

Minutes

Provost Level Employee Communication Council meeting – June 9, 2004

Present: Brian Bader, Kathy Soule, Suellen Hill, Linda Hunt, Ann Zook, Sarah Seat, Faye Snyder, Jo Ann Addison, Iva Gillet, Rebecca Peters, Glenn Taylor, Susan Fogler (past chair), Chris Loss

Jo Ann Addison called the meeting to order. Attendees introduced themselves.

Bob Dillman, Chief Facilities Officer, spoke about his organization. The format of Mr. Dillman's talk was generally questions (from Council members) and answers (from Mr. Dillman). There are over 720 personnel in his organization, which includes landscaping and maintenance, and it is always looking for people. Donna Barnes [Facilities Human Resources and Training Manager] is the person to contact if one is interested. At the two semi-annual social events, Mr. Dillman sees a lot of older people, who are near retirement, and his organization seeks to bring youngsters to the business and build trades through its apprenticeship program. To apply, one can attend trade fairs. Facilities has high standards and applicants are required to write a one-page essay since written communication skills are needed for jobs with Facilities.

A Council member mentioned the politeness of Facilities Management personnel ("impressed with the guys") who come to her older building, Zehmer Hall, which often requires maintenance work. Another Council member praised the quick fix of the broken air conditioning system in Old Cabell Hall on the day when the employee recognition program was being held in Cabell auditorium. Mr. Dillman encourages staff not to hesitate to call if things are wrong, noting that some senior people in the University sort of expect his organization to foresee problems.

Comparing the University with the Smithsonian Institution, where he used to work, Mr. Dillman noted that things are harder to fix here. Everything is out in the public eye at the University and it is hard to make repairs since buildings are not often closed, though this is also the case at the Smithsonian. There, however, things are back out of the public eye. There are plus-or-minus 600 buildings here, and the College at Wise (for construction and significant maintenance or operations problems) and

Blandy Farm also receive his organization's attention. The Smithsonian has 15 large buildings ("acres of buildings").

Concerning plans for New Cabell Hall, the Board of Visitors some two years ago decreed it should be torn down and something more appropriate built. Mr. Dillman does not think that this will happen in his work lifetime. Prior to New Cabell Hall work, a building must be put at the site of the B1 parking lot across JPA from New Cabell. Typically, projects have two-year design and three-year construction phases. A Council member was shown architects' plans about one year ago; Mr. Dillman thought that the plans have probably been through two changes since then. Pedestrian traffic across JPA will be through a plaza/bridge right across the road. The University wants some \$20 million in Federal money to do the plaza over JPA. There are design challenges which must allow the B1 building, the plaza, and the New Cabell replacement to be on the same level. When the [stock] market went south, donors shrunk back, and this also affects large construction projects such as the New Cabell Hall replacement.

Concerning landscape architecture, there is a University landscape architect named Mary Hughes. She works with an arboretum and landscape committee. Mr. Dillman's landscape people generally do what they say. Mr. Dillman's organization does not generally interface with the landscape architecture department in the School of Architecture. Trees are bought from a supplier in Richmond; there are no greenhouses here. Regarding disposal of plants and cut trees (the latter a potentially good source of firewood). This material cannot be auctioned or sold. To do so, Mr. Dillman would have to go through Procurement and it would cost more than he would get back. The materials are actually mulched, along with grass clippings and leaves.

Mr. Dillman does not think his organization has a website for grounds beautification. Again, he encouraged staff to call in any reports of needed work. Grass sometimes gets high in the spring because of mowing schedules and personnel requirements which must balance springtime needs (twice a week) with summertime (once every two weeks). Removal of posters on bridges is the responsibility of the people who post. Facilities assists but is trying to get students to remove posters themselves.

Mr. Dillman's organization is probably the largest employer at the University and spends more money than any University group (\$172 million/year); second to Mr. Dillman is the dean of the School of Medicine.

There are 120 people in the hospital and about 400 at the rest of the University; there is also a utilities group. Mr. Dillman expects his staff to be on time, work hard, and have a pleasant face at work. He expects management to treat staff fairly and with respect. Staff should be apprised by supervisors, and Mr. Dillman himself at semi-annual get-togethers, of what is going on ("no secrets").

