

STAFFING MANAGEMENT STUDENT WORKBOOK

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RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Hudson College

Scenario A: Talent Management

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Hudson College: Overview

Founded in 1881, Hudson College is a private liberal arts institution located in Beacon, New York. Hudson is a four-year undergraduate institution accredited through the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Nestled in the Hudson River Valley in Dutchess County between New York City and Albany, Hudson College prides itself in its core values of creativity, collaboration and civility. One of its strengths is its strong partnership with the vibrant Beacon community. Many of Hudson's employees serve on boards of local nonprofit organizations. Three years ago, the college helped improve the local transit system to provide better access to transportation for students and college employees. The college's presence in the downtown region is evident with the recent construction of the college bookstore, a coffee house and three student housing complexes along the Hudson River waterfront. Students choose Hudson for a variety of reasons, but most often they point to the low faculty-to-student ratio (12:1), the variety of academic programming and the proximity to New York City (approximately a one-hour drive).

Dr. Sara Richards became the 13th president of the college last year. She replaced the popular Dr. Robert McNulty, who retired after a 12-year tenure, which included a 20 percent increase in student applications, the addition of 15 academic programs, a strong emphasis on global education (the college now offers eight study abroad programs), and an increase in the enrollment of international students from 3 to 7 percent of the total enrollment.

Richards came to Hudson after serving as the provost at a similar liberal arts institution in the Midwestern region of the country. The transition from McNulty to Richards has been viewed as positive, but for many, it is too soon to tell. There is a small number of students and employees who feel the college lacks the necessary leadership to take Hudson to the next level. Richards reports directly to the board of trustees.

Edward Coburn has served as the board chair for the past three years. He retired in 2011 after a long, successful career at Appalachian Trust Bank in Poughkeepsie, New York, where he was the chief executive officer during the last 11 years of his career. The board of trustees, who traditionally have not meddled in human resource (HR) operations, are deeply concerned about the rise in health care costs and have focused their attention on this and other financial challenges facing the college.

Like so many colleges and universities, Hudson has been challenged by the difficult economic climate, increased competition among schools within and outside its peer group, and external pressure from its key stakeholders. The college's current strategic plan, now in its fourth year, outlined an ambitious agenda focused on diversity and inclusion, a reenergized commitment to increasing the school's affinity among its

alumni, and a multiyear capital project initiative that includes new construction and renovations to support the academic and residential experiences for students.

Hudson's endowment, despite losing 16 percent between 2008 and 2010 due to market conditions, has now reached \$350 million for the first time in the college's history. Despite serving as a positive performance measurement, most of this growth can be attributed to a rebound in the market. Large donations from alumni have been difficult to secure, making it a challenge to keep up with competitors.

David Bridges, vice president of human resources and risk management, has been in his current role for six years. He came to Hudson College from a university in New York City, where he was the director of human resources. Bridges has been described by his colleagues as a visionary who has led several key initiatives since coming to Hudson, including increasing efficiencies through technology enhancements and offering a more competitive compensation model compared to the local market and its peer institutions. Bridges reports directly to Richards.

Janet Mullins, director of human resources, has worked in the human resources and risk management division for 19 years. She started her career as a benefits analyst and moved into her current role shortly after Bridges' arrival. She reports directly to Bridges.

Elizabeth Guthry, director of organizational development, recently transitioned to higher education after six years as a corporate trainer for a *Fortune* 500 company. She has struggled with the cultural differences and has found it difficult to produce positive change in her short time at Hudson. She also reports directly to Bridges.

Hudson College has been named one of the "Top 100 Best Organizations to Work For in the State of New York" for four years in a row. Many attribute this ranking to the college's strong sense of teamwork and employee loyalty to the institution. The human resources and risk management division has also been recognized by local surveys for its care for employees and family-friendly benefits. Despite these recognitions, some faculty and administrative staff believe recent retirements and resignations of individuals in key positions have affected employee morale and the college's reputation of providing outstanding service to its students. Most of the open positions created by these departures were filled by external candidates, causing employees to question the college's commitment to its own people.

IN DAVID'S OFFICE

Bridges has been putting together a summary document he planned on giving Richards to prepare for their annual meeting about the division's goals for the upcoming year. As Bridges reflects on the past year, he notes a number of significant accomplishments that were made in the division. Despite these successes, he admits that it has been the most challenging year since he joined Hudson College.

