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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 five 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 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 appreciated recent efforts to improve employee moral through social events, as well as the emphasis on and culture of customer service. Some participants felt CPFM cultivated a culture of autonomy in decision-making, although this contradicts feedback from other sessions. There was an interest in improving this culture to allow for some “freedom to fail” and combat organizational hierarchy and divide between different management levels. Participants would like to see improvements in communication across departments and ensure more consistency in information sharing, especially when it comes to process changes. This lack of communication and limited resources also leads to unrealistic expectations for staff. Finally, participants indicated there is too much acceptable of disrespectful and unprofessional behaviors.

## What should CPFM keep doing?

* **Improving employee morale:** Participants discussed the general improvement in morale over the past few years, since Mike Harwood joined, because of employee appreciation events and opportunities. Participants cited CPFM-wide quarterly events such as the frisbee game as examples. One group member commented on the positive effect the friendly, approachable environment of her team made in her morale.
* **Emphasizing customer service**: Participants appreciated CPFM’s focus on customer service because it makes it a friendly place to work.
* **Supporting freedom in decision-making:** Participants indicated support for the current structure where management sets the goals, but people in the field are given the flexibility to make decisions on their own. The group felt this was important because it provided accountability and ownership, but employees are still able to seek support if necessary. Some participants felt they were allowed a certain amount of freedom and “self-management.” While this was not universal, the group appreciated an environment without micromanagement and a sense of trust.

## What should CPFM start doing?

* **Promote a culture with the “freedom to fail”:** Participants voiced interest in a culture where leadership is more communicative, open, and vulnerable in their approach with employees. One group indicated that many are afraid to try new things or take risks.
* **Value and respect employees:** Participants felt the existing power structure resulted in a broad impression that upper management is “better than” lower management. This resulted in a sense that not everyone at CPFM is on the same team. One group suggested that management provide some form of recognition to make employees feel more respected. The group also suggested management take steps to let staff know they are on the same team and not superior, humanizing managers within their teams.
* **Communicate more across departments:** Participants indicated there was a need to increase communication across departments, especially related to new projects. For example, Design and Construction knows when projects are starting, potential interference with other services, or what closures to expect. There was a feeling that staff did not always know what was going on with the rest of the department. For example, the grounds people want to know when a building is going to get torn down, so they don’t waste time trimming shrubs there. There was a feeling that some crews are “the last to know.” This need for improved communication includes building managers, who often are not expecting custodial day shifts. Participants felt supervisors should be responsible for communicating these changes in advance.
* **Ensure consistency in process and information sharing:** As one participant noted, “As the employee at the bottom of the food chain, you feel really dumb when someone questions what you’re doing.” This feeling occurred more often when staff were not informed of changes in procedures. Some examples included scheduling rooms, leaf slips, and purchasing, which tend to change frequently. While the standard operating procedures intend to address this issue, there is a sense most people work outside of them. The group also discussed position description updates and opportunities to ensure consistency and provide a space for feedback in this process.

## What should CPFM stop doing?

* **Tolerating disrespect and unprofessionalism:** There was a sense that “crudeness” and disrespectful behavior is tolerated rather than addressed directly. There is not adequate levels of professionalism and participants felt management should set a better example.
* **Unrealistic expectations for employees:** Participants felt there was a disconnect between on-the-ground perspectives and management’s expectations. Relatedly, participants feel the strain of reductions in staffing, stock, and equipment, all of which impact CPFM’s ability to be maintain level of service and meet expectations. Some participants mentioned their uncertainty in the rationale for these changes.

