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| **To** | Michael Harwood, Campus Planning and Facilities Management |
| **From** | Leah Rausch and Bob Parker, Institute for Policy Research and Engagement |
| **SUBJECT** | **quest for the best session TEN summary** |
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Campus Planning and Facilities Management (CPFM) wants to understand and enhance the experience and effectiveness of the approximately 300 employees within the Division—a project CPFM is calling “Quest for the Best.” The “Quest for the Best” seeks to identify key issues and strategies to improve the culture of collaboration and customer service at CPFM.

The Institute for Policy Research and Engagement team members conducted ten focus groups with approx. 30 CPFM staff members. CPFM and IPRE leadership began the session by sharing project objectives, agenda, and ground rules. Participants were then divided into three small groups representing a mix of departments. Within each group, IPRE team members moderated a discussion to respond to three questions:

* What should CPFM keep doing?
* What should CPFM start doing?
* What should CPFM stop doing?

Each small group identified top themes from each of the three questions to report out to the larger group. Finally, participants voted on their top “theme” from each question. This memo summarizes the top themes from the first session. Appendices I-III provide full session notes; Appendix IV presents the top themes and the results of the dot voting process.

# Key Themes

Participants identified several strengths and many opportunities for improvement within CPFM. Participants felt strongly that professional development and internal advancement are highly valuable and CPFM should continue developing pathways for career growth. Additionally, participants appreciated opportunities to provide feedback, but wanted to see a more formal feedback review process and fewer major changes without input. CPFM should advocate for continued quality employee benefits and improve hiring procedures to be based on work experience and more inclusive of trades people. Participants wanted CPFM to improve customer service efforts, focus more on maintenance and less on new construction, and start addressing “problem managers” more directly.

## What should CPFM keep doing?

* **Supporting professional development and advancement**: Participants overwhelmingly indicated this was an important component for CPFM to continue. There is some happening now, but several groups indicated opportunities for more offerings. Staff desire more pathways for internal advancement. There are some staff who are examples of growth, but there is not enough detail provided on how to “get from point A to point B.” Groups suggested a training coordinator to target professional development, a mentorship program, or informal apprenticeship.
* **Accepting employee input:** Participants appreciated the opportunity to participate in this session as well as similar events where they can provide direct feedback. They also felt they could approach their supervisors in most situations with feedback.
* **Providing quality benefits:** Participants emphasized the importance of quality benefits, especially as the union continues contract negotiations with the university. With potential threats to benefits, it is important to maintain their benefits or improve them.

## What should CPFM start doing?

* **Establish a feedback review process**: Participants indicated there was an opportunity to create a more formal process to gather and analyze feedback on operational changes. This may help in establishing a culture around accountability as staff feel they have more influence. One group provided the example of FAMIS, a program that did not work well for CPFM but was not abandoned for another seven years.
* **Hire and train more tradespeople**: Participants noted the trades are understaffed. Groups suggested two strategies to address this need, in addition to more general hiring. One was to provide more professional development to develop skills in-house and provide pathways for career development. The second was to implement a more inclusive and proactive hiring process to identify new hires, including those within the department. One group suggested a hiring committee or engaging more classified staff in the hiring process.
* **Hire based on work experience:** Participants felt CPFM had transitioned to hiring based on a degree rather than relevant work experience. When a degree is required as a part of a position, it limits opportunities for internal promotions and in some cases slows the hiring process. One participant noted trying to hire a manager of a trade industry, but most candidates have an associate degree or work experience rather than the required bachelor’s degree.
* **Improve how CPFM meets customer needs**: Participants expressed the desire to provide better customer service and cultivate a culture centered on service. One group suggested created a customer feedback system to report issues to CPFM.

## What should CPFM stop doing?

* **Making changes without input:** Participants felt changes were made without consulting those who would be most impacted. Specifically, one group noted management makes decisions without trades people at the table - those who are ultimately tasked with implementing changes. There was a sense that CPFM makes drastic changes too frequently without allowing time for the dust to settle. This “cowboy attitude” is detrimental to complex projects and is often the result of new staff wanting to make their mark. One group cited the zone change as an example – it happened quickly without an assessment of how much it would cost, what’s been done before, and how CPFM could learn from institutional knowledge.
* **Adding more management to fix “problem managers”:** There was a perception from participants that CPFM hires new managers to address poor management from others. This added layer of bureaucracy does not address the root cause of most issues.
* **Overspending on building projects**: Participants generally felt CPFM overcommits to construction projects to the detriment of ongoing maintenance. With several new buildings on campus, the perception is that funding is identified without thought for maintenance, resulting in further reduction of capacity. One group cited the inefficient use of resources on the CPFM bathroom remodel as an example of overspending. There is a sense that projects begin without a clear end goal.

