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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 eight 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. Staff members appreciated the ongoing effort to provide pay raises and flexible schedules. Participants valued existing career development opportunities but desired a more formal strategy that includes apprenticeship and certification programs. There is a continuing interest in seeing increased capacity and staffing within the organization and a focus on internal promotions. There is an expressed need to communicate more effectively across CPFM departments to streamline projects. Participants expressed frustration with a culture that emphasizes “top-down” decision-making and for crews to just get the work done. Finally, participants felt their work would be streamlined if graduation was centralized.

## What should CPFM keep doing?

* **Providing pay raises**: One group noted that ongoing pay raises for all employees were important and appreciated. The group did note some inequalities in pay, sharing that managers receive pay increases when classified staff see freezes. There is also a need to be more competitive with private sector pay. Some participants indicated there are issues with staff who are topped out on their step, although coordinators had a new step created for them in the most recent bargaining session.
* **Flexible hours and shifts:** Participants enjoyed the flexibility in hours offered by the organization. This flexibility varied across departments but was consistently present throughout. For example, custodial crew members appreciated that there were different types of shifts available to fit their lifestyle preferences – some people prefer a night shift, some prefer the day.
* **Encouraging career development:** Participants appreciate formal and informal opportunities to build their skills. Some indicated they had opportunities for job shadowing and cross training that allowed for job mobility. Others noted they enjoyed taking UO classes and the schedule flexibility that allows them to do so. While these pathways for development are available to some, it is not consistent across groups.

## What should CPFM start doing?

* **Formalizing job training and shadowing:** Participants felt there should be a formal process for professional development. Identifying a staff member who helps individuals to identify appropriate opportunities and pathways would be beneficial for those who are not sure where to start. While there are examples of those who advanced successfully, it is not always clear how to replicate that success. Several groups indicated support for a formal apprenticeship program or licensing and certification support. More formal coaching may result in opportunities for internal promotion in addition to beneficial cross-training. On a separate note, one group mentioned the benefit of supervisors shadowing staff to better understand their responsibilities and needs.
* **Hiring more people:** Participants felt they did not have enough staff to complete the work required of them. There is a sense that CPFM runs “skeleton crews” and some indicated they feel uncomfortable taking leave, as they know their work will be spread to other staff. Many felt this issue is complicated by retention issues, the long hiring process, and the slow (or lack of) replacement of retired staff.
* **Talking more between departments:** Some participants were dissatisfied with poor communication across departments. This issue is particularly relevant in situations where two departments are working on the same project. There is a specific need to have managers engage in more effective communication, citing some custodial staff not knowing about changes to the office cleaning schedule, or the breakdown in using work control. Generally, participants enjoyed working together and felt crews worked cohesively, including the recent move to bring together all the shops. Participants also noted the need to engage in more project-specific planning and communication, as well as campus-wide interaction.

## What should CPFM stop doing?

* **Encouraging a top-down culture:** Group members described CPFM as “top heavy” in supervisors and understaffed for employees on the ground. The group felt there needed to be more people on the ground to do the work rather than more “redundant” supervisors. Members said they felt the current top heaviness created an “antagonistic” relationship between supervisors and employees.
* **Perceived favoritism in positions**: One group indicated that CPFM engages in favoritism and gifting of “good” or management positions to family and friends. Relatedly, participants would like to see more positions go to internal candidates.
* **Pushing a “just do it” attitude**: Some participants felt there is a pattern of asking staff to move forward with changes that are not implemented or planned well. They did not feel like there was adequate information to implement the changes, with one group citing the POD system as an example. Participants felt this attitude related to “bullying” behaviors and an antagonistic relationship between employees and supervisors. Another group felt crews should not be expected to do things that the management would not be willing to do.
* **Hosting graduation at multiple locations**: Participants expressed frustration at the decentralized approach to graduation that requires significant preparation and capacity from teams. Compared to many other universities who may use a singular location, participants felt the process at UO was not efficient and distracted from other campus facilities responsibilities.

