

INSPIRE:

TALENT MANAGEMENT AT IANR

Focus Group Feedback and INSPIRE Priorities



IANR FOCUS GROUPS

Overview

At IANR, employees are a critical asset. To meet the current IANR initiatives, it is important for all employees to be engaged and productive, and we need to ensure staff know how they uniquely contribute to the mission of IANR. The [INSPIRE talent management program](#) for IANR staff is committed to defining, recruiting, developing and retaining a talented and engaged workforce. Through [three pillars](#), we support a culture encouraging staff engagement, empowerment and innovation.

To ensure we focus on what is most critical for our staff, we went directly to the source. IANR conducted 17 focus groups from June through September 2014. Participants included: campus and off-campus staff, campus and off-campus non-faculty and faculty staff supervisors, the Vice Chancellor and Associate Vice Chancellor, business center managers, deans, Human Resources specialists and generalists, the extension leadership team, and unit leaders.

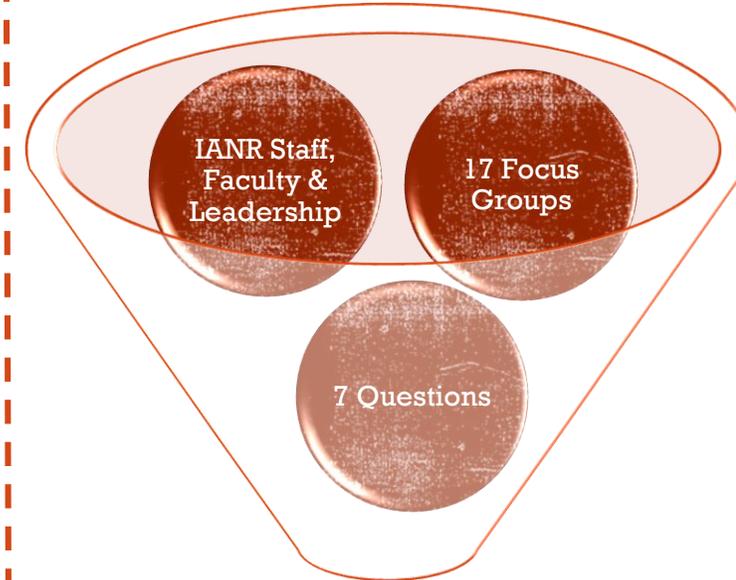
The focus groups were intended to accomplish **three main purposes**:

- 1) Identify priorities, concerns and other perceptions regarding talent management at IANR
- 2) Gain input on what evidence or metrics can be used to measure progress and success of the INSPIRE talent management program
- 3) Raise awareness and begin to build broad-based support for INSPIRE.

Here's what we asked:

1. What are the key staff talent (workforce) issues, challenges and opportunities facing IANR in the years ahead?
2. What evidence, short-term and long-term, will convince you that the INSPIRE talent management program has been a success?
3. What most impacts whether our employees actively participate in self-development activities that prepare them for additional duties at IANR?
4. What most impacts whether staff feel a high level of commitment and engagement to their work and the accomplishment of IANR goals?
5. What barriers do you see (organization and/or staff barriers) that will hinder a successful implementation of INSPIRE (our new talent management program)?
6. How would you like to be involved with or updated on the INSPIRE talent management program?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

THE GIST:



932 comments



**Ideas on how we can
make IANR a *greater*
place to work**

1.**KEY CHALLENGES FACING IANR**

Some of the top workforce/talent challenges facing IANR today include: attracting and retaining the right talent; current pay, rewards & recognition; the need for staff training and professional development; time-consuming and inflexible HR processes; staff workload; evolving workforce; lack of promotion opportunities and career paths for staff; an image of a staff/caste system.

Our INSPIRE talent management practices will aim to address these areas to ensure our staff are engaged, productive and successful.

[See next page for additional insights and data.](#)

2.**EVIDENCE THAT WILL PROVE 'INSPIRE' IS SUCCESSFUL**

In order for our stakeholders to believe INSPIRE is successful, you told us that we need: selection and retention of the right talent; less turnover; a staff that feels valued, engaged and committed to their work; options for staff career advancement; equitable salaries with opportunities for raises; access to training and development opportunities; simplified HR processes; to accomplish our IANR mission and goals.