REFERENCES

Balzer, W. (2010). *Lean Higher Education: Increasing the Value and Performance of University Processes*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

INSTITUTIONAL DATA	
Category	Figures
Enrollment	2,641 undergraduate students
Percentage of international students	7%
Percentage of students of color	13%
Acceptance rate*	46.1%
Discount rate**	44.8%
Retention rate	92%
Endowment (current)	\$354,106,198
Fundraising (fiscal year)	\$9,828,637

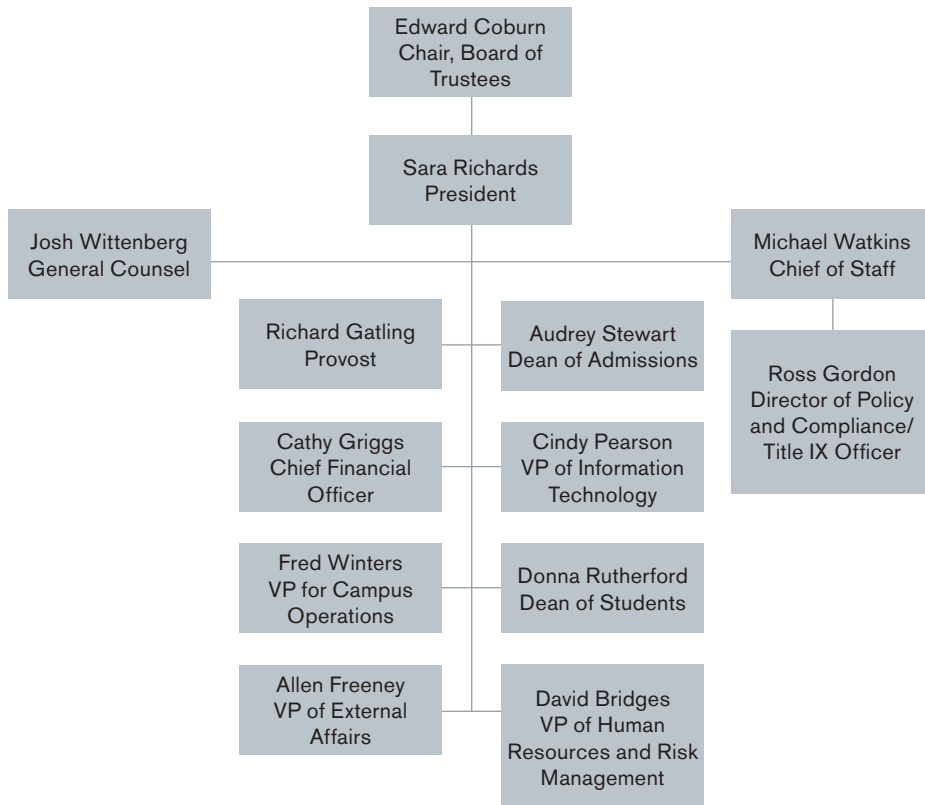
* Acceptance rate: The percentage of student applicants the college accepts.

** Discount rate: Institutional grant aid awarded to undergraduates as a percentage of the institution's gross tuition revenue.

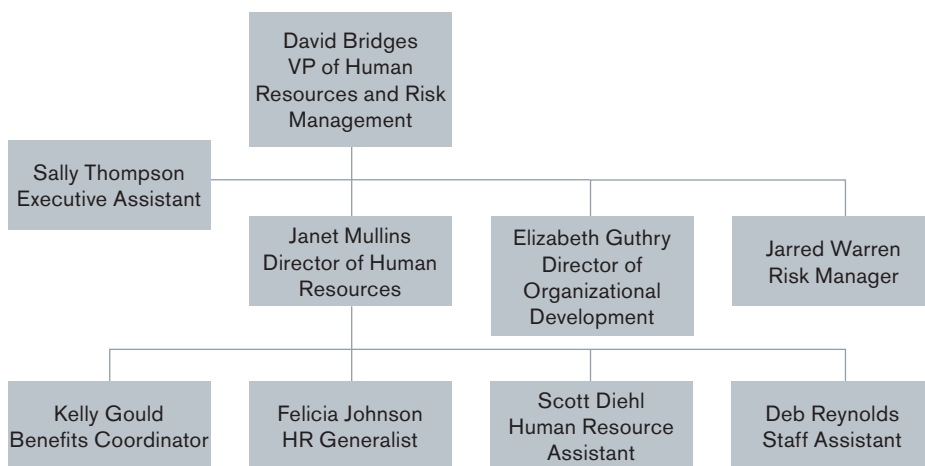
NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES BY GENDER			
Number of Full-Time Employees	Male	Female	Total
Faculty	113	93	206
Administrative	109	141	250
Hourly	106	167	273
Total	328	401	729

