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## XIII

# HUMAN RESOURCES

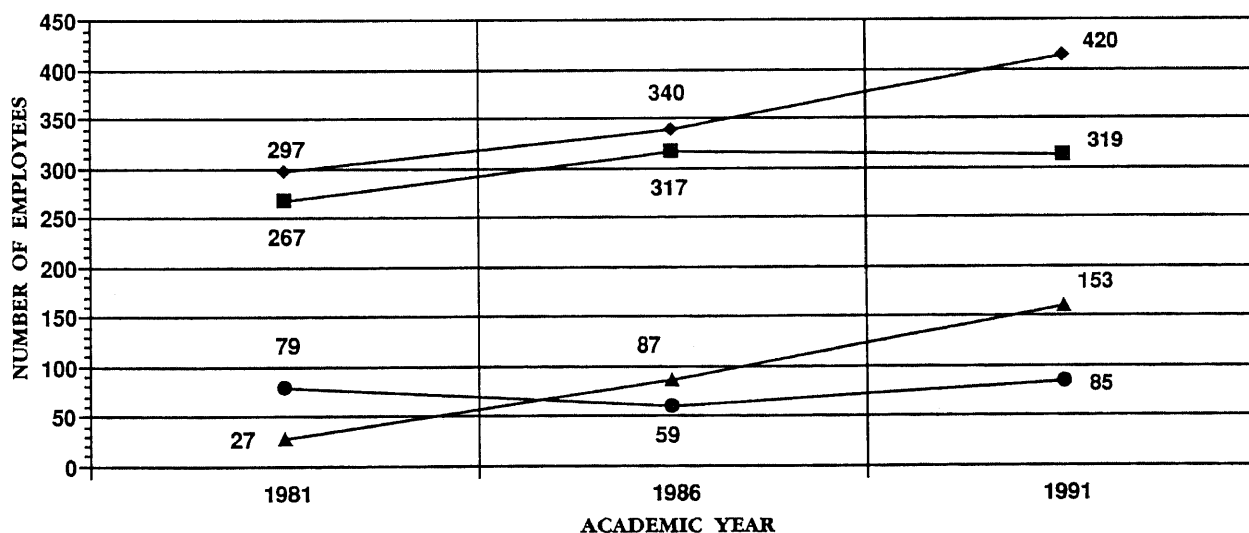
## Introduction

The many areas of growth and expansion at the university have required the establishment of new professional, technical, and office support staff positions. Employees in all personnel categories except executive/administrative have, in fact, increased significantly since 1981, with non-faculty professional and support employees evidencing the greatest rate of growth. Figure 13.1) Much of this occurred in support areas critical to faculty, students and staff as NJIT continued to evolve as a technological research university. There were large personnel increases, for example, in computing as the university

moved from minimal activity in this area to computing intensivity. Other areas of growth are related to the university's ability to secure external recognition and support. These include development, admissions and public relations.

In recognition of the importance of all NJIT employees to the continued growth and development of the university, and in recognition of the increased need for employee training, the Office of Human Resources was elevated to the vice presidential level in 1989. The university's Vice President for Human Resources oversees policy development, fringe benefit management, salary and wage administration, employee training, and employee assistance programs.

**Figure 13.1**  
**Number of Full-Time Employees**  
**1981-1991**



- Faculty
- Exec/Adm/Managerial
- ▲ Professional Non-Faculty
- ◆ Support = All other EEO categories: Secretarial/Clerical, Technical/Paraprofessional, Skilled Crafts, Service/Maintenance

The summary and analysis that follow focus on six critical areas: management and staff development, human resource information systems, employee productivity and quality of service, employee support programs, union relations, and recruitment.

## **Management and Staff Development**

A challenge facing the university in the area of human resources is the on-going development and training of employees at both the managerial and staff levels. It is imperative that this challenge be met with a variety of innovative and technologically advanced approaches. Recognizing this need, the university has established a new position, Manager of Training, under the Vice President for Human Resources.