Concerning a Law School building upgrade requiring ceiling work, Mr. Dillman noted that a project permit, at least, is required and for more significant work a building permit is needed per Virginia State requirements. (The Law School Council member who initiated this discussion noted that approval cost extra time and money for his project.) Due to the nature of the construction of older Law School buildings, there are sensors in the buildings which detect sound and can alert monitors when a structural support cable breaks (which can happen due to cable corrosion). Facilities prepares a formal written annual report on the status of the cables and their monitoring and submits it to the Dean of the Law School and State officials in Richmond. The Law School is watched more carefully than any other building, but about 60-80 buildings are checked every year structurally for cracks and evidence of movement. Buildings are usually grossly overdesigned using simple formulas to calculate loads (for most of the University buildings).

Concerning costs of the Lawn/Pavilion/Rotunda. Facilities annually spends about \$6,000 an acre on the Lawn, compared with \$5000 an acre for the grass at Law and Darden, and \$12,000 an acre on the Gardens. They do not spend much more on the buildings in question than on other buildings, aside from painting, typically to make things look good at graduation.

Staff should feel free to email Mr. Dillman if questions comes at rpd2n@virginia.edu.

Tara Telfair, of the Leadership Development Center (LDC), spoke next. The LDC is a small group (three people) and focus on a narrow aspect of training. It identifies people in key leadership roles and networks with them. Ms. Telfair noted that other training is available from groups under Bob Lake and Judy Woodson and that the Medical Center has separate training. From one of three handouts provided by Ms. Telfair is the following:

"The Leadership Development Center is a small training and consulting enterprise...[providing] a series of integrated programs and services designed to prepare, equip, and support people to succeed in fulfilling their leadership roles. Clients include administrators, managers, supervisors, and key administrative assistants... [and] on a very limited basis...non-university clients. Our missions...Developing and supporting leaders, Facilitating transitions..., Advocating for meaningful work that engages the human spirit in the service of others"

The two other handouts from Ms. Telfair listed 2004 summer & fall offerings and leader support services. The LDC does not do new supervisor training; this is done by the Division of Training. It does offer training in different environments: partnering with people to facilitate retreats and classroom training, intensive workshops such as "Horse Sense for Leaders," working with John D'earth from the Music Department. Horse Sense partners with a cowboy in Waynesboro and helps participants learn from developing relationship with a horse. Another program involves visiting the Whole Foods store to see how a business recognized for positive employment practices works.

One Council member had praise for the LDC service "Pulse Taking: Assessing Staff Morale" and noted it was good to see that the University was interested in this.

One difficulty noted in participating in LDC programs was getting funding. The University funds training and development but not always as a priority and so participants may have to pay themselves.

A suggestion was made that Tara speak at the July 2004 meeting of the Council when new Council members first attend.

The Council next discussed old business.

Questions from the February 2004 Council meeting for Human Resources (HR) have been resent via email to Tom Gausvik and Gary Helmuth. These were not all answered at the meeting or in follow-up from HR.

In the area of new Council business was the following:

Concerning ongoing and upcoming Council elections: four new people from Arts and Sciences will join in July, one new person from the Commerce School, one new replacement and one alternate from Continuing Education, and one new and one alternate for Engineering & Applied Science. No changes at the Law School. The Library should have elections underway by next Monday.

There will be another Executive Committee meeting in August. The last was in May 2004. At the May meeting, the proposed University charter was described as a "good thing," meaning less State approval for University initiatives, such as the Board of Visitors giving raises, a Board initiative previously nixed by the State. Also discussed was the problem of newspapers reporting on University affairs before staff were notified about them. It was noted at the meeting that a problem with the I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification form was being worked on, pay stubs should be reaching staff earlier than they have been, and posters are being removed to beautify grounds and a plan to have centralized locations for posting them is being worked up.

The Council will retain the agenda used for July 2003 meeting at the July 2004 meeting with a revised icebreaker, perhaps extending the meet and greet: New introductions (meet and greet), Ice breaker, Tom Gausvik to discuss Council history, Talk from the past chair, and Orientation. Council Chair Jo Ann Addison will contact Council member Michael Kidd about name tags for members at the July meeting. One suggestion was to email all members of election results and the importance of attending the July meeting, especially for members not present at today's (June 9) meeting.

