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| **To**  | Michael Harwood, Campus Planning and Facilities Management |
| **From**  | Leah Rausch, Institute for Policy Research and Engagement |
| **SUBJECT**  | **quest for the best session four 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. Many indicated an encouraging trend of transparency and improved communication from management. This resulted in a supportive culture fostered through team building, training efforts, and flexible schedules. Participants appreciated opportunities to work across the department and collaborate to solve problems. The organization is under the strain of limited resources and participants expressed a need to address capacity issues. They also desire more effective information sharing between teams and increased accountability from leadership. There is a perception that CPFM says “yes” without proper long-term planning and consideration of resources, and participants suggested several strategies to improve efficiencies.

## What should CPFM keep doing?

* **Encouraging transparency and communication from management**: Supervisors and management are working to be more transparent about what is happening and why decisions are made. Some participants indicated they feel their input is solicited and valued more often, and that supervisors are willing to listen. Participants felt comfortable talking directly with their supervisor and feel welcome to stop at their office to have a conversation. This was seen as an effective form of communication and beneficial to relationship building. While there is positive progress, participants also noted areas for improvement in transparency.
* **Fostering a culture of support through team building, training and safety:** Participants expressed appreciation for social gatherings that encourage inter-departmental interactions. There was also recognition of the organization’s focus on safety and a continued desire to participate in trainings and learn how to achieve safe work practices. Employees appreciated the opportunity to grow their skills sets and generally feel supported within their teams.
* **Improving collaboration within and between departments**: Participants felt there has been more opportunity to work with people outside of their direct crew. One group referenced liaison meetings as an effective tool to encourage cross-departmental collaboration. Participants indicated the organization was historically more siloed but has become less rigid. Some noted they feel more encouraged to work with other departments and share information. Participants highly valued the trust shared among colleagues. When working on projects, participants cited that they enjoyed the ability to have shared decision making across departments.
* **Providing flexibility in schedules:** Participants valued the ability to have a flexible schedule and change shifts. One participant recognized that, while the graveyard shift is necessary and works for some employees, the ability to change their schedule to the day shift was beneficial to their well-being. One group also valued the ability to have early start times.

## What should CPFM start doing?

* **Address capacity issues:** Participants explained that many of the inefficiencies faced at CPFM are a result of the limited resources and employees. Participants referenced the slow hiring process, often resulting in positions that remain open for months. This delay causes a real impact on the day-to-day schedules of crew members. In addition to people, crews need the right tools, equipment, and budget to meet expectations.
* **Encourage more information sharing between teams**: Teams are not always aware of the projects managed by other departments or crews until it is in-progress or complete. If there were more transparency and better planning, participants felt there would be opportunities for increased efficiency. For example, one group noted that storm drains may be cleaned redundantly by both the Utilities & Energy group and the Facilities group. There may be opportunities to combine service contracts. One suggestion from participants included a centralized onboarding framework with infill on specific tasks and practices by the assigned unit. Others felt communication efforts such as work control procedures and safety reports could help to streamline information sharing.
* **Accept responsibility and accountability**: Participants indicated CPFM does not have a culture of accountability at all levels. When projects do not go as planned, there is a perceived lack of communication. Participants felt some staff are not held responsible for their actions and that in general, accountability can be skirted. Some participants related this culture to an excess of “middle management.”

## What should CPFM stop doing?

* **Saying “yes” without proper resources:** Participants described CPFM as a “yes” organization that tends to “bite off more than it can chew” when there isn’t enough staff or bandwidth to meet expectations. Several groups indicated capacity constraints related to limited resources that are detrimental to crews on the ground. Participants noted this often occurs when staff are out for personal or medical reasons. Additionally, the organization has not filled all open positions, yet the same work must get done. While campus continues to grow, resources remain stagnant or shrink.
* **Using ineffective tools and procedures**: Participants specifically discussed the inefficiencies of time tracking and AIM.While the tool works well for some teams, it felt particularly burdensome for others. One group noted it can take longer to submit a project into AIM than it does to complete the project itself. Tedious time tracking was noted by participants who use both digital and paper timesheets. Some participants noted frustration with the volume of meetings they attend, and the way meetings are conducted. Issues included meetings monopolized by a select group of individuals, inappropriate language, standing meetings, and lack of a clear scope or objectives.
* **Implementing temporary fixes and advancing projects without proper planning:** Some participants felt recent changes in the department were temporary fixes, both to physical infrastructure on campus and internally. They cited not having the opportunity to provide input on these temporary changes having a significant impact on their department’s ability to function. There was a sense that CPFM does not always invest in long-term solutions, opting instead to either use “band-aids” or ignore the issue.