During the past year, a joint effort by Employee Relations, Human Resources, Affirmative Action, and the Counseling Center produced the university's first seminar for supervisors and managers on sexual harassment in the workplace. Training centered on the recognition and resolution of instances of sexual harassment within the guidelines of university policy, and federal and state laws. Recently, similar seminars were held for supervisors and managers relative to their responsibilities and those of the university in connection with the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1989. Orientation seminars for new employees continue to be held by the university safety officer explaining employee rights with regard to hazardous substances in the workplace.

Many university employees require basic computing skills to perform their jobs. The university initiated an Employee Computing Skills Training program in 1989 to provide secretarial, clerical and office support staffs with the most current computing skills. The program consists of ten half-day sessions covering the NJIT computing environment, electronic mail, word processing, electronic purchasing, and spreadsheet fundamentals.

The Employee Computing Skills program

and the management seminars are necessary and valuable components of a formal management and staff development program. The program should be more comprehensive, however. A formal document needs to be developed, identifying the goals and objectives of each program element and the target audiences. Given current fiscal constraints, full implementation of a comprehensive plan will likely take several years. Priority areas should be identified as part of the overall plan. Components would include:

- **New Employee Orientation** — There is no formal orientation program for new faculty or staff. Although faculty and non-faculty positions have different orientation needs, there is a sufficient common body of knowledge that all employees either require or would find useful. A program is being designed that will likely include a campus tour, seminars on programs and services available, an employee handbook, a video cassette on key programs and services, and a mentoring system pairing new and experienced employees.
- **Information on University Policies and Procedures** — NJIT's Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual (PPPM) was written in 1979. It provides information on conditions of employment, benefits, salary, administration, and services available to employees of NJIT. This document is now inadequate for the needs of the university community. New laws have been enacted; old laws have been modified and clarified through court decisions; new policies have been put into place at NJIT; the numbers of employees and their expected skill levels have changed; new bargaining units have been organized; and the mission of the university has evolved. The Office of the Vice President for Human Resources is undertaking a complete revision of the PPPM. This process not only offers NJIT

an opportunity to update its policies and procedures, but to provide high tech mechanisms for distribution and promulgation of future revisions.

- **Management Training** — There is a pressing need to develop middle management skills at NJIT. Many individuals in faculty and non-faculty positions have never had formal management training. Such a program is being planned; it will include conducting performance appraisals, conflict resolution, handling difficult employees, and implementing the collective bargaining agreements in effect on campus. New approaches to participatory management might also be explored, particularly in view of declining resources. Faculty in the School of Industrial Management are providing assistance in developing components of the program.

## Human Resource Information Systems

As part of the university's effort to develop a computing intensive campus, NJIT purchased and installed Information Associates Human Resource System (HRS) software to support the personnel and payroll activities at the university. Employee data currently maintained include basic biographic and demographic information to support the payroll function, position control for the budgeting process, and external reporting requirements for state and federal agencies. NJIT is sensitive to the issue of information privacy. The university's independent auditors recently examined the security and data access controls in effect for the university's management information systems and found that they generally exceeded industry accepted standards.

The Office of Human Resources is exploring methods and procedures to expand use of HRS to better support the human resource function. Recently, the system was used to

produce a personalized annual benefits statement for each employee, detailing the annual employer (and employee) contributions for most fringe benefit categories. The statement will need to be further refined to reflect the actual value of certain benefits which were estimated in the first effort. Expansion of the data on employees to include more information from faculty vitae is an appropriate next step. Educational histories, specialized skills, and faculty research interests would prove helpful in matching faculty areas of expertise with external needs and funding sources.

## Quality of Service and Employee Productivity

The quality of service to all NJIT constituencies must be provided at the highest levels. This includes service not only to students, but to industry, government, the higher education community, and other colleagues. Departmental discussion groups, customer service training videos, telephone etiquette training, and weekly tips in *NJIT this week* are part of a process designed to promote sensitivity to university constituents and a culture of service. All employees should also be made aware of the advocacy services provided by the Counseling Center, the Office of Affirmative Action, and the Office of Employee Relations.

The current financial state of public higher education requires many university departments to provide the same services with diminished resources. Under these circumstances, employee productivity becomes especially critical. Providing employees with the tools to make the best possible use of existing resources such as computerized information systems is a necessity. Appropriate training programs have been developed, with additional efforts planned.