3.**FACTORS THAT IMPACT WHETHER STAFF ENGAGE IN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

Whether or not our staff participate in available development activities depends on: general support of IANR and the department; rewards and incentives in place for participating; the relevancy and accessibility of training opportunities; manager awareness and development support; time and workload capacity; individual motivation and interest; available financial resources.

4.**FACTORS IMPACTING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND COMMITMENT**

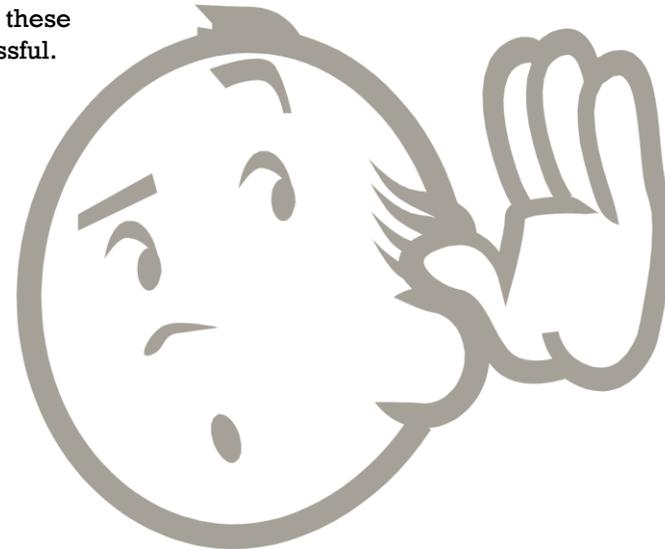
Factors impacting IANR employee engagement and commitment include: relationship with direct supervisor; lack of rewards, pay increases and recognition; degree to which staff feel valued and respected; understanding of how staff fit in to larger IANR picture; autonomy in work; frequency and transparency of communication; workload; interpersonal relationships and attitudes.

5.**POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF 'INSPIRE'**

Knowing our barriers ahead of time is important to a successful INSPIRE implementation. You told us some potential barriers may include lack of: buy-in and support from administration, faculty and/or supervisors; time and resources; clarity and communication efforts; an effective performance management process; understanding of the program benefits/rewards; inclusion of staff in roll-out; consistency in processes and messaging throughout IANR; engagement and buy-in from staff; readiness and willingness to change.

6.**SUGGESTIONS FOR ONGOING COMMUNICATION TO EMPLOYEES**

Communicating clearly and frequently to our IANR employees is a critical piece of the INSPIRE implementation plan. Your suggestions for communicating to employees include: additional in-person group sessions; email; concise and tailored messaging to various groups; webinars; IANR web site and blog; soliciting input and feedback along the way; messaging and commitment from Vice Chancellor's office.