## Additional Comments

The small groups identified other top themes from their discussions, including:

* **Facilitating communication across departments:** One group cited the newsletter as a productive strategy to encourage more internal communication and information sharing. There is a desire to collaborate more effectively, with one group citing the divide between Design & Construction and Facilities Management as an issue.
* **Providing annual performance reviews:** Those who receive annual reviews appreciated this formal feedback. These are not currently available to all staff on a regular basis, often due to supervisor turnover or transitions.
* **Supporting a casual culture:** Participants in one group appreciated the casual work environment, specifically the absence of uniforms.
* **Hosting social and team building events:** Several groups noted social gatherings and diversity forums as positive team building efforts within CPFM.
* **Provide people with tools they need**: One group discussed the need to improve the availability of specific tools, even if they only need it once per year.
* **Improve internal communication after changes**: One group engaged in an extensive discussion about improvements (or lack thereof) after major changes. Many felt there was not adequate communication about progress. There is a desire to better understand “where we are going” and if changes are made just for the sake of change.
* **Duplicating processes:** Participants observed some wasteful practices within CPFM, specifically within financial procedures. There is a sense that dollars are “move around” on paper for tracking purposes but without a useful intent.

# Appendix 1. Table 1 Notes

* One word to describe your ideal work environment
  + Exciting
  + Comradery
  + Interesting
  + Productive
  + Consistency
  + Compassionate
  + Evolving
* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
  + Communication and transparency – can always get better… but I do think they’re making an effort to do that. High level, what’s going on
  + Professional development – it’s happening but wanting to do more of. Examples… safety training, taking on a more senior role (encouraged), leadership development, being involved in other professional organization
  + Support hiring student workers
  + Benefits (especially in discussion with union and threats to cutting… should keep them the way they are or better)
  + Mike’s events – kickball, bowling, scavenger hunt – social, team building, quarterly events
  + Internal promotions and opportunities for advancement
  + Most of the time if you need something (for your job, resources, new chair, something that will actually function for you well) – what you need to function in your position is pretty supported. Always some resource or expert to call.
  + Casual work environment – not required to wear uniforms, people enjoy the freedom of getting to wear what they want. Does that extend beyond what you wear? Mostly what you’re wearing.
  + There has been talk about requiring uniforms in the past… but don’t like that idea. Especially for unionized employees.
  + Diversity activities – meetings, seminars – they have a committee, but practicing and recognizing it too
  + Annual employee evaluations – historically they haven’t always been like that, but in the last few years they’ve been doing a better job. Seem to be generally on time.
  + Not in our department… supervisor hasn’t been in the office long enough to actually give people formal evaluations. Part of it is due to transitions from zones to non-zones. Now we have a permanent supervisor so it might change.
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
  + Internal promotion / pathways for growth – within CPFM
  + More detail on what you need to do to move forward… how to get from point A to point B
  + They’re not sure if they have enough experience or not, but just guess
  + Like a student has an advisor, wish we had a training coordinator… push us, give us feedback. They try and push it on our supervisors, but our supervisors are too busy.
  + Some people know about conferences, but its not extended to everyone. Doesn’t feel equal or fair. Have to look out for yourself but don’t know what is out there.
  + There are people who have been here for 15-20 years… took the steps to move forward. We don’t know how they reached that, just that they did it.
  + Private companies our size would have this position
  + Can you look at the job descriptions? Yes, but unclear what the steps are
  + Classified positions are very set, but management positions are not. Specifically written for the positions… Lack of opportunity for those without the degrees to ever move into a management position. Where a custodian used to be able to have experience and move up, but now management decisions require a degree. In my office, we have seen it hamper the hiring. We’re trying to hire a manager of a trade industry, but most don’t have a BA but have an AA or experience. As a university we support people in obtaining degrees… but it’s not enough. Seeing it more and more and it’s frustrating.
  + Movement of the university and CPFM… more of a corporate-ization. How to balance that better? We’re people not widgets. I had a big change work-wise and I never heard from the HR department. If we could balance that… I understand the need for efficiency, budget cuts, etc. we’re still here, we’re people… its too difficult to have this conversation so we’re just not going to have it