## Employee Support Programs

The Office of the Vice President for Human Resources has initiated a comprehensive

set of employee support programs. While all planned activities are not yet fully operational, most are in various stages of implementation.

- **Employee Assistance Program** — In accordance with the Federal Drug Free Workplace Act of 1989, the university recently established an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Funded through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health, the program is headed by a part-time director. It seeks to help NJIT employees and their immediate families receive appropriate assistance and treatment for a variety of personal problems including substance abuse, financial difficulties, legal concerns and emotional issues. The EAP Director, who is a certified counselor and a registered nurse, provides counseling on a confidential basis to employees and members of their families. She has also introduced a lunchtime seminar series with guest speakers on such topics as stress management and family care options. A hot line will be added in the near future so individuals with critical needs can contact the EAP Director off-hours.

- **Wellness Program** — Research has shown that organizations providing wellness programs receive a substantial return on their investment in terms of employee productivity, reduced absenteeism, and improved attitude. During the fall of 1989, an NJIT wellness program was initiated for all employees. Additional time during lunch breaks is provided several days a week to give employees the opportunity to enroll in physical education classes. Participation in the program is being evaluated by the physical education staff. It is anticipated that the program will be modified to meet

individual needs of employees in such areas as diet and cardiovascular fitness.

- **Retirement and Benefits Seminars** — The university recently introduced a series of special seminars addressing retirement issues such as pension coverage, health coverage, and tax shelters. Too few individuals on campus fully understand their retirement program, its options, and the potential for early retirement. These efforts will continue, with perhaps a more structured program to inform employees of their entire benefits package, as well as proposed federal or state legislation that may affect the benefits.

- **Career Development** — Career development is clearly related to morale for all levels of employees. The university will make every reasonable effort given current fiscal constraints to encourage and support the attendance of faculty and professional staff at professional meetings. Career advancement within the university is a goal of many employees. Toward this end, the university posts all open positions, both inside and outside of bargaining units. Development of a consistent set of job descriptions for all positions at the university is another objective of the Office of Human Resources.

## Union Relations

NJIT's faculty and staff are currently represented by four bargaining units: the Professional Staff Association (PSA), which is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP); the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU); the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP); and the American Federation of State, County,

and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). There is also a group of employees not aligned with a particular bargaining unit and a number of positions that are statutorily exempt from collective bargaining units. While approximately 30% of the full-time NJIT employees are not represented by a bargaining unit, these employees do have formal procedures for resolving grievances and other matters.

Historically, the bargaining units have served as an interface between the NJIT administration and the respective employee constituencies primarily for the resolution of grievances and the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements. While potentially adversarial, the relationship between the unions and the administration can be positive if a climate of good will is established. Joint labor/management advisory committees enhance labor relations at the university. Described in the formal provisions of each collective bargaining agreement, the committees are charged with maintaining dedicated and disciplined good faith communication between the administration and the respective bargaining units as real non-grievance issues arise.

## Recruitment

A recruitment process which seeks out quality candidates committed to the mission of the university is important for all university positions. Although NJIT recently has been able to recruit faculty and administrators from a larger pool of candidates, these same candidates are being sought by other competitive universities. A national shortage of individuals holding

terminal degrees in engineering and scientific disciplines, coupled with the fact that approximately one third of NJIT's full time faculty will reach retirement age within the next ten years, makes this an important human resource issue. NJIT should become more creative in its recruitment and employment practices.

The Office of Human Resources can help make an NJIT offer of appointment more attractive. The university can promote the benefits of working in an urban educational environment, including the availability of a variety of housing options and cultural opportunities within a reasonable commute to campus. Establishing alliances with local and regional realtors would help in this process. In addition, candidates are often interested in spousal employment; alliances with employment agencies could help in this regard. Finally, with many families today being supported by two incomes, the traditional fringe benefits program designed around a single income family is sometimes inappropriate. NJIT employees enjoy a substantial benefits package which, for the most part, is funded from a central State appropriation rather than from the direct appropriation to NJIT. With that funding come certain limitations with respect to options. The university should, nevertheless, continue to explore options with the State, including a cafeteria style fringe benefits program which would enable employees and candidates to choose the programs that are most consistent with their family needs and lifestyle.