## Additional Comments

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

* **Providing quality tools and equipment:** One group stated that across their departments they have all the tools and equipment necessary to do their jobs well. Participants appreciated fast repairs and replacements, as well as the high quality of tools.
* **Encouraging more standardized procedures:** Group members expressed the desire for CPFM to establish clear guidelines and procedures. For example, new employee introductions and orientations, job shadowing, and onboardings could be standardized across departments.
* **Reducing services and standards:** Participants felt dissatisfied with reductions in campus service, which is an ongoing issue that is allowed to persist by management. Another group indicated there is a strong focus on excellent customer service from staff.
* **Lack of accountability and inefficient processes:** Participants expressed frustration with slow decision-making that they attributed to “people being afraid to make decisions” and a lack of accountability. Groups specifically indicated the slow hiring process and enforcement of mandatory meetings as inefficiencies.

# Appendix 1. Table 1 Notes

* **One word** to describe your ideal work environment
  + Stable
  + Respectful
  + Fair
  + Better hiring procedures
  + Communication
  + Stable
* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
  + Comes to work to do battle
  + Social gatherings
  + Having trainings that are at decent times for third shift
  + Pay raises
  + One comment was “I can’t think of much because there’s not much worth continuing”
  + Retain qualified good workers
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
  + Having social gatherings for all three crews – be consistent with activities across all shifts
  + Making trainings consistent
  + Having annual trainings at a better time for third shift
  + Respectful behaviors
  + Recognize experience and expertise (example – staff with the most experience are moved to swing shift)
  + Having managers engage in better communication
    - Example – some custodial staff were unaware of changes in the office cleaning routine
  + Promotion / pay increase system for employees who are topped out on their step – comment that coordinators got a new step created for them in the last collective bargaining; that managers get pay increases when classified staff have wage freezes
  + Better new employee training – comment that employee was given job area and released – cross training for some departments
  + Start getting employee feedback on changes (e.g., the “just do it” policy)
  + Feedback process – “my boss would hire me back”
  + Management spending time with staff by shadowing to better understand what staff do in their day-to-day activities – would also possibly help build respect
  + Paying wages closer to what the private sector pays
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
  + Micromanaging – being a dictator does not work
  + Annual trainings for long term staff
  + Stop repetitive trainings
  + Having trainings during the school year
  + Bullying behaviors
  + Running skeleton crews; laying off temps. Comments that people feel uncomfortable using leave because their work gets spread around to the remaining employees.
  + Stop hiring management/good positions to friends/family – comments suggested that few of the positions are filled internally
  + Stop to “just do it” policy on campus – they are making changes that are not well thought out, are failing, and there’s not any detail about how to incorporate these changes. Example – the POD system.
  + Don’t expect line staff to do what management would not be willing to do
  + Pay inequalities
  + Putting jobs out for bid that can be done internally

# Appendix II. Table 2 Notes

* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
  + In-house hires and opportunities to move up within your job
  + Spending money on deferred maintenance
  + Service to campus and emphasis on customer service
  + Safety procedures
  + Career development, including job apprenticeship, opportunity to take UO classes, and flexibility in schedules
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
  + More job shadowing and training opportunities
    - Cross-training
    - Apprenticeship program that addresses licensing barriers
  + More communication with the broader university
  + More information on upcoming projects
  + Communication from leadership to staff
  + More accountability at all levels of the organization
    - Provides opportunity for necessary disciplinary action
  + Better planning and layout of projects
    - Necessary staff allocation and resources
  + Make more daytime services available at night
  + Address decentralized graduation – use Knight Arena or other singular location
    - Two weeks of prep work, inefficient process compared to other universities
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
  + Hosting graduation in multiple locations; requiring so much set-up of tables and chairs; creating damage to the lawns
  + Unequal funding to deferred maintenance; lack of funding means projects are not addressed holistically
  + Constant moving of offices
  + Treating cars as buildings – need separate management systems
  + Long hiring process – leaving needed positions open