## Additional Comments

* **Allowing flexibility in schedules:** Trust from supervisors results in schedule flexibility for some. Those individuals are measured on performance and “getting the job done.” Those with more flexible schedules felt it was incredibly important for their well-being at the organization. Several participants specifically mentioned good family medical leave and how important that was for their work-life balance.
* **Focusing on transparency and responsiveness:** Participants appreciated recent efforts to increase transparency and redundancy, for example the emphasis on call logs so each department can see what is going on. They felt this process improved responsiveness.
* **Tedious time tracking procedures:** Most felt AIM was not user friendly and resulted in wasted time. One individual remarked they had to plan for small changes to their schedule because they needed to report it in advance. The group felt AIM was especially ineffective for employees who are not as comfortable using a computer, and because there were so many mistakes, it required too many layers of oversight.
* **Accessibility and transparency of upper management:** Participants stated they did not know how or why decisions are being made and that people would appreciate knowing the overall direction of the organization. Some felt upper management is not truly accessible and not being transparent about decisions being made – especially regarding financial decisions. The group suggested upper management using quarterly meetings to provide a “state of the union” address to candidly communicate challenges.
* **Motivating performance through shared goals or incentives:** Participants felt employees should be recognized for high performance work. One group indicated an interest to work together towards a shared goal, whether through incentives or another motivation strategy. There is an opportunity to make people feel valued without creating a competitive process by setting shared goals (weekly, quarterly, or annually) and communicating progress towards meeting the goals with “appreciation” events or recognition. The group suggested shared safety goals would be a perfect example or place to start. The Gold Duck system does not appear to achieve this, for most groups.

