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Consultative minutes 02/25/2015

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Consultative Committee
February 25, 2015
Prairie Lounge
9:30 am

Present: Lisa Harris, Sam Daniewicz,, Michelle Page, LeAnn Dean, Jayne Blodgett, Julie Eckerle, Jean Rohloff, Nancy Helsper, Rita Bolluyt

Absent: Allison Wolf, Leslie Meek, Megan Jacobson

Guest(s): Dave Roberts Chair of Faculty and P&A Affairs Committee, Athena Kildegaard (Faculty/PA Affairs Committee), Stacey Parker-Aronson Membership Committee Co-Chair and Sarah Ashkar Chair of United Staff Association (USA)

Topic: Follow-up on Engagement Survey forum and civility issues.

Faculty and PA Affairs Committee, the Morris Academic Staff Association, and the Faculty Development Committee sponsored a forum about the results of last year's engagement survey. Dave Roberts explained that the forum invitation went out to faculty and P&A. They reviewed last year's Engagement Survey. Over the past 8 plus years they've focused on faculty salaries. This year they're focusing on work appreciation and professional development. Civility has come up many times. The forum meeting was held February 2, 2015. There was a low attendance, only about 15 members plus a few emails. Faculty/PA Affairs is looking for more feedback. There's no "ground swell" in one direction. (e.g., 80 people with the same issue or concern). Roberts read some comments from the forum meeting: gifts we receive over the years are not meaningful; money and salary don't equal work load; P&A change in contract makes them feel insecure; lack of training for supervising students, etc. Low attendance may mean that there may not be major issues. Jayne Blodgett shared some concerns about merit pay, new employee orientation, faculty teaching 1000-level courses (which tend to have lower evaluation scores from students) and how if merit increases are based in part on student evaluations, those that are always teaching 1000-level course could be unfairly "punished."

Sarah Ashkar spoke about civility: anti-bullying seminar, underappreciated, salaries, recommendation to be careful not to bring up old issues, annual employee gifts are a waste of funds, training for supervising students, management training, new employee orientation for USA is only once per year and very basic (this is how you sign up for health insurance), professional development isn't consistent across campus.

Member asked what professional development means. Roberts responded that they're looking at what that means to everyone. They want to look at the next level deeper. Clarifying questions on the survey is important. Suggestion was made that stating two types of professional development might be helpful; 1) Professional Development to improve current skills and 2) Professional Development to advance in positions or expand opportunities.

Member spoke about how over worked they are: teaching, service, research are not balanced, and they feel underappreciated. They've shared this with Dean Finzel, Chancellor Johnson, their Division Chair, and the Consultative Committee. Then the next day were asked to be on another committee. They're not being heard. There's an imbalance. People may not have attended the forum because they're already disengaged.

Comments about job descriptions: they don't list all responsibilities, staff are classified incorrectly, and they don't feel appreciated. Staff voices are undervalued. Some supervisors say no when staff want to be on committees. Roberts read a few more comments and others agreed. Suggestion was given to make the service percentage for each individual less; this might happen through smaller committees, fewer committees, or fewer meetings. If you say no to being on a committee or taking notes/minutes, you're looked at as not being a team player.

Conversation on what authority do the committees actually have: decisions seem to be already made and bringing all the information to the committee seems to be a waste of some people's time. It has been said that faculty should chair committees and information should come from a faculty member versus a staff member. It's being implied that staff are less adequate. Very degrading to staff.

Faculty/PA Affairs Committee next steps: assemble thoughts and share with campus. All were welcomed to email the forum group thoughts and suggestions.

Member suggestion that there could be a Morris survey to get to our issues. Do we want to get survey overload?

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Harris