## Additional Comments

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

* **Considering a better budgeting process:** Participants noted that front lines supervisors used to be more involved in managing the budget throughout the year, allowing them to provide updates and context to decisions. Some noted they would value seeing and sharing outcomes, but as one person stated, the budget is a “big black hole that only a few can control or are aware of.”
* **Offering professional and specific training**: All three small groups noted appreciation for the growing availability of trainings, which allow staff to develop their skills and connect with other departments. There are opportunities to be more inclusive of different work groups and develop training opportunities that address personnel issues, including cultural and gender differences. Some groups also noted a desire for more specific training opportunities that relate to their profession or work group.
* **Beginning a program to address homelessness:** Participants did not provide a detailed suggestion or context but noted the presence of people experiencing homelessness was a growing concern across campus.
* **Empowering people to make decisions**: Participants felt supervisors should be more empowered to make decisions, rather than needing to consult management so frequently. There was a sense that if you hire good people, you can trust them to do the work and lead their teams.

# Appendix 1. Table 1 Notes

* One word to describe your ideal work environment
	+ Drama-free
	+ Clarity
	+ Positive attitude
	+ Defined communication
	+ Sustainable
	+ Efficient
	+ Communication
	+ Cohesive
* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
	+ I feel like there are things that I want to add but they might be relevant for the next list.
	+ Support for employees
	+ Stretching once your shift starts- one department does this before their shift and it really helps
	+ Keep growing individual skills through trainings. CPFM supports emp improvement through trainings.
	+ Amount of work is at a good level. When it gets to too much you have to make a decision about what will get done and what will not. With budget cuts there have been two employees not get hired and this good amount of work
	+ Supplies and standards are at a good level.
	+ Keep the lights on.
	+ Campus relationships/education
	+ Educating students (zero waste program) collects recycling, puts signage, hopes it is educating about what to put in or use. Important to tell them things like where the power comes from. Students used to shovel coal to warm the buildings.
	+ We have to sort through the material and w/o this important step it requires us more work.
	+ Recycling cans- $1000 generated per week
	+ Education of student emp is important. Try to have them work on projects relevant to their careers and get them involved and experience in running university.
	+ Schedule
	+ Timeframe- newly from gy and moved to day shift and the switch was helpful.
	+ Expanding is one of the goals
	+ Appreciates early start times.
	+ Flexibility of schedule
	+ Communication/relationships
	+ Communication w/ boss. Dropping in and talking
	+ Continued trust of coworkers.
	+ Shared decision making. When teams come together to work on projects.
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
	+ Timekeeping. Paper timecards every day. Not consistent across the entire organization. Housing and athletics have a kronos swipe in.
	+ Decision making
	+ Changes need to be prioritized and expedited.
	+ Wall fell on truck and set the wall in the grass. It sat there for 2 years. Ball dropped. Projects not getting executed. People see it as not their job.
	+ Strategic planning! Look 3-5 years down the road.
	+ Feels like we are looking 2 days into the past at what we need to fix.
	+ Empowering supervisors and managers to make decisions without going to top.
	+ Contributes to things not being done.
	+ Plenty of examples of going through the hierarchy, going to boss asking what to do, they say they will talk to
	+ Cross department communication/collaboration
	+ Combining service contracts. Notice that the storm drains utilities and energy will clean the drain and then facilities will send someone to do the same or a similar task. Would be more efficient if contracts were combined between departments
	+ Cross department collaboration. Depts changed across the years and we are not aware that duplication and issues exist because we don’t know what others do.
	+ Sees management holding on to their tasks
	+ In order to be successful collaboration needs to happen at all levels.
	+ Procedures for work control. Customers supposed to go to work control to be assigned. They don’t have a lot of procedures. Who does what? So work control can better assign work to departments.
	+ Hazard form/ safety report. Paper that you put the issue. High volume lead to stopping this. Need some sort of safety reporting to manage issues that are reported and injuries.
	+ Better onboarding practices- when someone new gets hired, dropped into deep end. Need thoughtful
	+ CPFM can create a framework and units can fill in.
	+ Inconsistent across departments
	+ Phas and HR have their own onboarding
	+ Seeing and meeting people and don’t realize we have that department.
	+ Cross campus communication
	+ Working with athletics and housing. We don’t work w/ them much. They have their own group and us ours. We may be doing the same things and both serving campus. Campus doesn’t care that they are split up. Control everything in silos
	+ Quarterly mtgs with housing, dining, athletics.
	+ Start more communication between different groups. They do some. There are places where one area of campus can talk more with another.
	+ Better budget process
	+ Heard it is because of budget and tracking, but that isn’t seen as much of an issue anymore.
	+ Front lines supervisor used to be involved and they are no longer.
	+ Budget tracking. Where do I go to buy an item? Don’t want to hear at the END of the budget. We should be able to see and share the outcomes.
	+ Better budget process. CPFM, don’t know what mine is, when it is stamped and sealed. Around June we are told that we might have more money in the budget. A big black hole that only a few can control or are aware of.
	+ Affects workforce. When roads can’t be updated/fixed it can lead to problems with those on the ground trying to do work across campus, who don’t know where to turn to get things fixed or when these will be fixed.
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
	+ Inefficient decision making
	+ Moving my office
	+ They have been shuffling everyone lately. It is a pain.
	+ Temporary fixes to physical infrastructure and internal to the team
	+ Starting projects without input and/or a thoughtful plan
	+ Especially from those who would be affected by that change.
	+ Not being afraid to say no. we are a yes org and that can get us into staffing/budget issues. Don’t say no and leave, say no with some info behind it.
	+ Coming from leadership. Overcommitting
	+ changing decisions mid project. It gives workers whiplash. Don’t start half baked. Running around in circles figuring out which way to do it.
	+ Taking on addition responsibility without resources.
	+ Staffing and funding
	+ Having meetings that don’t have clear scope, goals, and agendas.
	+ Rescheduling meetings
	+ Culture of negativity
	+ Negativity. Be positive. People are so grumpy and complain about working here.
	+ Less cross departmental griping. My department doesn’t do that internally. I wouldn't come to you to gripe.
	+ Affects the culture when people are
	+ Not a productive response
	+ Don’t know that they are reporting it to their supervisor/manager, but they are sharing it with others.
	+ Passing the buck on decisions. Stop being afraid to take responsibility. Go to their boss who doesn’t have answers. “I’ll check on it” and you know they aren’t going to check.
	+ I realize every boss has a boss, but it is a simple problem to solve.
	+ Overloading employees
	+ Adding more work than a person can do.
	+ Seen people who have to do 2 runs and it is too much for one person.
	+ Especially affected when filling in for people who are out.
	+ Cut staff/don’t hire and expect same product.
	+ Campus keeps growing and that inherently means more work for department.
	+ Regardless of resources, same work needs to get done.
	+ You do this, this, this, but this isn’t going to get done.
	+ Setting unachievable expectations.
	+ Sit in a room with VPs and have to report to management and say this is what we are doing, and management doesn’t have capacity.
	+ Too much detail required on time sheets. Time consuming when you have to go to the 15 minute/half hour and provide a description of your task. Who is looking at this? How much detail do you need?
	+ Especially if you are doing a job you are doing all the time.
	+ Aim has made it worse, even though it is electronic.

