



November, 2018

Workers Concerns with Brock University's HR Application, *Workday*

On Monday, November 5, 2018, CUPE Local 4207 hosted an all-union luncheon to allow the workers of Brock University a forum to discuss their concerns and offer solutions for the university's implementation of *Workday*, a human resources application intended to administer hiring and payroll. Since its rollout during the summer of 2018, there have been a number of serious problems that have affected the level of stress within the various departments and the workers of the university. This has had a detrimental effect on the work environment that in turn will negatively affect students. During the productive discussion on November 5, a number of common themes arose. These themes included *Workday* training, communication from Human Resources, administration, and the general ease of use (or lack thereof) of *Workday* with workers.

Problems

In summary, the general feeling from workers at Brock University is that there is a lack of training for *Workday*, both within Human Resources and the university's workers as a whole. What training is available is insufficient, poorly organized, and poorly advertised.

When workers attempt to reach out to HR to resolve issues, the responsiveness from HR is slow. When workers do connect with HR, the tone from HR at times has been negative; many workers felt patronized. There is a perception from workers that HR is not taking responsibility for the various problems encountered in *Workday*. While it is true that HR is overwhelmed, this only highlights the need for better support for the program.

It is the view from most workers that *Workday* is not a user friendly platform. Tools can be difficult to find, and can be buried in multiple levels of access. When workers manage to access the proper tools, it is difficult (and often impossible) to correct mistakes or edit information. Many workers expressed a frustration over unclear, generalized payslips and the inability to access their contracts to ensure they were properly signed, or for the ability to print hard copies.

One of the largest complaints from departmental staff was the downloading of a number of human resources responsibilities to departmental chairs and their support workers, doubling the workload. Administrative Assistants are overwhelmed with dealing with issues over inputting contracts, pay inconsistencies, redundant invoicing, and other inconsistencies that often change from week to week. Of particular note that affects a number of members of CUPE 4207 that *are currently teaching without contracts!*

Solutions

Some ideas put forward from the workers attending the luncheon tried to address the above concerns. It was felt that HR should provide more training to its staff and university workers as a whole. These include paid, in-person training, better communication of available

workshops and other training modules, and provide resources (glossaries, instructional pdfs) for specific work groups.

Communication from HR must be improved. Through better staff training and resources for hiring, HR should commit to more empathy with affected workers/departments and responsiveness to inquiries. Workers would also like to see more consultations with the unions.

There should be a commitment from HR to look for ways to make the system more user friendly. It needs to be more accessible, and also include ways for workers to provide information via hard copy if that is their only practical means. Consultations could also be a means to learn the needs of workers on better tools and interface layouts.

The consensus with workers is that Workday is not an appropriate system for a university. Brock University is a complex and diverse community with subcultures that have very different needs. While it is the desire of the workers to find a better application tailored to the needs of the university, should HR continue with Workday, there needs to be a number of changes to how it is administered (or any other application in the future). Any changes should be thoroughly beta tested before rolling it out. HR should also continue to manage related human resources items (onboarding, job postings, payroll, etc.), rather than departments. Finally, HR could consider the creation for working groups to address specific problems and solutions for the various cohorts within the university.

A list of the specific common problems and solutions is provided below. The workers of Brock University are committed to creating a better working and learning environment for all. We ask that HR consider these concerns and demonstrate that they are committed to do the same.

Common Themes from All-Union *Workday* Discussion

The Common Problems

Training/Education

- Staff training employees are still learning themselves.
- Training: if it is just online some employees will miss it.
 - Challenging for employees that don't have computer access or lack training in computer usage.
- Available training insufficient.
 - Training was too general and short, poorly organised.
 - Videos and booklets were poorly put together. Overall lack of information.
 - Told to refer to PP slides ETE.
 - Bad timing for the workshops.

Communication

- Slow response time from HR.
 - Trying to get hold of people in HR for assistance can take over a day.
 - No one calls back from HR, emails are sent but no response.
 - Questions/enquiry cannot be answered quickly. No phone contacts.
 - Letters go to personal email if not on file. Stays in limbo.
- Tone from HR is negative.
 - Treat us like we are uneducated. Students have hard time with workday.
 - Graduate students members felt left out.
 - HR Staff unhelpful and very patronising!

- HR is blaming everybody except themselves about workday problems.
- When HR has responded, lack of consistent support.
 - Depending on who we ask in HR, we get a different answer.
 - Need more frontline help who know workday well (we have had help and those employees did not know the system either).
 - No support by HR to solve workday issues; evident frustration of HR employees with meeting workers' requests/needs.
 - In contract system, clarify "35" has wh.. 0 + why – Needs language.
 - Lack of one on one support.
 - Example: employee has been meeting with HR since July about issues with Workday but it has not gotten any better (meets on behalf of all custodians).
 - Time it takes to figure out how to submit items in workday and the avoidance of responding by HR.