Elections in July for Council officers will require nominations and platform statements. Faye Snyder has volunteered to coordinate elections. Also, past chair Susan Fogler will give Council website webmaster Glenn Taylor a list of members for the website.

Next, a Law School Council member discusses a petition for "Summer Office Hours" with 15 signatures. It also included printouts from Princeton, Rutgers, and UVA websites related to the matter. They are at:

www.princeton.edu/hr/wrksched/summhrrs.htm

careerservices.rutgers.edu/summer03.html

www.virginia.edu/budget/faqSalary.html

The petition reads:

"We the undersigned would like to request the institution of summer work hours beginning on June 1st through mid August for the Law School. Pay increases to staff have been minimal (with no increases for several years), the cost of health benefits and parking have risen dramatically and most places of employment offer summer hours as a standard benefit. With the students gone and faculty members on vacation, the implementation of summer hours would not negatively impact the Law School. Suggestions for various ways of implementing summer hours are as follows: -Leaving one hour early each day or coming in one hour later each day. The standard work week outside of the university is usually 40 hours (with one hour for lunch) a week - not the 45 hours (with an hour for lunch) a week we follow. Being able to enjoy the 35 hour work week during the summer would be welcomed by all staff and very much deserved. -Close the Law School at noon on Fridays or offer the option of starting at noon on Monday. -If staffing from 8 am-5 pm is critical, stagger the opportunity to leave early or come in late among staff members. Flexibility would be encouraged due to the many different needs of the staff members and University. Attached please find the summer policies of Princeton and Rutgers. We appreciate the opportunity to present this proposal."

Chris Loss of the Office of the Provost responded that to his knowledge such a proposal had never been considered, but maybe it had been tabled. Each unit is different and staff should work things out [schedule-wise] with managers. Some managers informally accommodate staff, with such schedules as flex-time. State regulations are also a consideration; such a proposal might be more feasibly implemented under chartered status. A messenger mail copy of the petition should be sent to Alan Cohn. Chris will get a reply to it from the Provost's to Jo Ann Addison and the Law School council member who submitted it. During the discussion it was pointed out that some Council member constituents are frustrated at delays in getting answers to questions brought to the Council to the point where they ask "Why bother?"

A lengthy discussion of compensation issues followed, with Chris generally providing the answers to questions from Council members. During the discussion, a Council member noted that at almost every meeting the Council needs to talk to HR. There are both an HR representative and

alternates. Jo Ann noted that the [need for regular HR representation at Council meetings] will be taken care of.

A Council member mentioned a rumor she had heard about new employees being able to negotiate an extra week of annual vacation during the hiring process. Chris said he would check on this and believes there is a comparable faculty situation in which new hires are getting in pay what people who have worked here for so long currently receive. Various compensation management committees try to balance out pay band disparities/inequities and work on getting salaries up.

Another member asked why the same staff seem to year-after-year get in-band pay increases, such as an Information Technology (IT) guy and not a custodial worker. Chris responded that increases depend on what managers are doing with people, past performance of a staff member, whether an employee has acquired new responsibilities and duties, or if offers have been made from outside the University. Staff should talk with managers and evaluate how their performance has improved. Later in the meeting a Council member asked if there is recourse for a person passed over in pay raises to have HR review staff performance. This is really management responsibility to fill out in-band adjustment paperwork and there have been cases in which employees have filled out forms themselves and supervisors have been contacted and informed that this is their responsibility. Another point was made by a Council member that in some situations where a manager is a faculty member, the manager is not a good supervisor of staff.

Another discussion mentioned a situation in which an employee had a 15 percent pay increase offer from outside the University and asked for a 10 percent increase from UVA as a counteroffer. UVA offered 2 percent. This was likely because department funds, which are limited, are used to pay for the counteroffer and there is no central "pot" from which to draw to make pay increase offers.

In an IT hiring case a supervisor was faced with a situation in which salary requirements for a qualified new hire would be more than the supervisor. In order to avoid a pay disparity situation the supervisor would have to hire less qualified people. One recourse suggested was to reclassify the supervisor's position. It was noted that IT skills people are in demand and tough to hire and retain.

The next Council meeting is July 14 in the Garrett Hall conference room (in the basement at the Center on Religion and Democracy)

Submitted by Brian Bader