

human resources

News of the UMass Medical School Department of Human Resources

A conversation with Interim Chancellor Michael F. Collins

This is a time of change. The new Dean of the School of Medicine and Executive Deputy Chancellor Terry Flotte joined us last April, and soon after, Interim Chancellor Michael F. Collins arrived. Governor Patrick and UMass President Wilson were on campus in October announcing the Life Sciences Initiative. In a very short time, our world here at UMass Medical School has been transformed significantly. There is a renewed energy, a drive for transparency in our practices and a renewed focus on partnership with UMass Memorial Health Care. What does this mean for all of us? I discovered a great deal when I recently spoke with Dr. Collins to get his perspective on leadership and his approach to change. Excerpts from our conversation follow.

Joanne Derr, Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources



JD: *You've approached change initiatives here, at UMass Boston, and at Caritas Christi in a very structured way. Is there a reason for that?*

MFC: I judge everything in terms of challenges and solutions. I think it is useful if you know where the big areas are that need to be addressed. In Boston, I created a process for the change. I said, 'this is what we could do,' and I asked people to either affirm or deny that. Everyone got involved with shaping the vision and strategy process. I spent a year understanding what people aspired to. When I got to the Medical School, I was not asked to be content with what was; I was asked to act. And so I didn't have the opportunity for as lengthy a consultation process. Nor did I think the organization really needed a new vision. The organiza-

tion's vision is clear. We needed more structure, definitive goals, some attention to culture, and a long range plan that incorporated the needs and desires of all the entities. So my consultation process here was several months. Quickly, I started to hear the same things from many different people. There was a tremendous amount of consensus, which allowed us to leap. The timeframe of getting the strategic plan done by May, for me, is important because I think the organization needs to act. While there are elements of UMass Medical School that are wholly academic, our entities represent a large business enterprise that can't afford a two- or three-year process of thinking about things. Structure and direction are the best ways to make sure that decisions are made in a tight timeframe.

JD: *What do you believe is the role of leadership in managing organizational change?*

MFC: Change for me is not about 'change for change's sake.' Change should always make an organization better, bring it to a new level, test its boundaries. I have been amazed at how responsive organizations are when you set very high goals. I have never seen an organization yet, in nearly 25 years of leading change, that doesn't reach such goals when they're set. That's because people want what's best for their organization; they like to respond to challenges. They like the opportunity to take their efforts to the next level. I think part of the responsibility of a leader is to test the boundaries of just where an organization can be taken.

continued on page 2

Expanding professional development in a rapidly evolving workplace

The Workforce Development team is committed to developing practical and customized professional development opportunities for all UMMS employees.

Last year we launched the Workplace Learning Education Partnership with the Clark University College of Professional and Continuing Education (COPACE) and the Assumption College Graduate School and School of Continuing Education to offer undergraduate and graduate programs at a significant discount. UMMS employees are already taking advantage of the program, and as Clark and Assumption hold information sessions in the Worcester area, the offerings are expected to be expanded.

The Workforce Development team has been working with individual departments to create seminars, courses and curriculum that meet their specific program, departmental or professional group needs. Partnerships with Animal Medicine, Campus Services and Commonwealth Medicine, among other departments and divisions, have led to significant increases in the number of individuals taking advantage of professional development opportunities.

Participation in the Administrative Support Certificate and Core Management Certificate programs is also growing as UMMS grows. To address a workforce that is increasingly disbursed across the state, UMMS recently purchased licenses

for a Web-based learning program so that staff can take courses in Microsoft and business management skills from their desktops beginning this month.

Workforce Development is also reaching beyond UMMS, having recently been asked by UMass Lowell and University Information Technology Services to collaborate on training assessment and delivery.

We encourage UMMS employees to review courses in our catalogue and offer ideas for professional development initiatives and programs that we can create together. For additional information about current programs and initiatives, please contact Karin Fitch at 508-856-3928 or via global e-mail. ■

HR Bulletin

Keeping employees informed about HR initiatives

The Workforce Development and Human Resources Consulting teams have launched the quarterly *HR Bulletin* to share news and information about HR initiatives and programs with the UMMS community. The first issue of this e-bulletin was published in December. *HR Bulletin* will describe training and education opportunities, the performance appraisal process, benefits open enrollments, the Peoplesoft HR initiative and other HR-related information for all employees.

While *HR Bulletin* is distributed by e-mail to managers and department heads for distribution within departments, it will also be available to all employees on the UMMS intranet: inside.umassmed.edu/HR.

Conversation with Interim Chancellor Michael F. Collins

continued from page 1

JD: *How do you advise people who are concerned about change? How would you help them navigate it?*

MFC: I would say to people that the best way to adapt to change is to jump on the train and help to shape the organization. I'm not into leaders as spectators; I'm into leaders as active participants. I want people to play in the game, to step

It is wonderful to be around people who don't necessarily...have the same life experiences or background, talents or expertise. But they all come together with the singular drive to make the place better...