General Ease of Use

- Contracts are hidden.
 - Many employees want to view employment history online and need a print option of contracts.
 - Contracts are in limbo, unable to see confirmation of signature.
- Missing details of payments that were previously available in payslips.
 - Especially a problem with multiple contracts.
 - What we do have is unclear: different answers to the same question.
 - Contract worker payslips are not user friendly/ hard to find.
- Removal of members from HR system- loss of email and access.
 - Creates problems for returning temporary/contract employees.
- User Interface is not user friendly/intuitive.
 - Login system not working properly.
 - *Inappropriate questions regarding gender and sex.*
 - Confusion with the system- lots of clicks, hard to find things.
 - Assumption of background information in contract fields, in job aids i.e. job titles and positions.
 - Compatibility issues with web version and app version (both versions should be the same).
 - Cannot go back and view previous pay records.
 - PAP not intuitive.
 - Workday needs to provide adequate access to workers (more access options).
 - Employees who are not comfortable with using computers or have English language skills problems in writing have to do all requests through system which cannot work for them. It should be both manually and by system.
- Data Entry/Editing Problems.
 - Approvals going to multiple departments.
 - Lieu time/vacation time. System is forcing to use this for appointments.
 - Can only punch in seven minutes before shifts and need more time to get to area.
 - Custodial runs 24 hours so workday does not like that shift.
 - Corrections are so much harder in system and it is time and energy consuming (it takes twice as long as the previous system to correct mistakes).
 - Some mistakes have to be handled manually.
 - System glitches, lacking support with HR.
 - Not able to do edits, e.g., C.C.

- Not able to edit offer letters.

Administration

- Human resources is supposed to manage HR but HR has downloaded everything to departments and staff.
 - Departments or Chairs are now managing HR and trying to manage all their regular work.
 - Onboarding is now on department level instead of HR.
 - Change of information in a contract requires many levels of approval- wastes time for the process/people.
 - Responsibility for hiring all on Administrative Assistants
 - Fall was too busy for admin assistants.
 - Going to a new department trying to get to workday takes time.
 - 14 pages of emails plus 3 staff working a total of 9 hours to deal with 1 contract!
 - Computer science TA who rectifies workday issues for several departments – she does not work for HR.
 - Temporary worker have issues with workday. They have to get on workday to get paid which creates problems for workers.
- Inconsistencies/Duplication/Issues
 - Pay inconsistencies take months to correct.
 - In old system, only a contract for TAs,etc., was required, with new HR, we have to create ‘seats’ first then we can input contracts so it is twice the work.
 - ‘Pre-hires’ had incorrect emails.
 - Redundant: Sending the invoice AGAIN to accounts payable AFTER already submitting it in workday.
 - Unable to assist TA/RA/MG (unable to view).
 - Duplicate employee files.
 - Pay scale template not updated.
 - Cheque Request: difficult to determine which professors’ accounts are which.
 - Candidate process not consistent.
- ***Some are teaching without contracts!***

Some Proposed Solutions

Training/Education

- More training should be given to workers.
 - Having information explaining what should be done *in advance* of beginning of contract.
 - Paid, in-person Workday trainings.
 - One day full training/ mandatory for specific working groups- webinar
 - Bring in a benchmark (worker from other universities to guide the sessions and training).
 - Strengthen online training (fuller content and better communication of its location/availability).
 - Weekly reminders for Workday Wednesday.
 - Maybe have a Workday Wednesday for specific working groups
 - Bring in a benchmark (worker from other universities to guide the sessions and training).

- Teams that goes to different departments to talk about workday.
- Glossary of terms so everyone will understand the system.
- Inter-department 'cheat sheets' or 'how to' documents – budget officers

Communication

- Improved communication from HR .
 - Communications should empathetically acknowledge issues rather than implying issue is the fault of worker or department.
 - HR should acknowledge others are having issues too.
- A clear memo for every employee
- Answer HR phones.
- Detailed information via tech fix at HR/Developer lever.
- What is next? How well this info be used? Communication to union leaders? Timeline?

General Ease of Use

- Should have a disclaimer for gender and sex questions.
- Better accessibility options.
- Consult with workers on layout/interface changes.
 - What would workers like to see/access?
 - How can tools be easier to find?
 - What's missing?
- Payslips: decide on one layout and leave it.
- Download workday V.2.0.
- Continue working with departments on issues with HR (such as some positive outcomes with custodial).
- Let hourly employees clock in when they arrive.
- Meet with employees when they request it to work out issues.

Administration

- Bringing a new system that is robust.
 - Workday is not meant for universities and their diverse communities (Staff/Faculty/TAs/Students).
- Going forward, in future test in advance (beta testing) before rolling out the programme.
- HR Hire more dedicated staff who are knowledgeable.
 - Where are the HR support people?
 - HR build more support to service deficiencies of Workday (not more management and mouthpieces–real support).
 - Try to negotiate onsite and remote support.
- HR should manage all the HR items, i.e. onboarding, job postings, etc., offers of employment, payroll, and faculty postings.
 - Departments are overwhelmed with responsibilities they weren't trained for
- Have the professors do their own entries.
 - Professors need to learn which accounts are which.
- Policy for access to Workday, emails, Sakai for new employees (especially P/T) prior to start of contract.
- Idea for future working groups: perhaps have focus groups for specific groups, e.g. academic, non-academic, admin assistants, facilities management, etc., to offer specific problems and solutions.