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More than Potlucks: Reviving social engagement for a thriving library workplace

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UNO LIBRARIES

More than Potlucks:

Reviving social engagement for a thriving
library workplace

Heidi Blackburn, Lori Schwartz, Diana Allard, and Laine McCurrin



Organizational Culture

“practices, values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions of formal and informal groups”
(George & Jones, 2008, p. 567)

“Institutions are constellations of established and enduring practices, beliefs, roles, and meanings, which shape and are shaped by individual actions. They provide rules, norms, ideas, and assumptions and constrain or enable us”
(Garcia, 2011, p. 150)



We don't have time!

(Why should we care?)

- Poor organizational culture can cause workplace anxiety and attrition if employees feel unwelcome.
- Issues such as dysfunctional coworker relations, stereotyping, discrimination, and even sexual harassment could all complicate an otherwise effective workplace environment.
- Organizations must be proactive in creating environments that increase the likelihood of success for all members (Greer, Stephens, & Coleman, 2001).



Courtesy Committee (1985-2006)

- Staff
 - Voluntary, representation from all departments
- Space
 - Large break room, non-public staff areas
- Funding
 - Proceeds from Goodie Days
 - Selling ice cream bars (freezer)
 - Coffee proceeds
 - Stipend from Dean



Events (1985-2006)

- Holiday Party/Chili Feed
- End of Spring Semester Potluck
- Student Worker Appreciation Day
- Valentine's Day Treats
- St. Patrick's Day Treats
- Halloween Treats
- Retirement Parties







No Committee (2006-2010)

- Library renovation
- Lack of funding
- Departmental events





Positive Employee Recognition Committee (PERC) (2010-2013)

- Staff
 - Voluntary, representation from all departments
- Space
 - Reserved classrooms, Faculty Lounge, non-public staff areas
- Funding
 - Stipend from acting Dean (non-food items)
 - University Library Friends



Events & Activities (2010-2013)

- Holiday Party/Potluck
- Library Worker's Day
- Ice Cream Social
- Retirement Parties
- KUDOS Board
- Birthday Cards and Yearly Work Anniversary Certificates
- Monthly treat day for that month's Birthdays
- Set up CLASS (Criss Library Academic Student Scholarship) Scholarship with Director of Patron Services







No Committee (2014-2015)

Departmental events for all:

- Chili Cook-off
- Dip Contest
- Baking Contest
- Salad Days
- Pi Day (3.14)











Social Engagement Committee (2015-Present)

We needed a revival:

- Morale was plateaued because of uncertainty
 - No dean, interim dean, new dean
 - Strategic plan -> No strategic plan
- Lots of new hires!
 - Introductions between departments to cut down silos
 - UNO/Criss Library traditions/ideas
- Culture shift

Social Engagement Committee (2015-Present)

- Made up of 2 staff from every department
- Meets only as necessary
- Provides Welcome Swag Bag to all employees and goes out lunch with members outside their departments
- Reoccurring events but also spontaneous events (40th Birthday, Barak Obama's visit, Halloween)





| | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| Holiday Potluck | Dec 2015 – afternoon potluck for employees/student workers | Pi Day Bake-off | Mar 2016 – Pie back-off. Vote with change. Proceeds to UNO Food Pantry |
| Color Me Calm | Dec 2015 – Relaxation event to unwind post-finals | National Library Workers Day | Apr 2016 – Catered breakfast tacos and afternoon cupcakes from local businesses |
| Bizarre Bazaar | Jan 2016 – trade your weird holiday presents | Claussen-Leahy 5k | Apr 2016 - Library team of walkers (and a couple runners). Partners attended. |
| Chili Cook-off | Jan 7 – Cook-off, vote with your change. Proceeds go to Employee Emergency Loan Fund | Dips de Mayo | May 2016 – Dip cook-off. Vote with change. Proceeds go to GSRC. |
| Welcome for Dean | Jan 2016 - Welcome reception for new Dean | Bark in the Park | June 2016 – Meet at dog park for some social time. Then cook-out at someone’s house. Partners attended. |
| Farewell for Dean | Jan 2016 - Farewell reception for interim dean | Birthday/Anniversaries | Monthly treats celebrating employee birthday/work anniversaries |



| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Shakespeare on the Green Volunteering | July 2016 – Several employees volunteered one night at Shakespeare on the Green, a local Omaha event. | <i>Bizarre Bazaar</i> | <i>Dec 2016</i> |
| Smooth(ie) Ride | July 2016 – Blender bike for students workers and employees | <i>Chili Cook-off</i> | <i>Jan 2017</i> |
| Ice Cream Social | Aug 2016 – Afternoon event to build your own sundae | <i>Pi Day Bake-off</i> | <i>Mar 2017</i> |
| Geeks Who Drink Trivia Night | Aug 2016 – Geeks Who Drink Trivia night at Nebraska Brewing Company Tap Room. Partners attended. | <i>National Library Workers Day</i> | <i>April 2017</i> |
| 40 th Birthday Party | Sep 2016 – Celebrated Criss’ 40 th birthday with cupcakes and lecture of our history | <i>Claussen-Leahy 5k</i> | <i>April 2017</i> |
| NLA Raffle Basket | Oct 2016 – SHAMELESS PLUG. Donated items for raffle basket | <i>Dips de Mayo</i> | <i>May 2017</i> |
| Halloween Costume Photo Display | Oct 2016 – Show off your favorite current or historical Halloween costume. Vote on your favorite. | <i>Bark in the Park</i> | <i>May 2017</i> |
| <i>Holiday Potluck</i> | <i>Dec 2016</i> | Birthday/Anniversaries | Monthly treats celebrating employee birthday/work anniversaries |



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22w

teaspinning Go into work and find a chili cook-off for charity. I think I found my people.

