

Date: Wed, 26 May 2004 17:18:11 -0700
To: eroberts@cs.stanford.edu
From: Peche Turner <peche@cs.stanford.edu>
Subject: advice

Hi Eric,

OK, I just read the Faculty Senate report and am thinking of sending the following letter to the editor -- but then I thought I should take a deep breath (maybe overnight) and ask for your advice.

Peche

Letter to the Editor:

I've worked at Stanford almost twenty years. After reading the Faculty Senate Report in the May 19 *Stanford Report*, I felt a certain let-down, enough so to write my first ever letter to the editor.

Dean Joss thinks we should change the culture and focus on job roles and business processes, that Department Managers should rethink who does what function. It really doesn't matter who, in what job role, is staring at the "error on page" message, it doesn't go away any sooner for a 1A4 than a 2P1. It doesn't matter if I or my assistant sits staring at the monitor for two minutes while Reportmart2 tries to display the query just submitted—we do it with equal efficiency.

I was glad to read that Dean Stipek thinks "faculty should model a positive, upbeat response." Many faculty seem to be more concerned with their bottom lines, which they can't see or don't trust, than with "having a major influence on staff morale." And I agree with her that the faculty should avoid joining "the bitchers and the moaners and the complainers" I've always counted on the Professoriate to be the Pollyannas of the Farm.

I was pleased to read that the Provost is receiving fewer complaints and that the HelpSU system has fewer tickets. However, since I have stopped bothering to complain to people like the Provost and have just plain stopped submitting HelpSU tickets, I can only assume that other users have also given up bothering to report problems and that these declines may be more a sign of apathy than a sign of an improved system. But then, "it's a known problem."

I think the Provost, Dean Joss, Dean Stipek, Chris Handley and anybody else who thinks life here is an Oracle bed of roses should walk a mile in my shoes; I think they should come sit in my chair for one day and do yoga breathing while they wait for the screen to load, read the "error on page" message for the two-thousandth time, wait for the screen to load, get an error message because "ea" is not a unit of measure (that would be EACH, case sensitive), wait for the screen to load, manually change the default SALES_CA to TAX_EXEMPT each and every time they do a reimbursement when the only correct answer can ever be TAX_EXEMPT, wait for the screen to load, and spend 20 minutes running six different ReportMart2 report formats trying to see the indirect cost rate of a particular award, wait for the screen to load, find an error message that there is no Turner, Peche at Stanford (that would be TURNER, PECHE A.).

All in all, I'm pretty cheerful. I'm about 20 months away from the Rule of 75. Staff in my department have good camaraderie and have helped each other through these trying times, I have my health, I like my boss, I'm taking a vacation soon. . . I, too, believe that the system will some day be better, that many good people on the project are working very hard to try and fix things, and that someday I may be able to close out a fiscal year with the efficiency of times past. I just get pretty tired of hearing people who don't see "error on page" complain that I'm not cheerful enough.

Peche Turner
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