This Is FASEB
Personnel Services

by
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In large measure, the formation and development of the Federation's Personnel Services department established in 1962 mirrors the evolution of the Human Relations profession on a national level. Once relegated to the role of record keeping and administrative functions, the Personnel Services department has evolved into an active contributor to the overall management and welfare of the Federation and its employees. As the national demographics of the work force have changed along with the enormous technological advances of the last 25 years, a greater appreciation of the belief that "human resources are our most important asset" has emerged. A glance at the Federation budget reveals what accountants have known all along—that the cost of personnel is the single greatest expenditure in any organization. It only makes sense, therefore, to invest wisely in the employees and the benefit plans that play an integral part in the employee's well-being and that serve a major role in recruiting.

Concurrently, as with any other corporation, the Federation has had to comply with ever-increasing and more complex federal legislation that has imposed an immense, time-consuming strain on the human resources function. Starting with the Equal Employment Opportunity legislation of the 60s, through the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), the Tax Reform Act of 1986 (TRA), and the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 to mention a few, as well as the most recent avalanche of proposed and pending mandated employee benefits, the human relations professional has had to become conversant with myriad legal issues unheard of 20 years ago.

In most institutions the human resources function is a service oriented entity and as such is not expected to generate income. However, unlike other organizations, the Federation Board has made available to the Constituent Societies many services at cost and on a per-capita basis, which produces revenue for the department:
- Performing recruitment and placement functions
- Administering employee benefit plans, including complying with reporting and disclosure requirements
- Maintaining employee records
- Consulting on salary administration, employment practices, and compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission legislation and other federal, state, and local regulations.

The cost of personnel services is computed by dividing the common personnel costs in the annual budget approved by the Federation Board by the total number of employees working for the Federation and member Societies. For 1989, the computation results in a per-employee charge of $704. This compares to a national average cost for comparable-sized entities of $1129 per employee as reported in a survey published jointly by the Bureau of National Affairs and the American Society for Personnel Administration. It may be of interest that the Personnel Services department budget represents 1.6 percent of the Federation's total operating budget and that the Personnel Services department's salaries and wages represent 3.4 percent of FASEB's total salaries and wages.

As the extension to the Milton O. Lee Building was nearing completion, several additional biological societies were attracted to the Beaumont Campus. To provide an attractive package for these potential tenant-residents, the Federation developed a mechanism to offer employee benefits that would not have otherwise been available to them as independent groups. Beginning in January 1988, a leasing arrangement was initiated whereby the Federation hired tenant society employees, placed them on the FASEB payroll and "leased" the individuals back to the societies. In addition to offering a comprehensive employee benefit package that the Federation can better negotiate with insurance carriers and other suppliers because of its larger group size, the tenant societies are}

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1This is the seventh in a series of articles about FASEB's structure and function. (See Volume 3, Numbers 1, 2, and 5-8)
2Mr. Knox has been Director of Personnel Services at FASEB since 1966.
absolved of the complexities of the many government regulations that cover the diverse facets of employment. As a result the Federation Staff has grown to 132, which includes 29 leased employees. With the 77 employees of the seven Constituent Societies, the on-campus work force for which human services are provided, total 219 salaried employees. An additional 20 to 30 seasonal or temporary employees are recruited by the Personnel Services department or are on call. The tenant organizations that participate in the leasing arrangement are charged a per-capita fee, which is 10% greater than that charged to the Constituent Societies and FASEB.

In Step With the Times

In many organizations, the human resources department is the last one to become computerized. At FASEB, it was recognized that to assist in the effectiveness of the office and free an increasingly professional staff from clerical duties, a computer system had to be installed. Today a sophisticated system of interrelated programs enables the office to perform the following functions:

- Process payroll authorizations and exceptions (such as status changes, overtime, and leave without pay)
- Calculating and print employee benefit invoices (health insurance invoices, life and disability insurance invoices, and retirement plans remittance lists)
- Produce quarterly reports of personnel actions to the Executive Director and annual Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Program (EEO/AAP) reports
- Maintain leave records and produce leave reports
- Assist the Executive Director and Department Heads in the annual merit review process for salary increases by printing performance evaluation forms and salary summary listings
- Prepare letters of salary increase notification and calculate legal limits of tax-deferred contributions to the retirement plan
- Produce an individualized narrative statement for employees summarizing the elements of their personnel package with actual employee and employer costs for each benefit plan
- Generate various telephone directory listings
- Maintain an applicant tracking system for EEO purposes.

To help meet the demands and fulfill its obligations, the Personnel Services department is staffed by three full-time employees. In addition to the Director, a Staffing Specialist and a Personnel Assistant comprise the department. Because of the size of the Federation, each staff member is really a generalist with a much wider range of responsibilities than a title may imply. For example, in addition to recruiting and placement activities the Staffing Specialist, Ms. Jennifer Shultz, is responsible for the orientation of new employees, exit interviewing, applicant tracking, monitoring the EEO/AAP program, serving as a referral source for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), providing liaison and working with community activities such as the American Red Cross, American Lung Association, the United Way Campaign, and organizing/coordinating special functions such as staff receptions and social activities. The Personnel Assistant is Mrs. Maureen Mapp, who processes insurance and employee benefit invoices, payroll actions, and leave reports, and who generates a computerized directory listing.