— Michael F. Collins, MD

up. I believe that a competent professional has a certain inner self-confidence, and if that inner self-confidence is focused, it is very easy to adapt to change. A self-confident person knows that even though one may not be doing the same thing, appreciating the same problems, working with the same people over and over again, in an organization adapting to change, one will be able to do their job and do it well.

JD: *Organizational change can demand more of people's time. How do you personally balance work and family?*

MFC: There is nothing that is important to my family that I haven't been a part of over the years, even though I have had very responsible positions in three organizations. When it was important, I was there. My job got done but I was also there [for my family] for everything that was important. That is the message that I convey to everybody I work with...their family must be a priority. But, one also must do a great job every day. I realize there sometimes is tension between those two ideals. I do think it is possible for an effective employee to do both.

I recognize that it is complicated, and some people have young families. I also know that it can be more complicated for parents who often are responsible for child care. I understand that, and I really do feel it to my core. I also have very high expectations, but there can be a balance between the two.

JD: *One of our goals is to make UMass Medical School one of the best places to work. What do you think such a place would look like?*

MFC: I think the best place to work is a place where people come to work every day and bring all of their unique qualities to bear on the organization. It is wonderful to be around people who don't necessarily think the same or have the same life experiences or background, talents or expertise. But they all come together with the singular drive to make the place better, and they take a certain amount of pride in that.

JD: *As someone who strives to learn from each role you've taken, what is your perspective on professional development?*

MFC: I think that well-educated managers are the key to a motivated workforce. If the workforce is motivated, if they feel they are part of something special and they understand the goals of the organization, they can better understand where the organization is going and they can help get us there. They're all part of the team. Acting individually often hinders progress. You can have high expectations of an individual, but each of us has to be measured against the whole team goal and that's what we are trying to accomplish.

JD: *Describe the characteristics of a great UMass Medical School employee.*

MFC: I think if you can give to the organization, in the time you come to work each day, the same level of intensity and commitment that you give to everything else that is important in your life...then you are a great employee. ■

Managing Work-Life

The Work-Life Office has a number of initiatives underway that are designed to support faculty and staff working at UMMS.

In conjunction with UMass Memorial, UMMS is in the early planning stages for a child care center on the University campus. A joint UMMS and UMass Memorial Child Care Task Force determined needs and requirements for a center, and the consulting company WorkForce Directions (WFD) performed a dependent care needs assessment regarding the potential size of the new facility. WFD recently shared the survey's results with the task force, and those results will be distributed to the UMMS-UMass Memorial community. Based on the survey data and senior management review, architects will draft plans for a new child care center that, if all goes according to plan, is expected to open within three years.

In support of working mothers who are nursing, the Work-Life Office arranged for two new mothers' rooms. In January, a new room opened on the University campus and the existing mothers' room at the South Street campus was refurbished. Both rooms are equipped with hospital-grade lactation pumps and



In addition to larger initiatives of flexible work options and onsite child care that will help make UMMS one of the best places to work, a number of initiatives that help balance work-life have been introduced over the last year by the Work-Life Office, including work-life effectiveness seminars, onsite dry cleaning pick-up and drop-off, Meals-to-Go and a recent Summer Camp Fair that featured 30 vendors. The Worcester YWCA booth is pictured above.

offer a private, safe space for nursing mothers.

A new Flexible Work Options Policy for UMMS is being developed in partnership with key stakeholders and is in the final stages of review. To ensure that managers have the necessary tools to support the new policy, Human Resources is offering manager training sessions that will continue throughout the implementation

period. Employees will also be offered training to help them understand the flexible work options available. The Work-Life Manager and HR consultants are available to advise managers and their staffs as they make decisions about flexible work options.

For more information, contact Work-Life Manager Janet Hirsch at 508-856-2958 or via global e-mail. ■

Massachusetts Life Sciences Talent Initiative

Attracting and developing talent for the life sciences 'moment'

Many UMMS employees are participating in Governor Deval Patrick's Life Sciences Initiative, which is designed to strengthen Massachusetts' global leadership in this realm.

One of the first projects funded by the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, the Life Sciences Talent Initiative (LSTI), is a comprehensive study to develop a strategy among businesses, government and higher education institutions to ensure that the state's need for talent in the life sciences is met. The study is being overseen by the UMass Donahue Institute and, with input from UMass faculty, administration and staff, teams are analyzing current and future talent needs and the capacity of higher education to respond to them. Recommendations will then be made to respond to any gaps the analysis finds.

Focus on Human Resources

Produced by the UMMS Office of Public Affairs and Publications for the Human Resources Department

Contributors to this issue:
Rich Maguire, Joanne Derr

Photography: Tony Maciag, TMS
<http://inside.umassmed.edu/hr/>