# Appendix II. Table 2 Notes

* One word to describe your ideal work environment
	+ Helpful, respectful x3, Good attitude, collaboration, integrity
* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
	+ Department culture
	+ We don’t interact much, so training allows people to see others. Safety policies are well developed.
	+ Team building activities, gatherings, social activities (kick-ball, bowling)
	+ Improved top-down/down-up communication. Our boss hears us, and we hear him. Good supervisors, working better with their teams. \* should be done more
	+ Discontinue “pods” – asking people to volunteer more
	+ Utilize and collaborate in other groups. Using resources at CPS or Planning, recognizing there are strengths and assets in other parts of the organization.
	+ Cost-sharing\* should be done more.
	+ Electricians are dispersed across multiple departments.
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
	+ More integration and collaboration (example – the latest snow storms, pitching in to keep things going)
	+ Walk a Day Plan – cross-department job shadowing
	+ Even Field Trips to other departments to see what else is going on
	+ Build a campus community rather than siloed roles in isolated departments
	+ Accepting responsibility and accountability for things that don’t go as planned
	+ Fixing things more efficiently. Things get ignored. Even by people that have the tools. People are waiting for a work ticket to be generated.
	+ Addressing deferred building maintenance.
	+ Streamline the maintenance/work ticket/ workflows.
	+ Anyone is authorized to open a work ticket, but people will not do the work unless they have the ticket.
	+ Empowering people to have the training and skills to do more tasks.
	+ Unions
	+ Short-staffed and vacant roles (Recruitment and Onboarding)
	+ Work with HR to develop clear promotion and incentive programs
	+ Communicate all of the existing resources (GIS, maps, etc.) so that collectively people are more familiar with the entire campus community.
	+ Fix parking – not enough for the employees, nowhere for contractors and consultants to park when brought on campus. Even for service vehicles responding to an issue.
	+ Increase transparency and communicate more broadly with more people, especially when changes or tasks impact roles and operations. More open communication. Campus-wide
	+ Streamline communication (acronyms)
	+ Develop training that is more sensitive and responsive that address personnel issues, including cultural and gender differences.
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
	+ Blaming other departments
	+ Swearing in meetings and being unprofessional
	+ Hoarding information within departments (between departments)
	+ Stop Band-Aids and temporary fixes
	+ Inefficient management and (excessive) middle management (“too many chiefs, not enough indians”)
	+ Breaking promises
	+ Biting off more than you chew. Unreasonable goals. Overloading staff.
	+ Don’t take on projects that are beyond your scope. Both ways. Set people up for success (not failure).
	+ Monopolizing meetings – same voices over and over.
	+ Meetings for meetings sake. Ensure the meeting is a good use of time.

