The Strategic Priorities Council (SPC) has engaged representatives from across the University to identify, analyze, and implement strategies to address Rowan’s ability to achieve the University’s priorities: the four strategic pillars and 10-year goals (“Rowan 2023”). Formerly known as the Strategic Planning Council, the SPC has changed its name to reflect its role in supporting Rowan’s progress toward realizing this vision. Our work in 2014-2015 addressed multiple projects with the themes of maximizing the substantial human capacity of our employees, reducing the impediments to each of us being allowed to put our talents to their “highest and best use,” and analyzing the internal and external context in which Rowan is operating.

Below are brief descriptions of the SPC’s major initiatives and results.

Employee Engagement Survey

The Employee Engagement Survey was developed by the SPC as an opportunity for all employees to express their voices candidly and confidentially. Sense of engagement is known to be a significant factor in employee capacity and productivity. The goal of this initiative was to provide insights into the values, expectations, and experiences of Rowan employees that will eventually help to enhance engagement. The survey was conducted in March 2015.

Strengths identified in the survey are that Rowan University employees felt strongly that they were valued by their supervisors; clearly understood what was expected of them at work; viewed their fellow employees as committed to doing quality work; were proud to work at the university; and viewed their role as important to the university’s success. Areas for improvement identified were communication with senior leadership; recognition for work; professional development opportunities; and concern for health and well-being.

The SPC’s engagement sub-committee will continue to keep employees aware of the initiatives that are being developed to support them. In March we implemented a formal recognition program (described below) and plan to roll out more informal recognition programs during the Fall of 2015. Additionally, a survey to assess health and well-being concerns is being considered, as are programs to address professional development and communication at Rowan.

These results provide an important first step and a baseline against which we can measure progress. It will help us to better understand both our strengths and our challenges, and will provide a foundation from which we can work together to achieve new levels of success.

Employee Recognition Program

With the support of the President's Office, the SPC developed a new mechanism for recognizing the contributions of our employees. Open to all employees on all of Rowan’s campuses, the Employee Recognition Program is designed to recognize and reward faculty and staff for their extraordinary efforts to support the values of the University. These values include: Student Centeredness, Customer Service, Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Inclusivity, and Teamwork.
Award recipients for the Employee Recognition Program were determined by a subcommittee of the SPC. The subcommittee included representation from all of Rowan’s campuses. One honoree was selected for each value. An additional award recognizing a team for Teamwork was also chosen. Honorees were recognized during the Celebrating Excellence Awards Ceremony on April 7, 2015.

Over thirty nominations were received for the inaugural offering of these awards. For the first time, the Celebrating Excellence ceremony was standing room only. In future years, the formal recognition program will be held on an annual basis. Additionally, the recognition sub-committee developed day-to-day recognition ideas for supervisors, including a toolkit as well as a “PROFessional of the month” award.

**Banner Web Time Entry**

The SPC successfully proposed that the University undertake conversion from paper time sheets to a web time entry system in Banner. This project, which was jointly led by Information Resources and Technology and Payroll, enhanced effectiveness and efficiency by automating a process that impacts all employees and offices.

**Human Resources Service Quality Survey**

The SPC assisted Eileen Scott, Associate Vice President for Employee and Labor Relations, in the development of this survey, which was announced to the campus community and was implemented during the Spring of 2015. Individuals who contacted HR were directed to a brief survey to provide input on the quality of the service. Human Resources used the results to improve HR services such as response time and an increased use of technology. Other departments are encouraged to complete a survey.

**Optimizing Banner Usage**

The SPC worked with Dr. Mira Lalovic-Hand, Vice President for Information Resources/CIO to review employees’ concerns and questions regarding the use of Banner. These discussions resulted in a Rowan Announcer to orient employees on available training for Banner usage and the process to report problems or questions with Banner. Effective use and optimization of Banner will allow us to make better use of creative and intellectual human resources.

**SWOT analysis**

Most recently, the SPC conducted a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that affect the University. The analysis was derived through subcommittees of the SPC using personal observations as well as the following sources as guides: the Extended Cabinet report (from last summer’s retreat), the Engagement Survey results, and the One-Page Strategic Plan developed by Roberta Harvey and Jeff Hand in 2013. The council continues to work together to identify areas that we feel will have the most impact and benefit to the university.