

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: May 5, 2009

SUBJECT: MUN WORKPLACE OPINION SURVEY

As many of you already know, MUN has been promoting another Workplace Opinion Survey through the NEWSLINE Listserv. Academic Staff Members (ASMs) should be aware that participating in this survey is a purely voluntary undertaking, and that MUNFA has repeatedly documented perceived problems with such a survey in the past. Attached to this message, please find two (2) letters addressed to University administrators outlining our concerns with such a survey.

January 26, 2007

Fax # 737-2453

Ms. Karen Hollett
Director of Faculty Relations
Division of Faculty Relations

FAKED

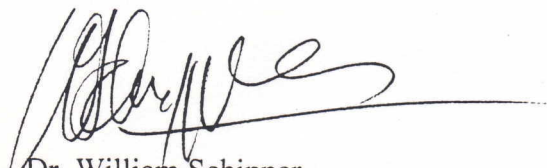
Dear Ms. Hollett,

RE: Memorial University of Newfoundland Opinion Survey (January 10, 2007)

We have reviewed the draft survey and there are a number of issues that concern us. First, the psychometric properties of the survey are questionable, and thus the ultimate usefulness of potential results. Is there any evidence that the scale items are valid and reliable? Have they been used before? With what results? Many of the items appear to be taken from other surveys and are not applicable to the academic environment. E.g., I respect my faculty leader; My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own; I receive the technical training I need to do my job effectively. Many of the items are complex, express more than one idea, and in short, are not "good" items. If the consulting group have simply taken a compendium of items they have used in other fora then they must present evidence of the psychometric properties of the new scale. This is standard practice in assessment. Online administration and survey length (it is too long) are likely to lead to a low response rate. This needs to be addressed.

There are ethical issues with the survey. Demographic sections are so specific that respondents' anonymity is not assured and this is a sine qua non of a good survey. Confidentiality must be assured for both ethical reasons and validity reasons. Ethical approval of the survey apparently is being done at another university, yet the work is being carried out at Memorial for Memorial. It would be standard practice to have the ethics approval from Memorial.

Sincerely,



Dr. William Schipper
MUNFA President

March 31, 2009

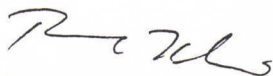
Ms. Lisa Hollett, Director
Department of Human Resources
Memorial University

Dear Ms. Hollett:

Thank you for your letter of March 9, 2009 regarding plans to re-administer a workplace survey between April 27 and May 8, 2009. When the survey was proposed in 2007, MUNFA provided a detailed response to the draft survey. We expressed our concerns about the reliability and validity of major sections of the survey and we questioned the overall value of the results that would be garnered. Though our feedback was prepared by Academic Staff Members with considerable expertise in, and who teach graduate courses in research methods and survey design, it was ignored. Subsequently, when the survey was administered, there was further comment from faculty members who raised concerns about confidentiality, anonymity, and other issues related to the protection of rights of human subjects. These, again, appeared to be ignored. Attached is a copy of our letter of January 26, 2007 to Karen Hollett outlining our concerns with the January 10, 2007 opinion survey.

Though we appreciate your suggestion that MUNFA converse with you about the workplace survey, we are hesitant given our previous experience. As well, while we understand the reasons for using the same workplace survey as in 2007 (for compassion of responses), we are concerned that use of the previous survey is a given and do not wish to be party to a process that has been defined *a priori*. We might share a desire to undertake a workplace survey, but believe the method and process used last time is not the most productive way to go.

Yours sincerely,



Ross A. Klein, PhD
President, MUNFA

cc: Morgan Cooper, Director of Faculty Relations

Attach.