

## Office of Relocation & Dual Career Assistance

*First Annual Report for the 2016-2017 Academic Recruitment Cycle*

The [Relocation & Dual Career Assistance \(RDCA\) Program](#) is a collaboration between Academic Affairs and Human Resources. Its creation was based on data obtained from 1) the 2015 Housing Study which revealed challenges associated with faculty and staff finding adequate and affordable housing in our area; and 2) Exit Interviews revealing a trend of faculty and staff members leaving the University due to their partner's inability to find fulfilling employment.

The intent of this office is to address these challenges by offering Housing Assistance and Dual Career Partner Employment Assistance. Community Integration Assistance and management of the [Appalachian Marketplace](#) have been added as complementary, value-added services.

Program preparations began in October 2016, with the hiring of Mrs. Becky Gosky as the program coordinator. The first task was to poll the Deans and Colleges to discuss what processes and financial resources were in place and how they would like to see this program utilized.

After consulting with the Deans and Colleges, it was determined that RDCA's services would be marketed from the very beginning of the recruitment process:

- Presenting the program to Administration and Department Chairs;
- Presenting the program during weekly EDC Search Committee training meetings;
- Providing program contact information in the application portal and in faculty job announcements;
- Reaching out to Search Chairs at the beginning of each search and providing electronic brochures;
- Requesting Search Chairs include the RDCA electronic brochure in their interview invitations;
- Providing hard-copy brochures to all candidates during their on campus interview;
- Meeting with finalists before, during, or after on campus interviews;
- Providing clarification and ongoing assistance to primary recruits and their dual career partners.

Next, in order to further determine what services to offer, we scheduled face to face interviews with our newly relocated employees. From these discussions we concluded some key points:

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|---|-----|
| ● Excited to be in Boone, top choice, love the area/mountains | 81% |
| ● Challenging to find adequate and affordable housing         | 69% |
| ● Challenging to integrate into the community                 | 63% |
| ● Has a Dual Career Partner                                   | 84% |
| ● Partner would like employment assistance                    | 59% |

-information gathered from face-to-face new employee interviews, Fall 2016/Spring 2017

Then, we started marketing our program to various groups around campus. We presented to the Chancellor's Cabinet, the Provost's Council, the Council of Chairs, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate. We passed out our business cards and brochures at meetings. We attended New Faculty Orientation, Staff Connect, and Faculty Club, marketing our program. We sent emails to our new employees, inviting them to events and promoting the Appalachian Marketplace. We sent out periodic campus emails via the Announce system, marketing this program to all employees. Simultaneously, we built relationships and systems to develop this program into a beneficial, full-fledged campus program.

## List of Accomplishments

### Communication & Marketing:

- Developed Mission, Vision, Values, Purpose and Goals for this program;
- Designed and maintained new website in newly branded format;
  - Expanded Employment, Relocation and Community Information portions of website;
  - Expanded Employee Perks;
  - Added numerous resource links to RDCA website, which have proven to be helpful to our relocating employees;
  - Created a Feedback Feature and a Registration Feature for Website.
- Created professional brochure based on newly branded website;
- Branded program with logo;
- Presented data from Fall 2016 *New Employee Surveys* to Council of Chairs, Provost Council, Staff Senate and Search Committees.
- Reported data from *2016-2017 Academic Recruitment Cycle* to Council of Chairs and Search Committees;
- Partnered with our HR Professional Development Coordinator and hosted 5 New Employee Social events. We collaborated with other campus departments to educate our new employees about campus resources. We had food and social networking time. Our attendees were a nice mix of Department Chairs, faculty members, and EHRA and SHRA staff members. We received good feedback after the events.
- Hosted 4 ComPsych Employee Assistance Workshops related to Relocation topics;
- Developed strategic community partnerships to support relocation and dual career assistance programs, as well as employee discounts and partnerships;
- Invited all new employees (and attended/welcome/distributed “Block A” Pins) to Fall 2017 Staff Connect (handed out 11 pins) and Fall 2017 Faculty Club (handed out 24 pins).

### Networking:

- Reached out to Boone Chamber of Commerce’s CEO, David Jackson, about forming an Appalachian State University/Boone Chamber Alliance in which a Chamber/HR Quarterly Networking Lunch was established with Boone’s largest employers;
- Attended and actively engaged with HR/Chamber of Commerce Group regarding relocation, recruitment, retention, introduction of dual career partner issues;
- Contacted and networked with High Country community employers and hiring managers;
- Obtained marketing materials from community employers to provide information to our relocating employees;
- Sent “Welcome Letters” to all new SHRA, EHRA, and Faculty employees who are relocating to the area;
- Participated in New Faculty Orientation.

### Program Administration:

- Created system to communicate to all Search Chairs and other hiring staff about RDCA Program when milestones happen within the search process;
- Reached out to all new SHRA, EHRA and Faculty Search Chairs to remind them of this program and how we can help their recruitment efforts, and attached an electronic version of our brochure to send to their finalists;
- “Welcome Emails” sent to all SHRA, EHRA Non faculty and Faculty confirmed hires;
- Improved and updated the Appalachian Buy/Sell/Trade board and marketed it to our employees;

- Managed and expanded the Appalachian Employee Discount Program. Continually networked with community businesses to increase participation and market program;
- Presented RDCA Program weekly to EDC's Search Committee training meetings.