  + Employee recognition? That’s part of it. I got a promotion but it didn’t feel good because of how the org approached it
  + Looking at us as a person and not a position/number/widget
  + Have seen a lot of people retire… they just disappear into the wind. No appreciation of the people. The person I replaced is just gone. Someone that puts in that much time, that much of their life. You should have some way to recognize them for their time.
  + You look at it… do I want to stick around that long? Turn into dust.
  + Last round of layoffs… was a lot of 25+ year people
  + Messes with peoples’ idea of what their value is
  + Not a smooth transition. Rode around with him for one year and then he said “I’m not going to be here on Monday….” --- they should have a 30 day overlap rather than a 5-7 day overlap.
  + Provide funding for overlap positions and for training
  + They don’t do anything with that experience
  + You have to make special requests, make temporary positions, etc.
  + New employee… 6M square feet… its really overwhelming what you are going to be responsible for. Luckily no one tells you that.
  + How has this transition from zones been? There is definitely a gap from what I hear. More complaints from building managers and users about response times. Trades guys are doing the whole campus rather than zones. Your number just goes into a queue of jobs. Mostly has to do with manpower (in our shop) Makes it harder to be an expert.
  + I would be curious to hear about how that went? Is it going in the direction you were hoping to go.
  + Hasn’t been a good thing from the HVAC side… I have 400 jobs in the queue. Now I’m going off campus to buildings I’ve never been to. They keep piling up. There are tickets from 2 years ago.
  + Trades that commonly bounce off each other, we’re not even in the same building. Interfacing with people is challenging. Email works to an extent, but sometimes you need the face to face opportunities.
  + Do you think centralizing the shops would help? I think that’s what they’re trying to do.
  + The re-organization is only half way through… do we even have an end date?
  + I think we’ll always be evolving in some way.
  + Where are we going? Are we changing just to change?
  + At any given time they can use the excuse of running out of money
  + Start health initiatives – riding our bikes to work, paying for gym memberships, discounts at the fresh market. Free rec center memberships!
  + Better goal setting, benchmarking, sharing our progress
  + 2 ways to think about this – mike can send out information, big picture vision; but he can also have smaller groups send out goals/objectives… through the managers
  + Online tuition credits
  + Start giving us options to park after 8/830; I work swing shift and its impossible to park in the afternoon. Permit should actually mean something if they’re forcing us to pay for parking.
  + Need some leadership that’s inspiring. Not management but leadership. We’re working hard, over worked, they’re always asking us to jump. We need some inspiration here.
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
  + Overspending on ridiculous projects – bathroom project is the one that comes to mind… there is a few – building and remodel
  + They wanted custodians to have uniforms… why are we spending money on uniforms when we’re laying people off. Uniforms aren’t going to do much.
  + Stop only funding the creation of things and not the long-term maintenance. We can get money all day to build new buildings. For that matter, non-academic buildings.
  + Stop duplicating processes – especially in the financial world. Wasteful practices. All these people processing all these things. They’re just moving the same dollars around. Sometimes its necessary for tracking purposes.
  + Out of trade decision-making – certain aspects of management wanting to make decisions without people asking. If you’re going to spend a bunch of money, talk to the guys who are going to be doing it.
  + Poor inter-trade coordination. We got a lotta trade, but there is like one coordinator for all the trades. When you’re working on projects with many trades, it would make it better.
  + Better stakeholder communication and organization for all types of contracts.
  + You’re heading for a catastrophic repair in the future… talk to the guys who do the work so you can understand why you should do the repair today and not five years from now when its catastrophic. Turns into a customer service issue.
  + Paper timesheets – it is 2019. But please don’t do the time clock, that was worse.
  + Stop hiring supervisors that don’t have an expertise in that field that they’re supervising.
  + Stop people from leaving – 5 PMs left in the last year. Benefits and pay are better out there, so people are leaving.
  + Cowboy attitude that hurts projects. Do things without planning, consulting. Jump the gun on projects, let’s just do it. It’s an attitude that doesn’t work with the complexity of our projects.
  + Someone new comes in… I want to change this and this. They want to change things to get noticed rather than it being grounded in what’s evolved or best for the institution. Making changes, leave carnage behind them. Changes are not rooted in people who are still here. Unjustified changes… do it because they think they should… don’t seem well thought out.
  + Even the zone change… it was one person, happened quickly after they arrived, full speed ahead before they even had an assessment of how much it was going to cost, what’s been done before, learning from things. Where is the institutional knowledge?