Locating Qualified Employees

Because of its location the Federation's efforts in recruiting are concentrated in Montgomery County, Maryland, where the unemployment rate is approximately 1 percent. However, this population also represents one of the most highly educated professional labor pools in the nation. The competition for key qualified support staff such as administrative assistants and secretaries is nevertheless keen—with the demand far exceeding the supply. As a result, in addition to the traditional methods of recruiting through newspaper advertising, the placement offices of local universities and business schools and county and state employment services are enlisted in searches. Recruiting sources have been extended to attempt to reach underutilized segments of the labor force (e.g., individuals re-entering the work force and retired and/or semi-retired workers interested in remaining active. As the number of women entering the work force is expected to increase dramatically to 66% by 1990 and account for 47% of the labor force by the year 2000, issues such as job sharing, more flexible schedules, working from modems at locations remote from the work place, and child care will need to be given serious consideration in the near future.

As an adjunct and aid to the recruitment and retention of a highly competent staff, the Federation has consistently kept a step ahead of the competition in the development, availability, and level of employee benefits. In this climate where the value of the staff is appreciated and the employee's over-all well-being is of paramount concern, the Federation was one of the leaders in the Washington Metropolitan Area to initiate an EAP through which comprehensive counseling and education are available for a variety of personal matters at no cost to the employees or their families. Further, the Federation, with the cooperation of the Constituent Societies, has established definitive policies for restricting smoking and for providing a drug-free work place. These developments reflect the corporation's concern for its employees' welfare and appreciation for the select staff assembled in Bethesda, and in turn provide the biological organizations that conduct their scientific and educational programs on the Beaumont Campus with a dedicated and highly competent staff to assist the research community.

The Placement Service

In addition to in-house personnel duties, the Personnel Services Department has administrative responsibilities for FASEB's highly esteemed Placement Service.

The Federation has had since 1922 some form of announced activity to match Society members and other scientists with available positions. From then until 1947,
through the consecutive efforts of Dr. Edgar D. Brown, University of Minnesota; Dr. Charles W. Edmunds, University of Michigan; and Dr. Howard B. Lewis, also from the University of Michigan, the service had been offered throughout the year and at annual meetings at no charge.

From 1947, when Dr. Lewis relinquished his Placement Service role, until 1951, the future direction of the service was the subject of formal study and review, which resulted in detailed recommendations by senior members of the Federation community. Establishment of the service as an entity within the headquarters office of the Federation resulted, as did changes in the method of scheduling interviews at annual meetings. Also during this period, a candidate fee of $1.00 was established. Employers were not assessed a fee to participate in the Placement Service until 1952, when an annual fee of $10.00 was established; by then the applicant fee had risen to $3.00. The Placement Service was recognized as a major function of the Federation with the appointment of Mrs. Helen Lee, followed by Mrs. Donna Larsen and Mr. Billy Clement. Mr. Thomas Trudeau was appointed the current manager of the Placement Service in 1985.

Although some changes in working definitions of employers, interviewers, and available positions occurred, from 1952 to 1970 several hundred individuals representing employer organizations participated in placement service activities each year at annual meetings. Candidates have numbered in the range of 1000 per year. Employer participation fees increased to $50.00. The candidate fee remained at $3.00 until 1971, but increased to $10.00 in 1973. It has not been increased since.

Recording the numbers of individuals participating in the Placement Service at annual meetings was standardized in 1971. Since then, through 1988, the average number of candidates per year has been 958, with a high of 1224 in 1973 and a low of 760 in 1988. Interviewers representing employer organizations have averaged 461 per year, with a high of 602 in 1988 and a low of 373 in 1975. Interviews scheduled at annual meetings have averaged nearly 5,100 per year during the past 5 years.

Today the Placement Service operates year-round and at annual meetings. It matches candidates seeking post-doctoral training and permanent positions with recruiting employers from academia, government and industry. Most candidates are at the doctoral level, or graduate students anticipating conferral of the doctorate, and in disciplines represented by member societies. Membership in the Federation is not a prerequisite for participation, either as a candidate or as an employer. Individuals not holding or expecting a doctorate are not excluded from participation as candidates. Mr. Trudeau is assisted by Mrs. Mildred O'Brien, who has been the Employer Registrar since 1978, and by Ms. Maizie Cummings, the Candidate Registrar. The service realizes sufficient revenue, principally from employer registration fees and advertising of positions available in the Employment Opportunities section of The FASEB Journal, to exceed all expenses.

For the purpose of establishing employer registration fees, employer organizations are categorized as commercial (those who intend to earn a profit) and academic/other nonprofit (other nonprofit consisting principally of federal government entities: National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Agriculture, Veterans Administration). Regardless of the number of employer organizations registering in any calendar year, 20% are in the commercial category, and are major pharmaceutical manufacturers and biotechnology companies, large and not-so-large. Of the remaining 80%, 70% are from academia and 10% from federal government.

FASEB placement service support is also provided to other organizations to obtain efficient utilization of staff. The American Society of Anesthesiologists, the Society for Neuroscience, and The Endocrine Society use these services. These additional missions are accepted only when they will not interfere with completing the primary Federation mission.

Those interested in timely information about candidates and positions available should refer to Employment Opportunities sections of current and recent issues of The FASEB Journal, with particular attention to the standing matter on the first page of the section.

In conclusion, the Personnel Services Department offers a wide range of services to both FASEB societies and their members nationwide. It is an invaluable asset to the management of the FASEB headquarters and in many ways represents the quality of FASEB services and programs.