

Findings from the Chili Chat Forums Winter/Spring 2006

Employee Assembly
and the
Office of Human Resources

What was the Chili Chat?

A series of six forums held in winter/spring 2006 asking staff across the Ithaca campus and Geneva three questions regarding their vacation usage.

Over 400 staff attended and provided 1,145 responses.

Following are those three questions and the top three responses to each.

Other than wages and benefits, what keeps you motivated at work?

30% are motivated by where they work and the people they work with.

30% take pride in what they do and/or feel appreciated for their work.

15% Appreciate opportunity for advancement and self improvement.

What is the biggest obstacle to taking your vacation (or using your vacation time)?

42% said heavy workload and lack of coverage while they are gone.

18% stated vacation time has to be saved for personal or family care needs, including school closings, sick children, etc.

17% felt guilty for over- burden their co-workers and/or co-workers or supervisors while they are away.

How do you leave work “at work” while on vacation?

24% left all technology (lap tops, cell phones, pagers, etc) at home or in the office before leaving for vacation.

20% planned ahead with co-workers and supervisors in the office to provide coverage by others.

9% have fun, do hobbies, and/or spend time with family and friends.

What are some of the Recommendations?

Use office Vacation Calendars for better planning.

Workload, lack of coverage, guilt, timing, and burden on co-workers accounted for a vast majority of the obstacles to taking vacations or using vacation time. A common vacation calendar could alleviate the stress and challenges of taking vacation time.

Recognize staff with a “Thank You” for a job well

done. Staff are more motivated when they receive recognition for doing their jobs well.

Plan forums and special events. Encourage and support staff to attend educational, informational, and social events to give staff the opportunity to network; personal advancement.

What are some of the Recommendations?

Develop Departmental Pool. Hire temps when possible for high vacation request times to avoid the work overload upon return. Bring the temps in before hand to learn basic tasks **PRIOR** to the vacation dates.

Utilize More Cross Training. People need to know they have someone helping back on the job so they can actually relax while they are away from the office.