# Appendix II. Table 2 Notes

* What should CPFM keep doing?
  + “Keep” social gatherings
    - Team-building events like bowling
    - Newsletter
    - University Day
  + Keep safety and risk trainings/continuing education
    - Example- specific to department, others like risk management
  + Collaboration between units in CPFM
  + Long-term planning
  + Informality and continuous improvement
  + People dress casually, refers to everyone by first name
  + Keep this style of meeting so we can tell management what needs to change
* What should CPFM start doing?
  + **“**Start” hiring specific tradespeople, currently understaffed
    - Support professional development both for those in-house, and bring in new people
    - Specific skill training/career development
    - Formal across departments
    - Available for all shifts
  + Establishing and adhere to feedback review process
    - Helps with accountability culture
    - Example FAMIS- old program that didn’t work for CPFM but didn’t ditch until 7 years later, operational processes
  + “Follow through”
  + Using student workers for easy tasks
  + More intentional student internship program
  + Mentorship program for staff, informal apprenticeship
  + Support trainings for staff and new people
    - Ex- new employee training
  + Providing people with the tools they need for specific jobs and tasks
  + Share specific tools, sharing tools
    - Ex- you may need a tool one time a year but you still need it
  + Flexibility to staff up for situations that are in demand (current resources – staff time - are limited and are not agile)
  + Institutional partnerships – learn from other institutions (OSU, etc.)
* What should CPFM stop doing?
  + Stop letting institutional knowledge walking out the door
    - “I waste time trying to find the right kind of ladder
    - “Bad weather is a classic example of what we knew was good went bad, why are we redoing it rather than building upon a plan?”
  + Stop building new buildings that we don’t have funding and capacity to clean
    - Custodial cleaning, starting a project without an end goal
  + Stop remodeling temporary buildings
    - CPFM building we’re in right now: “This building was slated to be torn down and we’ve spent 4 million in it.”
    - “Everytime there is a move, everything gets disorganized. Wastes time and money?
  + Stop constant reorganization
    - “I’ve been in nine offices in the same job” -30 YO UO worker
  + Segregation between construction and design and facilities management
  + Lack of collaboration
  + Paper-based processes - Timesheets, others

# Appendix III. Table 3 Notes

* One word to describe your ideal work environment
  + Productive
  + Harmonious
  + Rewarding
  + Comfortable
  + Empowered
  + Positive
* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
  + Bowling/Team building events
  + Include events that people from different shifts
  + can all still participate in
  + Accepting input from employees
  + Newsletter
  + Communicating across CPFM, both personal and professional content
  + Choosing shifts based on seniority
  + CPFM safety committee
  + Bring all the departments together
  + Michael (Harwood’s) open door policy. This is also true of other members of management
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
  + More advance meeting materials and follow up with notes and other documents.
  + More manager coaching as opposed to disciplining.
  + Employers need to better articulate expectations
  + More sense of mentorship, training to be a better employee.
  + Opportunities for professional development
  + Improve the onboarding of new employees
  + Start enforcing policy of providing improvement information
  + Build teams, not just train individuals
  + Break down hierarchies
  + Start looking at outside organizations for best practices.
  + Have classified employees participate in managerial hiring process.
  + Assess hiring committee to promote better hiring decision making.
  + Proactively recruit good people for new hires.
  + Think more about the consumer
  + Communicate across departments within CPFM
  + Hire from lay-off list
  + Test priority infrastructure
  + Example: resetting power breakers across campus
  + Have a customer feedback system. Includes a way for customer to report problems to CPFM.
  + Have a central web page with CPFM’s policies posted.
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
  + Quit taking parking away.
  + Stop using ‘busy’ as an excuse not to do things.
  + Stop weaponizing letters of clarification against workers
  + Stop fixing ‘problem’ managers by adding another layer of management
  + Stop crowding people into limited spaces
  + Need to expand space capacity for current staff
  + Need to update old buildings where CPFM is housed
  + Stop changing working conditions without employee input
  + Stop making change for change’s sake
  + Stop isolating senior employees from others
  + Stop playing favorites
  + Stop changing processes without input
  + Stop allowing campus to interfere with operating procedures and policies

# Appendix IV. Dot Voting

### Continue

* Professional development and opportunities for advancement (15 votes)
* Accepting employee input (5 votes)
* Good employee benefits (3 votes)
* Collaboration between units in CPFM (1 vote)
* Informality and continuous (1 vote)
* Communication newsletter (0 votes)
* Annual performance reviews – for all (0 votes)
* Social gatherings (0 votes)

### Start

* Establishing feedback review process – about operational processes (9 votes)
* Hiring specific tradespeople – support professional development for recruiting and employees (6 votes)
* Valuing and hiring based on work experience (3 votes)
* Improve how CPFM meets customer needs (3 votes)
* Mentorship program for all levels (2 votes)
* Inclusive and proactive hiring (2 votes)
* Professional development (2 votes)
* Provide people with tools to do tasks (0 votes)
* Better internal communication post-change (0 votes)

### Stop

* Making changes without consulting people who are impacted (8 votes)
* Adding more management to fix “problem managers” (6 votes)
* Overspending on building projects, not spending on maintenance (6 votes)
* Not following through – using “busy” as an excuse (2 votes)
* Segregation between design & construction / facilities management (2 votes)
* Duplicative and inefficient processes (1 vote)
* Starting projects without end-goals (0 votes)
* Constant reorganization (0 votes)