

**University of North Carolina @ Chapel Hill
History of the Employee Appreciation Fair
University Managers' Association
Recognition and Morale Committee**

The UMA minutes of January 23, 1989 report that the Recognition and Morale committee met and had received many suggestions for recognition from the UMA membership and university managers and staff. These included opportunities to attend special events, employees/departments of the month, the establishment of a Human Resources Department, and money for staff development to be part of the Bicentennial Campaign. The committee had also surveyed and personally contacted other universities similar in staff and student size to UNC-CH throughout the country, as well as in the State of North Carolina to collect information on ways they recognized and rewarded their staff.

On February 28, 1989, Margaret Balcom, Chairman, Recognition and Morale Committee and Tim Sanford, President, University Managers' Association met with Provost Dennis O'Connor and presented a proposal recommending the committee's ideas on ways to improve morale on our campus. The two main proposals were (1) non-faculty participation in University Day and (2) a spring all-employee recognition event. He was enthusiastic about these ideas and agreed to take them to the Chancellor's Administrative Council. This information and proposal was made to the University Manager's Association and the idea was endorsed in January 1990 to plan for an Employee Appreciation Fair in the spring of 1990.

Without financial support provided from the University Administration, the managers solicited individual departments for donations. The result was \$125.00 from individuals and \$10,750 from UNC-CH departments. Our first Employee Appreciation Fair was held in "The Pit" on May 18, 1990. The theme was "You Make It Happen". We expended \$7785.77 on the fair and had a balance in our account of \$3,089.23.

In July 1990, UMA committee members met with Laurie Charest regarding the 1991 Employee Fair. Ms. Charest preferred that UMA continue to sponsor the fair. She requested that UMA present a funding proposal for the financial support for the next year's event. A budget proposal of \$25,000 was submitted to Charest in August 1990. In October 1990, Charest notified UMA that \$15,000 would be budgeted for the 1991 Employee Appreciation Fair. An overhead account was established in the Human Resources –Employee Services Department to support this event. The UMA Fair Committee was responsible for management, expenditures and reconciliation of the funds. In 1992, this account was cut by 20% that resulted in an initial budget allocation of \$12,500. Request was made to the budget office to restore this funding and an addition \$3500 was put back into the account and our 1992 fair budget was \$16,100 (\$100 individual donation also received). Since these funds were allocated from Pan University funding, carryforward to the next fiscal year was not possible.

In preparation for the 1993 fair, it became evident quickly that the \$15,000 budget was not sufficient to fund the event. The estimated budget requirements totaled \$21,102. That did not include the additional donations by departments and individuals that required no funding which added up to over \$49,000.

Pinkey DuBose, Scott Blackwood and Linda Lane went fundraising. The efforts resulted in \$7000 in additional funds from the Educational Foundation, Provost Dick McCormick and Vice Chancellor Garland Hershey. The budget for the 1993 fair was \$22,000.

With advocates on the Pan-University budget committee, the Employee Appreciation Fair budget was increased to \$25,000 annually for the 1994 and 1995 fiscal years. It was also approved that the balance in the 1995 fair budget could be carried forward to the 1996 budget year that resulted in \$29,299 available. In 1997, Elson Floyd allocated another \$6,000 to the fair budget which brought our operating budget to \$31,000 annually. The fair was held in 1998 and 1999 with this budgeted amount available also.

Our vision for the fair was to bring together the University community where UNC-CH could showcase their departments and staff could get together for a few hours of fun and fellowship. Little did we know that the posters, buttons and t-shirts would become collector's items. Physical Plant donated the funds for the purchase of the lunch bags. You can still see staff carrying their lunch bag from fairs held 5 years ago. The entire campus was encouraged to be a part of the fair excitement by participating in the "Button Blitz". Prizes were awarded "on the spot" when staff were spotted wearing their fair button. It had become a trend to see staff who had attended previous fairs wear their buttons from past years and barter for buttons they were missing. The Smith Center was decorated with balloons and decorations using the theme colors. Entertainment included local school chorus', Karaoke, clogging, line dancing, shag lessons, UNC staff musicians, Yoga demonstrations just to name a few. We had a professional DJ as our Master of Ceremony. Hundreds of door prizes were given away. Heels for Health combined their Health Fair and the concourse became another wonderful event expanded to focus on our health. Chair massages were provided and many health affairs departments and local health care professionals provided information. It was estimated that between 4,000 and 5,000 people attended these events.

Budget cuts in the 99-00 budget resulted in the Employee Appreciation Fair budget being cut in half. There would be around \$16,000 available. The consensus of the 1999 Fair Committee recommended that it was not possible to have an Employee Appreciation Fair of the same quality for 5000+ staff without adequate resources. We were not willing to start over at ground zero. The Employee Appreciation Fair Committee was a full year commitment and a full year of work to plan this wonderful event. Hundreds of hours were volunteered by university managers. Insufficient funds and support made it impossible to continue at the current level.

In summer 1999, a group led by Gwen Burston, Director of Employee Services Office Of Human Resources and UMA Board Members Sharon Grayden and Trevaughn Eubanks met to determine the type of employee appreciation event we could do with the lowered budget. It was determined that an Ice Cream Social and Health Fair was the best possible alternative. This event was led by a Chair from the UMA Board. The Employee Services Program Manager continued to serve as a Human Resources liaison committee member handling the budget of the event.

“Cool Your HEELS” Employee Appreciation Event was held in May of 1999 at Carmichael Auditorium rather than at the Smith Center. The thinking behind this was that employees might more likely expect a completely different event at a new, smaller, venue. Funds were spent on food (ice cream, popcorn, cookies, lemonade and water) giveaway post it notes for employees, balloons for decoration and a stage. Health Vendors set up on the Carmichael Floor and food was served on the concourse. Door prizes were donated. Printing services donated creation of the logo and a banner.

In 2001, a couple of additions were made to the event. Campus Recreation sponsored games on Fetzer Field and onsite chair massage took the place of the health fair vendors. Auxiliary Services donated use of a UNC ONE Card scanner for door prizes and entry. In 2001 we spent the funds on food (ice cream, popcorn, cookies, lemonade and water, chair massage vendors, post it note giveaways for employees and balloons. All door prizes were donated. Printing services again donated creation of a logo.

**Pinkey DuBose
December 11, 2001**