# Appendix 1. Table 1 Notes

* One word to describe your ideal work environment
  + Quiet
  + Communicative
  + Satisfaction
  + Professionalism
  + Organized
  + Time
  + Functional
* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
  + In my department, we’re allowed to self-manage. Not micromanaged, no one over our back
  + Lots of team work
  + Trust from management that you’re doing your job, rather than being suspicious
  + Being able to talk to them without feeling intimidated
  + From past practices, they can see you’ve done a good enough job that they trust to do that in the future. Think the schedule flexibility goes in with that too… work on your own schedule rather than have a deadline.
  + Small team – 6-7 operators – communication is pretty good, lots of emails and lots of questions, quick responses
  + Good training opportunities – skill based? A little bit of everything across the board. Professional development… go to our manager and ask, usually its approved.
  + Protective of FMLA, benefits, flexibility in schedule (not across the board)
  + My department, I can schedule week by week, work around things in my schedule
  + Keep up with the safety – classes, not shy on that – across the board, we all do it together. Good about offering classes outside of the regular schedule.
  + What could be replicated in other departments? Transparency. They’re trying to make it redundant with the call logs – so each department can see what’s going on. Reporting system, gets logged, filtered to the folks responsible for fixing it.
  + Do you generally know what other groups are doing? A few people said no.
  + Fairly responsive in making things happen
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
  + Communication between departments. I feel like there is a lack of that. There is a lot being closed due to construction right now, but I don’t think a lot of people knew before it happened. Could be part transportation services… but we (Design and Construction) are the ones doing that. Communication when projects are starting that might interfere. Within CPFM. More information can trickle down from the higher ups… what is going on with the rest of the department.
  + If they’re going to move, call your house. I have some shrubs that I want to trim, but if they are going to tear down the building next week, I’m not going to trim them. I am usually the last to know – show up to work one day and I’m pissed off.
  + Better communication with the building managers. When they first started out day shift, they didn’t let anyone know we were coming, and they were like, what are you doing here? Supervisors to building managers (Customers). Supervisors could pester building managers more. More prep work – are there certain places we can’t go? You’re supposed to be invisible and coming
  + As the employee at the bottom of the food chain, you feel really dumb when someone questions what you’re doing. Its uncomfortable. Might not be aware of changes… they might be a little upset with us if they don’t know.
  + Consistency – bigger things down to tiny things. Scheduling rooms for example… supervisors contradict what we’re hearing. Leaf slips… goes back and forth a lot. You’re the one who looks like an idiot when you keep hearing different things.
  + Purchasing is the same way… we’re going to do this, oh wait no you’re not. They’re doing all these standard operating procedures… but everyone works outside of those. It’s frustrating and it wastes a lot of time.
  + New tool… but there is no manual. Wasn’t charging, couldn’t figure it out. Never got back to me without the manual. Would like to know what these indicators mean. Why doesn’t the equipment come with an operating manual? When you get something new, don’t you want to know how it works? Might come under training… I’m not the only one who is having trouble with it.
  + Giving incentives. There is really no incentive to do more than you need to do when you come to work. Why kill yourself going above and beyond… you might get a gold duck… wow! On my fridge! (sarcastic) my supervisor used to hand them out like candy… now they are harder to get.
  + There are ways to set goals…weekly, quarterly, annual. Everyone needs to feel like they’re a part of it. Good conversation about motivation… what actually motivates people. You all feel like you have a role in it, your self-esteem feels good. Get a lunch when you meet your goals.
  + Not in a condescending way though. That feels worse.
  + Do you all get a bi-annual review? Once a year… would suspect that not everyone gets that though.
  + Recently we got something that documented our roles… so poorly written, copy and paste, band-aid for everyone. I signed it, even though I had questions. You’re not giving me an opportunity to discuss it. Position description.
  + Dancing around customer service and appropriate behavior. If you don’t want us to cuss – just say that. Be clear and concise, not redundant.
  + Description… said we have to do recycling, but we don’t have to do that. But there are some of us who do… well why is it on mine?
  + More personalized position descriptions that are accurate.
  + Pretty vague
  + Grounds keeping – start working Sunday through Thursday. Especially in the fall … maybe consider seasonal flexibility. Example… dragging in leaves in the fall. Takes forever to clean things up.
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
  + I’m pretty new to CPFM… I do not like the way that AIM works. System that is not user friendly. Waste of time. More people agree with you than you realize.
  + I don’t work with AIM… they want to know ahead of time if I’m going to leave early… it’s hard to do. Cumbersome, takes a long time
  + Hard to go back and fix mistakes
  + I think that is why they’re trying to get into the call log system, so that work control has to do all the AIM work
  + I don’t like it to do purchase requests
  + We would need to find a different system to use, other than AIM
  + I think we’ll always need to do our time in there
  + Employee doing it, then the supervisor, then another person
  + Wish we could just swipe in and out
  + AIM was supposed to save time… by eliminating all those cards… now it’s a waste of time. Especially people who don’t normally work in front of computers, but it takes us a long time because we hate computers. Steeper learning curve.
  + They’re going to be doing more trainings for AIM… one of the frustrations… going to show you how to do it, but then you don’t have to do it again for 6 months
  + Extremely high cost without much reward… everyone is wasting 15 minutes a day, across CPFM that’s a lot of hours. Paying for lots of trainings. Can’t believe the amount of money you’re spending on it.
  + Teach us how to purchase stuff, that maybe our management should be purchasing it for us, we don’t do it any how, but we go through the trainings. Don’t get the repetition needed to learn. Stop unnecessary trainings.
  + Maybe it was pushed out too quickly?
  + General inefficiency
  + Custodial – pod system, did not work, created more of a headache. Already gone.
  + Stop the drama. Management should set an example – lots of crudeness that gets tolerated… you just keep doing your job. Goes back to when I said professionalism. Unkindness… almost an individual thing though.
  + Stop being disrespectful – all levels, all parts. Be cognizant of who is around you.

