

PROVOST EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION COUNCIL

December 12, 2001

Meeting 100

Attendees: Jan Cornell, Tom Farruggio, Susan Fogler, Kim Gregg, Pat Hartsook, Vincent Kois, Roger Morris, Doug Moseley, James Scales, Terry Sheltra, Glenn Taylor, Sue Wharam, Bill Vining, Anda Webb

Guest: Gene Block, Provost

QUESTIONS FOR GENE BLOCK 12-12-01

1. What exactly are the responsibilities of a provost? What does a provost do?

A: The Vice President and Provost of the University is the chief academic officer of the University. The provost is charged by the Board of Visitors and the president with overseeing education, research, and public service in the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, in each of the other schools of the University except Medicine and Nursing, in the University's libraries and museums, and in numerous other academically related units of the University. The budgets of these units flow through the Office of the Provost (text taken from the Provost's Web page, located at <http://www.virginia.edu/provost>).

2. HR question: can it be addressed to Mr. Block or if not, who should it be addressed to?:

It pertains to the position of special events coordinator. I notice that this position now falls under the category of public relations & marketing specialist and the criteria of having to have a bachelor's degree has been added. Prior to this particular criteria being added, the job description would say a degree or related experience. I do the special events job as part of my other jobs here in my department. At times it has been a full time job in itself. I have also created the protocols, set up the networks of vendors, taught others how to go about doing special events, do budgeting, vendor contracts etc. and before coming to the university, did this type of work both with the U.S. government and internationally. I have glowing evaluations and references. Now, however, if I wanted to move within the university, this new job criteria eliminates any opportunities that may exist for me or any other classified staff member without a 4-year degree. While I understand that the university is in the college degree business, they still need to keep the doors open for non-degreed employees to grow and move ahead. I notice that the Batton School had an announcement out for months and months for this particular position. Had it not been so restricting they may have received a lot more applications in a timely manner. If there is not a suitable question somewhere in the

above for Mr. Block then maybe this is an area where the council can try to influence a change in policy.

RE: above question. We still struggle with Human Resources at UVA. Everyone has a horror story to tell about that department. It is nearly impossible to get an application referred to another department without calling and going over there and insisting that the application be sent. It is the same old story for years and years. And with the addition of the new compensation plan, it is even worse now. Many council chairs have tried- to no avail- to break through the brick wall that we call HR. Leonard Sandridge is well aware of the problems we face. But to date, the situation seems worse than ever.

A: We have programs at the University to help employees receive their degree. Mr. Vining stated that jobs are listed and requirements are set by a standard group of requirements and those requirements have actually been relaxed over the years.

3. I received my letter from President Casteen asking for money. I felt like it was a slap in the face in this time of economic crisis, no raises for state employees, parking, and health care insurance going up and the huge jump in the private disability costs. Please don't ask us for money!! We are in the hole already this year, employees will be bringing home LESS money this year than last. Pretty soon we will have to pay UVA to work here!! I just think the administration should be more sensitive to what is going on here with staff.

A: The letter was meant to remind people of the United Way Campaign. This is a tough time for everyone, with the State Budget impasse and the economy on the downswing. Mr. Block understands that we are concerned about the fact that there will be no cost of living increases for State Employees and a budget cut seems likely.

We discussed the fact that a tuition increase was possible, but that a tuition increase would not solve all the problems we face. Layoffs are not anticipated and the University goes to great lengths to protect employees from layoffs.

Departments have already begun to plan for the possibilities of decreased funding from the State.

4. When is Oracle going to be up and running correctly, without so many glitches? I can't see how "go live" for the 2nd part can happen when they haven't gotten the 1st part up and running smoothly.

The Oracle Team is well aware of the problems we are having with Oracle, but they are working hard on solving those problems. We are actually doing better than other Universities on the implementation of Oracle.

Ms. Webb: Because of the way we all had our own systems and ways of doing things, we underestimated the amount of training needed to move everyone to a system where things had to

be done consistently. This is not a fault, just a problem with implementing a system. Some people didn't have the underlying knowledge on how to do their jobs to begin with, so training for a new system was not all the training we needed.

The Oracle Team has started to look at online help, which will lead users through the entire process, from beginning to end. It takes time and patience to learn the needs of all users.

Some of the people who were trained early need to be re-trained now that they know which items are giving them trouble. Training was an enormous effort, but it is not over.

5. What do you think of the role of employee councils? Do they work? Are they worthwhile tools to the administration?

Yes, this is a great way for the administration to hear employees, their fears and concerns.

It is also a great vehicle for two-way communication. It is sometimes difficult to distribute information in such a large community. Having different ways to communicate helps the entire community.

Mr. Block said he hoped that we could bring our concerns and some thoughts about solutions to problems we may have.

6. I know that all the schools are doing these "Envision" meetings with you and your staff. Why are classified staff not included (in most cases) in these presentations? Classified staff makes up a huge percentage of this university. We seem to still be treated as a faceless, voiceless majority. What can be done about this, in your opinion?

The Envision process is meant to talk to the Schools and make sure that the plans for each school line up with the University's plan. Different schools invited different groups. There was not a requirement to include every group and there was not a purposeful exclusion of any group.

We suggested that classified staff would be most beneficial to this process and we would like to be included in any and all decisions and discussions about the future of our community.

We talked about having a greater recognition of the Martin Luther King Holiday. Mr. Block thought that recognizing the accomplishments of Dr. King was important. He suggested that we point out the reasons for every holiday.

Anda Webb:

We don't know much about the budget yet. Schools were asked for contingency plans and they are preparing cut projections now, in case the Governor asks for plans to cut expenses in the budgets that began July 1, 2001.

We are anticipating a one-time cut, but nothing is set in stone yet. There is not a hiring freeze at the University. Departments could choose to freeze hiring. The University is trying to avoid an overall freeze on hiring so the Departments and Schools can have some flexibility in how they will deal with their funding issues.

Mr. Vining

We do not foresee any layoffs and the University has a long history of using this policy only as the very last resort.

Q: Any buyout in the foreseeable future? Many people chose that option during the last buyout. Anything is possible, but this is probably not likely.

Open enrollment went rather smoothly. There was a last minute rush on the last day, but the work got done and the employees survived.

Human Resources is gearing up for the HR Module in Oracle. They are trying to plan for all possible scenarios and are doing the best they can to prepare.

Internal promotions - is there a policy?

Q: People who work at the University really don't have any advantage. Is that the intention?

A: We could have serious EEO problems if we gave employees preference. The policy is to hire the best person for the job, without preference.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:25 am.