# Appendix III. Table 3 Notes

* **One word** to describe your ideal work environment
  + Productive (2x)
  + Efficient
  + Staff
  + Friendly (2x)
  + Committed
* Continue – What should CPFM keep doing?
  + The people we work with
    - Hiring the right people
  + Bringing all the shops together
    - Recent changes – trades workers, carpenters, etc. together and able to help each other out. Helpful for roofs maintenance
  + Working as a team.
    - Crew works cohesively
    - Has each other’s backs
  + Appropriate supervision
    - Some people need more, some less
  + Quality tools to use
    - New
    - If broken, they get fixed
  + Flexible hours
  + Like that CPFM are on the north side of campus
    - Parking is easier there
  + Temps are helpful when people are gone or during the off-season
* Start – What should CPFM start doing?
  + Providing a full crew of workers – fully staffed
    - They don’t have enough employees
    - Hire MORE people
  + Look for ways to retain employees
  + Train employees/professional development
  + Anyone who retires, is not being replaced
  + Poor communication across departments
    - On issues two dept. are working on the same thing
    - Happens across all department of CPFM
    - Private sector made an effort and invested in that
  + Work control has been sending work order notices…but people don’t read them. The work control email is available for the public to use, if they want
  + Start emphasizing training building managers to understand work control system
  + Start creating clear guidelines and procedures for actions. Make standardized policies across departments.
    - Know roles and responsibilities of each department so the correct people know what to do
  + Standardized trainings
    - Introduction
    - Shadowing
    - Orientation
    - There are currently different on-boarding processes across departments
  + Start emphasizing, adding value to annual evaluations were taken very seriously. Not just checking boxes
    - Judge what you’ve done in the past year
    - Identify areas to improves
  + Up-ward evaluations of supervisors.
    - 360s.
    - Supervisors get feedback, they get better
    - Gives the supervisors support and a metric of how they are doing
  + Apprenticeship training – internal job promotion
    - For plumbers, etc.
    - Good that everyone is currently placed together to help them cross train.
  + P-cards for purchasing
    - Streamlines process
    - Allows personnel to take care of what they need to
    - Would have been much more efficient. Wouldn’t have the hassle or all the steps. You’d get it when you need it, not later on.
* Stop – What should CPFM stop doing?
  + Reorganizing
    - Mix of people leaving
    - In the end its been beneficial
    - Rotating cast of supervisors
    - Left holes in processes // the way it does business
  + Stop reducing services
    - Our quality of care is reducing on a weekly basis. Bothers them
  + Stop allowing standards to be low
  + Stop POD system. Groups of four to work as a team but there was too much work to do even for all of them.
    - It’s a lot of work and if people are gone then others had to pick up slack
    - APPA system is an issue
  + Reducing “work load” by not having them to clean offices
    - Students and staff forced to work on conditions they don’t deserve
  + Stop top heaviness
    - There needs to be more people on the ground and fewer OAs
    - How many custodians can be hired in replacement of one supervisor
  + Stop redundant supervisors
  + Stop taking too long to make decisions
    - Checks with everybody
    - Talk to six different companies, twelve supervisors
    - Everyone’s afraid to make a decision
  + Hiring takes forever
    - Takes a 3-month process
    - New people know what is going on
    - Once people are hired the background check takes forever
    - Could lose people because a candidate may not hear back
* No standard for how we recruitment/hire
* Stop creating an antagonistic relationship between employees and supervisors
  + Make it a nurturing relationship

# Appendix IV. Dot Voting

### Continue

* Pay raises (6 votes)
* Flexible hours and shifts (3 votes)
* Career development (3 votes)
* Retaining qualified employees (2 votes)
* Working as a team (2 votes)
* Excellent customer service (1 vote)
* Quality tools (1 vote)
* Trainings that are accessible to all shifts (1 vote)
* Safety procedures and training (0 votes)

### Start

* Formal job shadowing and cross-training (5 votes)
* Hiring more people (5 votes)
* Talk more between departments (4 votes)
* Standardize procedures and training (2 votes)
* Holding people accountable (2 votes)
* Planning and project communication (1 vote)
* Better communication and behavior from managers (1 vote)
* Campus-wide communication (0 votes)
* Promotion and pay raises for topped out employees (0 votes)
* Trainings at better times (0 votes)

### Stop

* Top-down, heavy culture (4 votes)
* Gifting good positions – favoritism (4 votes)
* “just do it” attitude (4 votes)
* Graduation at multiple locations (3 votes)
* Enforcing mandatory meetings (2 votes)
* Reducing services and standards (2 votes)
* Burdensome processes – decision-making and hiring (2 votes)
* Micromanagement (1 vote)
* Maintenance funding (unequal and lack of) (1 vote)