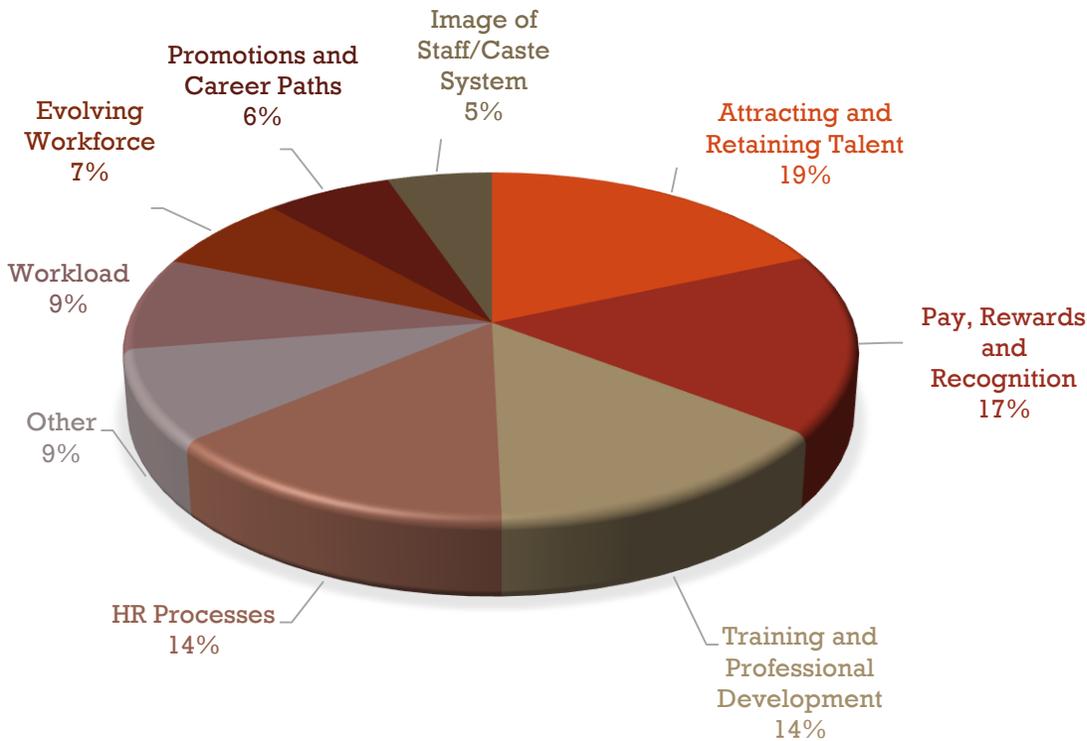


YOU SPOKE, WE LISTENED.

A CLOSER LOOK...

Key Talent/Workforce Challenges Currently Facing IANR

Our INSPIRE talent management priorities over the next several years will address the current issues and challenges facing IANR to ensure we're taking action on the items that matter most to our employees. To determine our top areas of focus, we took a closer look at the 266 responses to focus group question #1. The responses were categorized into nine key areas, shown on the chart below.



Top challenges within each category:

Attracting and Retaining Talent (19%)	Difficulty attracting talented, qualified individuals, especially for some positions & to rural areas; difficulty retaining talent; lack of onboarding practices; benefits are no longer our strongest recruiting tool
Pay, Rewards and Recognition (17%)	Hiring salaries not competitive compared to market; little flexibility in merit options; salary compression with existing positions; need for greater appreciation/recognition of contributions
Training and Professional Development (14%)	Need for: manager skill building; technology training; overall increased accessibility to training & opportunities to attend; plan to retain/transfer knowledge with retirements
HR Processes (14%)	Time consuming & inflexible recruiting; reclassification of positions takes too long & is the only way to promote staff; lack of understanding of HR processes; ineffective & inconsistent performance management process
Workload (9%)	Recent growth without additional support is leading to overload for our staff; doing more with fewer resources leads to staff burnout which stresses work quality & work/life balance; no cross-training & no back-up leads to sense of not being able to take vacation
Evolving Workforce (7%)	Growing diversity and generational differences in workforce; technology skills/needs are changing; need to evolve staff responsibilities to align with future growth & support needed
Promotions and Career Paths (6%)	Need opportunities for staff to advance; to move up, employee must move out of department; no tie between professional development & promotion/advancement
Image of Staff/Caste System (5%)	Tier system within UNL (staff-faculty); recognition that staff opinions/ideas/contributions are not adequately included or valued; we have an opportunity to recognize staff as important part of IANR
Other (9%)	Resistance to change; need for major culture change that attracts/retains talent; staff disconnected from larger IANR vision; infrastructure falling behind & not being maintained

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR IANR?

We collected 932 lines of comments, insights and recommendations from you about what is most critical to IANR and to the successful implementation of the INSPIRE talent management program.

Stay tuned:

With this information, we're currently determining where we can have the most impact – both immediate and long-term. You will continue to see updates about the INSPIRE project as we finalize our priorities. We will communicate via email, our listserv, and the IANR HR web site.

What's currently in the works:

- A **short, simple survey** for all IANR staff to find out more about our culture – what you love about working here, and what would make it better. This is one way we'll know we're making progress.
- An updated **performance management process** for IANR – a simple and effective way for managers and employees to talk about goals, progress, and employee development
- **Supervisor training and development** – resources, discussions and training opportunities for supervisors that will address key topics around leadership and managing teams
- **StrengthsFinder team discussions** – help employees and teams uncover their natural talents and develop them in to strengths to work more efficiently and gain maximum productivity
- Evaluation of our current **HR processes** to determine ways to simplify and streamline
- Development of an **IANR onboarding & orientation** program for our new hires

LEARN MORE:

- ✔ Sign up for the INSPIRE listserv! It's simple:

Email LISTSERV@UNL.EDU
In the Message field (NOT Subject) type: SUBSCRIBE inspire-update

- ✔ [Review the INSPIRE HR Model](#)

- ✔ [See our INSPIRE Pillars](#)

- ✔ [Visit the IANR HR web site](#)
(in progress!)

- ✔ For questions or comments about INSPIRE, please contact [Becky Carter](#)