EEO STATUS (FULL-TIME)		
Classification	Number of Employees	% of Total Employees
African American, Black	133	18.2%
Asian American	34	4.7%
Hispanic, Latino	103	14.1%
Multiethnic	6	0.8%
Native American, Alaskan Native	5	0.6%
White or Caucasian	448	61.4%

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART: EXECUTIVE TEAM



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART: DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND RISK MANAGEMENT



Scenario A: Talent Management

PLAYERS

- Fred Winters, vice president of campus operations
- Jessica Wallace, executive assistant for the vice president of campus operations
- Brad Tomlinson, director of facilities
- David Bridges, vice president of human resources and risk management
- Sally Thompson, executive assistant for the vice president of human resources and risk management
- Elizabeth Guthry, director of organizational development

IN FRED WINTERS' OFFICE

From the day he began as a housekeeping supervisor at Hudson College 32 years ago, Fred Winters, vice president of campus operations, had a reputation as being a “hands off” manager who trusted his staff but provided support when necessary. Winters, a graduate of Hudson College, had been through several changes in administration during his tenure. He would admit that the past few years have been some of the most challenging given turnover rate in his division and the financial strains that have affected campus maintenance and building projects.

One position that recently turned over was the director of facilities. The position was filled three months ago by Brad Tomlinson who had worked in a similar capacity at a local area hospital. Although Tomlinson was viewed by most as an excellent hire, Winters has had multiple meetings with employees from the facilities department regarding Tomlinson’s conduct as a supervisor during his short tenure with the college. Common themes identified by Winters from those discussions were that employees felt Tomlinson was too abrasive and unwilling to listen to their ideas. In keeping with his hands-off approach, Winters initially thought these issues would work themselves out. Winters waited weeks before scheduling a meeting he now wishes he had made sooner.

Winters was gazing out his office window when his executive assistant, Jessica Wallace, knocked on his door to let him know that Tomlinson had arrived for their meeting.

“Hey Brad, come on in,” said Winters. “I appreciate you coming in given how busy things are this week. Is everything on schedule for a great weekend?”

Hudson's Homecoming Weekend was only a few days away, and Tomlinson and his team had been working overtime to prepare the campus, including making needed repairs to landscaping damaged by a series of heavy storms during the past week.

"Everything is definitely on target for a successful weekend," Tomlinson replied in a cautious tone. Tomlinson knew the purpose of the meeting was not to talk about Homecoming Weekend.

"Please sit down," said Winters. "Brad, I will get right to the point about why I asked you to come in to see me. When I hired you three months ago, I knew we were very fortunate to get someone with your background and experience to fill one of the more critical positions on this campus. From my vantage point, since your arrival, everything appears to have not missed a beat. Projects are getting accomplished on time, the campus looks as beautiful as ever, and I have had few complaints from faculty, staff or students. At least, no more than normal," Winters added to create some levity to an already tense environment. "However, I have had a number of employees who report to you come to me with concerns related to your supervisory skills." Winters paused to gauge Tomlinson's initial reaction.

Tomlinson sat back in his seat in disbelief. "I have to say I'm surprised. Why haven't they come to me if they were upset? What did they say?" asked Tomlinson in a defensive tone.

"That was the first thing I asked each of them—did you have a conversation with your supervisor about this? Gauging from your reaction, it seems they haven't. I am not going to disclose who came to me because these were confidential discussions. However, I am concerned about why they feel they couldn't go to you with their concerns. We value collaboration in our division. The other concern, of course, is your management style," said Winters.

"You're questioning my management style because of a few conversations you've had with my employees?" asked Tomlinson in a louder tone.

"First, I want you to calm down. I sense you are getting defensive," said Winters. "The goal of this conversation is to not punish you, but to hear your side."

Tomlinson hesitated and took a deep breath. "This place is so different than the hospital. I don't know what was allowed before I arrived, but my employees feel entitled. I have high expectations of myself and of my staff. They seem very sensitive. We don't have the time or resources to coddle every one of them."

Tomlinson paused while looking down at the floor before making his next comment. "To be honest, there are a few of them that I want to fire right now." With that, Tomlinson started to get up out of his seat.

"Do you think that's the right approach to take?" asked Winters.