# Appendix III. Table 3 Notes

* One word to describe your ideal work environment
	+ Comfortable, free, family, respectful, responsible, fun,
* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
	+ Picnics and group activities
	+ Building manager meetings, these are liaison meetings, they touch a lot of different departments
	+ Hiring process – they look for people that get along. Thoughtful
	+ The group itself gets along very well
	+ Individual training, there are different groups but now they are being more inclusive
	+ We all do jobs well, take a lot of pride in the work.
	+ The team is a lot of self-starter. They don’t have to tell them how to do it, there is not a lot of micro-managing. But not across the board
	+ People put together good teams to get projects done.
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
	+ Start utilizing employee skills together. Employees are lumped into the same even though people have different skills. In other department, people take advantage of that.
	+ Better safety program. The safety people have one trade, but they aren’t able to apply it across trades. From training to raffles. You can have monthly incentive programs. But it doesn’t always work
	+ You get the same trainings every month. You could use inputs from staff
	+ Better communication between departments
	+ Ex. Water pipe burst but the control did not tell water people
	+ Work control – they need to all do consistent work
	+ Preventative maintenance is everything – but they end
	+ Doing repairs and maintenance on the same time
	+ Need more people to do more work – need more workers and less admin staff
	+ 0% waste and surplus property, we throw away. There are a lot of student workers that could be more effective. Need to put those things in an inventory. Some of the stuff is pretty good
	+ Program for the homeless population. It’s expensive.
	+ Organizing work tickets
	+ If you need something from this department – you don’t know who to go to. You need to know people.
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
	+ Too many work tickets. They are not always consistent.
	+ Stop needing IT approval. You can’t set your screen locks.
	+ Stop being reactive in choosing work tasks.
	+ Stop putting things off
	+ There is not a cheat sheet for AIM but the error ticket doesn’t always help you.
	+ Now they are putting on trainings but it’s a work in progress
	+ It takes a lot of time.
	+ Stop using AIM for automotive fleet tracking. Stop using it for the wrong things
	+ Cutting corners with software
	+ Load in projects, budgets, any time you do anything you have to put in aim. You need a work number to put in time. But if you have to do quick things, the projects take less time than the assignment
	+ AIM is getting better. But there are other systems where all your things can be on the same system.
	+ If somebody leaves, it’s difficult to pick back up on a project

# Appendix IV. Dot Voting

* Continue
	+ Top down and bottom-up communication (7 votes)
	+ Ground-up and cross-departmental collaboration (4 votes)
	+ Team building, training and safety (3 votes)
	+ Flexible schedules (2 votes)
	+ Group activities (2 votes)
	+ Hiring process – considering freedom to do the job (2 votes)
	+ Staff training (1 vote)
* Start
	+ Address capacity issues (7 votes)
	+ Cohesive communication – work control consistency, adding staff (6 votes)
	+ Accept responsibility when things don’t go well (3 votes)
	+ Cross-department collaboration – information sharing, shadowing and cross-training (2 votes)
	+ Professional and specific training (2 votes)
	+ Start a homeless program (1 vote)
	+ Better budgeting process (1 vote)
	+ Empower people to make decisions (1 vote)
	+ Using employee skills – training and safety (0 votes)
* Stop
	+ Being a “yes” organization and over committing without resources (8 votes)
	+ Overloading staff (5 votes)
	+ Using ineffective procedures (4 votes)
	+ Temporary fixes – projects without proper planning and input (4 votes)
	+ Unnecessary IT approval (1 vote)
	+ Being reactive and putting things off (1 vote)
	+ Redundant meetings (1 vote)
	+ Band-Aid fixes – do it right the first time (1 vote)