# Appendix II. Table 2 Notes

* One word that describes your ideal work environment?
  + Enjoyable
  + Supportive
  + Drama-less
  + Fulfilling
  + Harmony
  + Cohesive
* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
  + Safety! Appreciate how much it is pushed. Safety training and equipment. Has worked in different area through facilities. Even it may be though redundant, you pick something up every time.
  + Culture and environment in her group is great
  + Work well together
  + Small group
  + Approachable supervisor
  + Keep doing quarterly events. Team building exercises. Still plays frisbee with person met at during a quarterly event
  + Emphasis on customer service. Friendly place to work
  + Keep updating procedures and protocols
  + Previously stuck in the 70s, it’s a much-needed update to how things are done.
  + General focus on efficiencies in the past two years
  + Having a picture of why we are here and what we are doing. A reboot and emphasis on this concept.
  + Gives people an idea where people are in CPFM as a whole and where they fit in. Some changes recently
  + Sometimes too granular
  + Specified development professional development trainings
  + Flexible working hours (person-specific), not currently common across department
  + Freedom (person-specific) to make decisions on the spot. Lead/ seek support when necessary. When given the opportunity to make decisions, people own their choices.
  + Have set goals for the company
  + Within goals there is flexibility for growth and ways for people to
  + As long as the outcome is the same, I’d be happy with it.
  + Outcome-driven not worried about the minor details
  + Within the past year, since Mike’s been here, there’s been an improvement on morale. Things like this are helping.
  + Expanding employee appreciation events and opportunities
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
  + Empower employees to make decisions without consequences
  + It’s okay to make mistakes. There will be support
  + Biggest issue when people don’t have an idea how or why decisions are made. People appreciate information so they know where the organization is going.
  + Quarterly meetings, besides the winter celebration, to have a clear “this is what we are dealing with, and this where we are thinking of going”.
  + Honesty is the best policy
  + A lot of financial decisions and restructuring decisions
  + Not just ra-ra time, but more of a state of the union address
  + Be human
  + Let us know you’re struggling
  + Upper management needs to be more accessible
  + Let people know we are all on the same team
  + Jamie had sit-down meetings with 20 people at a time
  + Unsure about outcome/experience
  + I am no different than anyone else, I just am a different cog.
  + There is a delineation between power bands
  + Humanizing management. They are no different than us
  + Individual, personal basis people can start feeling valued and respected
  + Doesn’t feel that way currently
  + Make people feel like part of a team
  + Hear a lot of buzz terms, but actions don’t happen
  + Feels like remorse to go to work
  + Which is why family is that much more important
  + Can’t put a finger on it exactly
  + Especially in the trades, would be nice to be able to exceed campus expectations. There isn’t much merit
  + Other than telling them how proud I am, there isn’t a way to reward and commend people
  + Some type of incentive would be nice
  + Recognize people for going above and beyond
  + Hiring qualified applicants
  + Last few years position descriptions have been rewritten.
  + Position descriptions are more general now, not specific to a job now.
  + Allows room for expansion
  + UO doesn’t compete with other places
  + Appropriate skill sets for the job
  + And competent
  + Have a 6-month grace period
  + Noticing people’s soft skills that you need to build trust in relationship with staff/management
  + It’s for everyone’s sake, not just one employee, but the team
  + Hard skills come out in the application
  + Start taking input from people on the ground
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
  + Stop having unrealistic expectations for employees
  + There is a disconnect between on the ground logistics vs ideal expectations
  + Stop dismissing knowledge on the ground
  + Stop taking our tools and resources
  + Reducing our stock/employees
  + Had to downsize our service vehicle twice so he can’t carry the things he needs to repair
  + Surplus items that they could put back into the building, but forced to buy something new
  + Stop attrition
  + Taking away tools and resources to take care of things
  + Unsure what our goal is
  + Stop telling employees it’s a bigger project so leave it, but customers are suffering.
  + Stop telling employees there isn’t funds to do things and yet we are fighting for our contract.
  + Management has raises and the rest feel like just happy to be there.
  + A lot of departments get certain benefits and perks and others
  + In a time where budgets are tight, there seems to be decisions about certain types of trainings.
  + 3000 employees for an hour
  + Let the people be who they are
  + We have a code of conduct already, just enforce
  + Safety trainings are great – OOSHA trainings
  + Harassment trainings make sense bigger picture
  + Other trainings that try to change how people see the world
  + Quest for the Best
  + We need to be one big happy family
  + We will naturally do that, but to try to force this idea that we should just get along (in a work professional way) is okay, but besides that
  + Forced political correctness
  + Agendas unrelated to our ultimate goal
  + There are side agendas in departments to promote “friends” or people who are connected away from here.
  + Unrelated to
  + Stop using the term culture, it has a negative connotation. Culture is supposed to be positive.
  + Unnecessary meetings in regard to decision-making. Committee process is painstaking especially when there is no clear goal/direction
  + Annoying to have a cooperative meeting where nothing is happening
  + Meetings less than an hour
  + Stop them versus us mentality
  + The beginning year makes it rough
  + Stop micromanaging the managers
  + Paid for expertise in a field of work. Let them make decisions.

