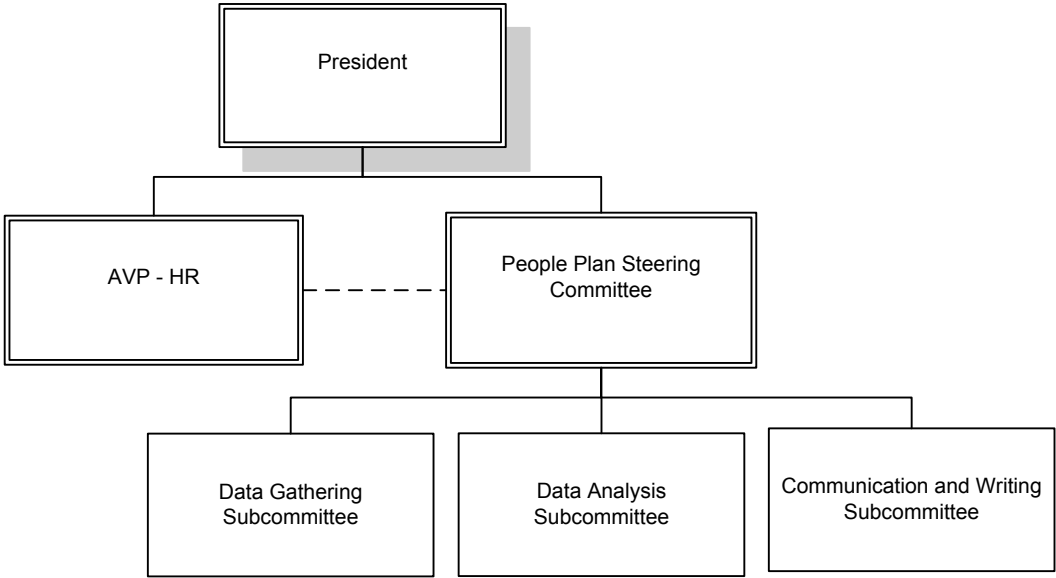
To encourage a culture of community, to suggest that all internal stakeholders pursue a common goal, and to provide the means and supports for individual stakeholder success, within a large, diverse and complicated organization such as this university, is a tremendous challenge. Together, through collaboration, and because we believe the difference is in our people, the 'People Plan' at the University of Lethbridge will achieve these ends and more.

A University is the sum of its parts and those parts are people. The people plan is an investment in all of us.

Appendix 1: Objective to Measure Example

Objective	Desired Outcome	Tools for Measure
To foster and promote respect, communication and collegiality	Respectful workplace among all group interactions	Interviews and survey results depicting a respectful workplace
	University events have high attendance	Comparison of attendance numbers over time at University events
	Cross-campus groups working together to solve University issues	Number and diversity of volunteers Number of issues addressed
	High level of engagement and work satisfaction	Survey results
To define us as a community and set expectations on how we work together	Clear view of how we are linked, what our community is about, and expectations of our members	Survey results show that employees who understand; community and expectations match the objective
	Sense of community	Survey results Representation, pride and participation
	Atmosphere of mutual respect, caring, group success, collaboration	Survey results for respect, caring, collaboration
	Fostering diversity of individuals and perspectives present within the University	Survey results of diversity achieved Attendance at and number of events promoting diversity
	Reduction in “unproductive” conflict	Number of grievances Availability of conflict resolution training and channels to open discussion
To be mindful of the Strategic Plan	Priorities, outcomes and themes are linked directly to sections of the Strategic Plan	Demonstrated links
	Policies, procedures and practices that balance the needs of the employee community with the needs of other University stakeholders (students, government, community)	Policies demonstrate that stakeholder needs are considered
To foster a positive, healthy, safe and inclusive work environment	A strong reputation as an exemplary employer	Placement in top 100 Employers in Canada Survey results show these environmental aspects
	Safety and security (physical, psychological, financial)	Surveys to measure perception Number and severity of workplace health and safety issues Number and severity of security reports
	Health and wellness	Availability of services and number of people using services provided Evidence of satisfaction with services provided

Appendix 2: **People Plan Committee Structure**



Appendix 3: **Gantt Chart**

(Gantt Chart provided as a separate 'Excel' document)

Appendix 4: **Budget Proposal**

Assuming that meetings are held on campus:

Dedicated administrative support	\$35,000
Travel costs to and from Calgary and Edmonton campuses	\$4,000
Materials and supplies Food and beverages	\$2,500
Survey mechanisms additional to those already completed, such as Higher Education Survey for Employee Engagement (University of Texas) or University Employee Opinion Survey (University of Saskatchewan)	\$5,000
Event such as World Café or workshops, with external facilitation	\$10,000
Web development	\$4,000
Publicity, including launch event, and printing costs	\$4,500
Other	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$70,000

Appendix 5: **Sample Plans**

Wilfred Laurier Employee Success Factors: http://www.wlu.ca/homepage.php?grp_id=12373

Red river College People Plan: <http://www.rrc.mb.ca/index.php?pid=5959>

Australian Federal Police People Plan: <http://www.afp.gov.au/~media/afp/pdf/a/afp-people-plan.ashx>

City of Toronto People Plan: http://www.toronto.ca/divisions/pdf/people_plan.pdf

City of Richmond Hill People Plan:
http://www.richmondhill.ca/subpage.asp?pageid=people_plan_richmond_hill