Log in to like or comment.





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Chili Cook-off

January 2016









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teaspinning Pi Day at #crisslibrary - this is
the face of sweet, sweet regret. (Soon.)

Log in to like or comment.





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Claussen-Leahy 5K

April 2016





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Please join us for

Dips de Mayo

May 5th, 11:30am-1:30pm

Room 231

Looking to flex your dipping muscles? Grab your favorite recipe and enter your dip in the following categories:

- **Salty and satisfying**
- **Smooth and sweet**
- **Nacho typical dip** (other category)

Sign up on the wiki to bring a dip and/or a dipper to complement your colleague's entry (chips, graham crackers, fruit, etc.). Bring your appetite and vote with your chance for the People's Choice trophy!



Dips de Mayo

May 2016



A decorative border composed of various colored circles (blue, green, red, orange) arranged in a rectangular shape around the text.

Nacho Typical Dip Category

Laine McCurrin

Dips de Mayo 2016

University of Nebraska Criss Library

May 5th, 2016

Social Engagement Committee



Tired of just eating at library events? **HOWL** about we try something new!

BARK IN THE PARK!

- WHEN:** Friday, 3 June @ 5:30pm
- WHERE:** Hanscom Dog Park— 32nd and Woolworth
- WHO:** You and your two— and four—legged friend(s)!
- AFTER:** Meet-up at Tammi's for EATING! And more puppy time!



Brought to you by the Social Engagement Committee.

Don't have a dog? Don't **TERRIER** self up about it!

Bring yourself and have a **BALL!**

YORKIE to contributing is to bring something to eat or grill at Tammi's! We all will!

(It looks like this is the end— I might have to pull the **PUG** on this flyer...)





Presented by the Social
Engagement Committee.
More information on
back.

BARK IN THE PARK



RUFF!!

J
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3



WHEN:

June 3rd @ 5:30pm

WHERE:

Hanscom Dog Park—
32nd and Woolworth

WHO:

You and your two— and four—
legged friend(s)

AFTER:

Meet-up at
Tammi's for grilling (thanks
Scott!), potluck, and more puppies!

Bring something to grill for
yourself and/or a side dish for
everyone to share.

BYOB, if you're into that!

The pups will be provided for in Tammi's backyard, so bring them along, too!

SHARK IN THE PARK?!



nope.

bark in the park.

june 3!





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Follow

spinsagoodyarn, bildungsromans, mclainers, knittinginny, ebenezer77eln, sparkeespud and crunchomahadeerfield like this

teaspinning This is what happens when you give a lot of animal-loving library people a fun social event to look forward to AND empty board space. Can you find George and Betty?

Log in to like or comment.







Criss Library Trivia Night

Join us for a little back-to-school brew!

Come enjoy some light appetizers and get to know your co-workers! A full variety of craft beers will be available for purchase.

Flex your trivia muscles by joining a team or cheer on your colleagues from the sidelines.

Trivia will start around 6:30pm and significant others are welcome!

We hope to see you there!

August 12, 5:30pm

Nebraska Brewing Company

7474 Towne Center Pkwy #101,

Papillion, NE 68046

Join us for trivia with



For more details about this group, see <http://www.geekswhodrink.com/>

Brought to you by the Criss Library Social Engagement Committee
Questions? Contact Heidi at hblackburn@unomaha.edu

the quiz is upon us...



Q: Objectively, when is the best date for inter-office socialization??

A: August 12, 530-930

Q: Where, objectively, should you be for said inter-office socialization?

A: Nebraska Brewing Company Tap Room (6950 S 108th St, La Vista, NE 68128)

Q: Who should attend said socialization event?

A: You, your spouse, BFF, plus-one, partner, buddy-ooo... whomever makes you happy!

Q: Can I eat there?

A: Of course! the SEC is buying appetizers!

Q: Can I drink there?

A: Of course! Nebraska Brewing Company makes some super sweet beers. You'll have to pay for your own, though. State funding...

Q: What about trivia teams?

A: Either work out a team of six ahead of time, or we'll make them up on Friday!

That's *Mike*. He's our Quizmaster!





Scores

Our Other Name is a Pun ... 58
Staff Infection ... 58
Chewbacca ... 57
LOCness Monster ... 57
The REAL Founders of ISIS ... 52
Dean's Dead Heads ... 41



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Trivia Night

August 2016









Lessons Learned: Variety

- 🎉 Free events...Events that cost money
- 🎉 Annual events...One-time events
- 🎉 Food events...Active events...Community events
- 🎉 Inside the library...Out in the wild
- 🎉 Interaction required...Not required
- 🎉 Different times of day (involve all employees)



Lessons Learned: Funds, Support, Communication

Funds:

- 🎉 Line in budget
- 🎉 Friends group

Support of Leadership:

- 🎉 \$\$ (what they provide)
- 🎉 Verbal (what they say)
- 🎉 Visual (how they participate)

Communication:

- 🎉 Frequent updates by email or whatever works for you
- 🎉 Bulletin board that changes and is interactive



Lessons Learned: Formalize

Give your committee (group, team...) structure:

- 🎉 Elect leaders and set term limits.
- 🎉 Aim for participation from every department/area.
- 🎉 Be flexible (don't squash enthusiasm).

Strategic planning:

- 🎉 “Culture” reflected in current plan.
- 🎉 Need leadership on board...refer them to research presented earlier if they're reluctant!
- 🎉 Workplace culture can turn over quickly—for the good or bad. Make it a priority.

References

For continuous updates on creating an engaged and supportive workplace, subscribe to *Library Worklife* (ALA/APA) at <http://ala-apa.org/newsletter/>

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