"Fred, I appreciate you wanting to talk with me. I get the message. Now I ask that you please let me do my job," Tomlinson said in a direct manner. "I will be sure to give you a report next week after Homecoming Weekend," said Tomlinson to change

the subject as quickly as possible. Winters thanked Tomlinson. Tomlinson left to oversee the tasks that remain in preparation for homecoming.

ONE DAY LATER IN DAVID BRIDGES' OFFICE

David Bridges, vice president of human resources and risk management, sat in his office answering a series of e-mails he received earlier in the day about an employee relations incident requiring the attention of a number of division leaders when his assistant, Sally Thompson, informed him that Fred Winters had arrived for their 11:00 a.m. meeting. Winters normally didn't schedule meetings with Bridges. He usually called if he needed advice or wanted to get a different perspective on a particular issue. Bridges sensed this meeting would be something more serious.

"Always good to see you, Fred," Bridges said as he greeted Winters at his office door. Bridges' opening remark was somewhat tongue-in-cheek because he was almost certain that the reason to see him was related to an employee matter. Winters replied jokingly, "I can't think of a better place to be than your office." Bridges and Winters have had a strong working relationship since Bridges arrived to Hudson six years ago. Bridges could see that Winters was under stress.

Winters sat down, covering his mouth with his hands as he thought about how to begin the conversation. "I had a meeting yesterday in my office with Brad Tomlinson, our new director of facilities." Looking Bridges directly in the eye, he stated, "You know when you get that gut feeling about someone?"

"Of course," replied Bridges. "Did you get that feeling yesterday?"

"Actually, I got that feeling during the hiring process," Winters responded.

Looking somewhat amazed, Bridges waited for Winters to elaborate on his thought.

"I trusted the recommendations made by my staff members who had the opportunity to meet with him. He has tremendous mechanical skills and was highly recommended. He also is well respected in the community from his work at the hospital and support of nonprofits in Beacon. I have to tell you, though; he lost some of that respect with me when he essentially walked out of my office yesterday," said Winters.

Bridges waited to see if Winters was finished. "What are you thinking today?" asked Bridges.

"What I'm thinking is that we made the wrong hiring decision," replied Winters. "Glenn (referring to Glenn Saunders, associate director of facilities) was a finalist for the position, but many, including me, thought he didn't have the experience to lead the complex projects scheduled over the next few years. Now I'm dreading the choice we made."

AFTER THE CONVERSATION

Unfortunately, other senior officers have shared similar concerns about recent supervisory hires having difficulties in their transition to Hudson. As Bridges finished reviewing his notes from his meeting with Winters, he realized he needed to talk with Elizabeth Guthry, director of organizational development. Bridges was focused on helping support the transition of recent hires. What was more of a concern, though, was the number of internal candidates for critical positions who were passed over for individuals from outside the college, some without experience in higher education; seven out of nine new supervisors were external. In addition, external searches were conducted in the hiring process of the past three senior officer positions. Bridges thought that Hudson needed to better position employees for future success, whether they had just started or had been there for several years. With that, he sent an e-mail to Guthry, asking her to provide a one-page outline of the current orientation process and to arrange a meeting to discuss how the onboarding process could be improved.

OUTLINE OF HUDSON'S CURRENT NEW-EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION PROCESS

Before first day: Mail to new employee

- Congratulatory letter with start date.
- Benefits enrollment and payroll forms.
- Employee handbook.
- Copy of letter with start date and new employee checklist to immediate supervisor.

First day: New-employee orientation

- New employee reports to human resources and risk management division for a half-day orientation to include:
 - Welcome and introductions.
 - Video “History of Hudson.”
 - Overview of each campus division (with presenter from each division).
 - Employee benefits discussion.
 - Campus tour.
 - Lunch with HR staff members.
- New employee is escorted by an HR representative to his or her department at the conclusion of the lunch.

**A training program currently does not exist for new supervisors.*

SCENARIO A: QUESTIONS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

1. What are the main issues Bridges and Guthry must immediately address?
2. Given the struggles of new supervisors to make a successful transition to Hudson College, what recommendations would you have to address this challenge?
3. Describe the benefits of hiring internal and external candidates.

SCENARIO A: QUESTIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

1. What advice would you give to Winters if you were Bridges? How would you connect this advice to the needs of Hudson College?
2. Provide recommendations about how Hudson College can change the culture to place more emphasis on succession planning.
3. What questions or challenges would a talent management strategy address? When is a talent management strategy appropriate, and when is it not appropriate?

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