We set out to serve our employees in a highly personal and needs-driven way:

- We networked with numerous housing providers, real estate brokers and property managers to support our relocating employees. We interviewed these housing specialists to assess their ability to provide excellent customer service and to gauge their eagerness to serve our employees and future employees in a highly respectful manner. Then, when speaking to our new employees, asking them questions and assessing their needs, we were able to recommend 3-4 housing providers we knew would be able to meet their needs.
- When meeting with our Dual Career Partners, we were able to listen thoroughly; provide resume and cover letter consultation; brainstorm and pinpoint their career passions and objectives; determine their short-term and long-term goals; navigate the sometimes complicated job search process; educate them about opportunities on campus or in the community; help them think outside the box about their career path – so often needed in this unique job market; and provide a letter of introduction on their behalf to Search Chairs both on campus and in our community.

Expanding upon our bullet point above regarding reaching out to David Jackson, Boone Chamber of Commerce President/CEO, we discussed ways Appalachian State University and the Boone Chamber could work together to support both our relocating employees and our dual career partners. We came up with several ideas and some are now flourishing programs.

One program came to be known as the Chamber/HR Quarterly Recruitment Luncheon. Every quarter, the Chamber hosts lunch for all of the major employers in the area. We get together to brainstorm and talk about shared HR/Recruitment/Relocation/Retention issues. We have already enjoyed five meetings. They have been well attended and more than one representative from Appalachian State, the Chamber of Commerce, Watauga County Schools, Watauga Medical Center and other employers have attended, ready and willing to partner to support retention and dual career partner issues. Note: I have networked on behalf of 3 of our dual career partners to date. One was with Watauga Medical Center for an MSN Nurse who was having trouble finding a higher-level position (she is now working with them). Another was with Watauga County Schools for one of our dual career partners who is looking for a full-time teaching position (he has obtained a long-term substitute teaching position). The third was a BSN with 25+ years of cardiac care experience and she is now working at Watauga Medical Center's Cardiology Center.

The second program is an enhanced Appalachian/Chamber Relocation Packet which we present in person or mail to the new employee not yet in Boone. It contains lots of current, local resources, maps, brochures and a Tervis cup. The Tervis cup is a re-usable, heat-proof cup containing a card inside printed with local business sponsors. When presented with the card and cup, the local business fills up the Tervis cup for the new employee with whatever complimentary drink they are offering. This helps our new employee connect with our community and our participating local businesses gain valuable advertising.

## UTILIZATION DATA

The data collection period for this report is from the start of the program, October 17, 2016 through August 31, 2017. We consider this period to be the 2016 – 2017 Academic Recruitment Cycle and the end of this program's first year in existence.

Data collected from Nov. 1, 2016 – Aug. 31, 2017:

- Total Number of Employees Hired: 473
- Total Number of Faculty Hired: 166
  - Full-Time Faculty: 63
  - Part-Time Faculty: 103
- Total Number of EHRA Employees Hired: 57
- Total Number of SHRA Employees Hired: 95
- Total Number of Temporary Employees Hired: 155
- **Total Number of Clients seen in the RDCA Office: 104**
  - Dual Career Assistance Clients: 55/104 (53%)
  - Housing Assistance Clients: 49/104 (47%)
    - Seeking Rentals: 43/49 (88%)
    - Seeking to Purchase: 6/49 (12%)
  - Community Integration: 39/104 (36%)

Benchmark Data was gathered from Virginia Tech over a 5-year period (2011 – 2016): Their Dual Career Assistance Program (no Housing component) saw a client range of 96 – 105 per year, with 2 full-time employees.

The following are some additional faculty and non-faculty Dual Career Partner Case Studies gathered during this same period.

### Case Study #1:

Faculty Member's husband is a recent Business Administration Major with Concentration in HR. I let him know about the Hospitality Mints HR Director opening, he applied, I sent a letter of introduction and support on his behalf, he interviewed and got the job!

### Case Study #2:

Faculty Member's husband with no University experience but great transferable skills in another field, applied for a Compliance position in our Office of Research. I consulted with dual career partner on how to translate his prior industry experience into University language on his cover letter and resume, and he received an interview and got the job!

### Case Study #3:

New high-level administrator's husband had a teaching background in non-IT field with a recent IT certification. He was seeking an IT position and was not receiving interviews. I reached out to Watauga County Schools (who was receptive due to their own hiring needs and our previous interactions/networking) and explained how his

extensive teaching experience plus his newly earned certificate met their qualifications. They said they would pull his application materials right away and reach out to him.

#### Case Study #4:

Four separate experiences working through this office during this cycle: primary recruit accepted a tenure-track faculty position and their partner later obtained a non-tenure-track teaching position.

#### Case Study #5:

Diverse international couple. Primary faculty recruit was among the applicants receiving on campus interview. Through course of interview, mentioned that his partner was also in the applicant pool. The application was pulled and it was noted that secondary recruit was also highly competitive (had also received a phone interview) for the same search. Department hired primary recruit as a tenure-track and partner as a full-time NTT teaching position.

We consider ourselves a Recruitment and Retention Tool for the University.

- Recruitment Tool
  - Supply brochures to all interviewing candidates by sending them to Search Chairs;
  - Meet with finalists as they evaluate their decision to move here. We meet with them before, during, or after interviews to provide a confidential, non-evaluative discussion;
  - Provide information finalists need to make an informed decision;
  - Work to connect finalists and new employees with people and organizations so they find the right resources;
  - Offer a welcoming, listening approach.
- Retention Tool
  - Welcome and check in with our new employees and assist them during their transition. This helps them engage in this community. We hope this will lead to a decision to remain with the University.

#### Future Goals:

- Continue to market and enhance our existing processes, research ways to be more effective, and add other programs as needed;
- Assist the Chancellor in marketing the Faculty Club and Staff Connect to new employees;
- Reach out to other Chamber of Commerces in the region to expand our employment networking for our dual career partners;
- Build relationships with additional employers in the region to enhance job opportunities for our dual career partners;
- Continue networking with local housing providers, building relationships to improve our customer service and to increase the amount of adequate and affordable housing options for our relocating employees.