# Appendix III. Table 3 Notes

* One word that describes your ideal work environment?
  + Collaboration
  + Fun
  + Productive
  + Enjoyable
  + Easy
  + Respect
  + Comfortable
* Continue - What should CPFM keep doing?
  + Keep AIM work order system
  + Add modules as needed
  + Keep working on how each department uses AIM
  + Providing small amenities to show CPFM cares
    - Example- filtered water, break room
    - Example- keep summer cookout and winter potluck, recreation activities
    - Example- APA trainings for career advancement, in-house training for skill and safety
  + Keep communications improving
    - Example- weekly meetings
* Start - What should CPFM start doing?
  + Consistency in the workplace; not guessing what day-to-day tasks might be
    - Example- one supervisor says one thing, one says another
  + Consistency across departments on policies
    - Example- differences on handling orders i.e.-window screen
  + Improve communication between departments
    - Example- Getting emails down to everyone, not just supervisors or put in one spot where everyone can see it
  + Intranet, OneDrive
  + Start a program that gives employees incentive to do more
    - Example- money incentive; would support newer employees who are cash strapped; “where is the incentive to volunteer to do more?”
  + Start stocking stores with things needed for all departments
  + Drywall supplies all over campus, cleaning supplies all in one spot🡪 would stop stocking hoarding
  + Update tools for quality “We’re the customer; they should be buying what we need”
  + Several echo this sentiment
  + Start a feedback loop to support better communication and support employees
    - Example- send in feedback, if it doesn’t follow up then they get explanation
  + Managers check in to see what people feel they need more of to encourage employee production
  + Start supporting campus standards across the board for all departments
    - Ceiling tiling, 10 ft. sidewalks for lift work
    - Already doing, must be more aggressive
    - Change in expectations “Anybody can do what they want”
    - People can order what they want, such as ordering paint
  + Promote a culture that promotes the freedom to fail, leadership being more communicative, open, and vulnerable approach with employees
    - Example- people are afraid to try new things because they’re afraid they’ll get in trouble
  + Hire people who are trained in their fields
    - Example- coordinating with a supervisor who isn’t aware of workspace
  + Clarify communication
* What should CPFM stop?
  + Stop construction, overkill on the construction; consumes time
  + Sod coming into the buildings, sidewalks not secure
  + Stop taking prime parking
  + Stop thinking in a siloed approach, be more collaborative
  + Stop thinking about the money
  + Stop with magical cures so people can fix it and move on
  + Steam in the tunnels example
  + Stop the frontline worker from worrying about how things are going to be funded
  + Make the space accessible for personal work needs
  + Toilet paper dispensers
  + Stop hoarding information
  + Few people have info, people retire, info is lost

# Appendix IV. Dot Voting

### Continue

* Improving employee morale (7 votes)
* Emphasize customer service (5 votes)
* Employee freedom in decision-making (4 votes)
* Training opportunities for skill-building and safety (3 votes)
* Schedule flexibility (3 votes)
* Providing small amenities (1 vote)
* Group activities (1 vote)
* Self-management (0 votes)
* Transparency and quick responses (0 votes)

### Start

* Culture of “freedom to fail” (6 votes)
* Humanizing management, value and respect employees (4 votes)
* Communication with other departments (4 votes)
* Consistency in information and procedures (3 votes)
* Incentivize high-performance employees (2 votes)
* Standardization of equipment across campus (1 vote)
* Upper management more accessible and transparent (1 vote)
* Motivating people towards shared goals (0 votes)

### Stop

* Unrealistic expectations (7 votes)
* Culture of disrespect / unprofessionalism (6 votes)
* Siloed thinking (2 votes)
* Hoarding information (2 votes)
* Micromanaging the managers (2 votes)
* Reduction of tools and resources (1 vote)
* Time-tracking (AIM) – wasting time (1 vote)
* Dismissing the knowledge of workers on the ground (0 votes)
* Workers feeling responsible for financial implications/considerations (0 votes)