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Consultative minutes 11/21/2008

Consultative Committee

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Consultative Committee Minutes

November 21, 2008

Present: Jon Anderson, Nancy Carpenter (XO), Brad Deane, Pam Gades, Len Keeler, Judy Korn, Maggie Larson, Alex Murphy, Adam Olson, Lynn Schulz, Jennifer Zych Herrmann (Chair)

Absent: none

Guest: Jacquie Johnson, Chancellor

Minutes Approval: Will be conducted via email, for the sake of time.

Communication on the Morris Campus: Jacquie Johnson, Chancellor spoke to the Consultative Committee about campus communication. This conversation was initiated with the intention to address concerns that some on campus feel that they are not adequately informed. The Committee would like to be sensitive to those feelings and proactive in addressing concerns before they result in greater problems or issues.

Jacquie shared the many venues through which she communicates with the campus, system, and Morris communities. Here is a list of some of the venues through which she communicates:

1. Direct Reports – Vice Chancellors and Associate Vice Chancellors (1x/week)
2. Division Chairs
3. Administrative Committee (monthly)
4. Executive Committee of Campus Assembly (3-6x/semester)
5. CRPC
6. Campus Assembly
7. Open Office Hours/Chat with the Chancellor (staff/faculty and students)
8. University entities in the region – Extension, WCROC, Continuing Education
9. Chamber of Commerce
10. Stevens Forward
11. Regents (monthly)
12. President's Executive Team (weekly)
13. Chancellor's (monthly)
14. Campus Community meetings
15. Email
16. Face-to-face meetings with nearly anyone who asks

When things are important and of wide interest, Jacquie uses email but is concerned that not everyone is reading them carefully and is missing information.

The voiced concern is over the dissemination of information on campus but Jacquie expressed concern over execution of representation on campus. It isn't necessarily a symptom of information being shared by her, but rather a failure of her communication to

trickle down through all appropriate channels. Is our representative government model working? Many people spend time in governance here, but because they aren't always elected to their position by their constituency, there isn't the same expectation or responsibility or demand to get information back to those they represent. Sharing information is key. Think of your constituencies and what they need to know.

Judy Korn asked for examples of what other schools do to facilitate communication, agreeing that information sharing is a key point.

Nancy Carpenter said that Jacquie nailed the issue with her diagnosis. There was some discussion by the committee that there isn't a clear mechanism to share information on campus.

Pam Gades noted that time was an issue, especially with all-University committee responsibilities on our plate. When do you have time to share the information you have? Jacquie said she was surprised to see how many people on campus are serving in this capacity.

A major area of concern is how to avoid incorrect information and rumors. Jacquie countered that it is everyone's responsibility to challenge rumors and to ask when questions arise.

The Community Meeting for the Budget (held on 11/24/08) was brought up, with some concern over using this format vs. Campus Assembly. The benefit of the Community Meeting is that everyone on campus is a member but good representation should be occurring in Campus Assembly. The earlier concern that information isn't making its way to the right people begs the question if this model is really working.

Adam Olson gave an example of how MCSA works and agreed that although committee reports are frustrating, they are helpful and he feels informed.

Nancy C. thought that it is Jacquie's role to model the behavior that we wish to see and to make sure that committee membership is sharing information with their constituencies.

Jacquie countered, saying that she was hired under the auspices to be an external presence and it is not possible or appropriate for her to fully monitor the work of committees, as that's the role of the committee membership. Her time is more wisely spent with donors, alums, legislators, etc.

Committees serve roles related to the business of the university, process, and content. They can be issue specific, driven by data, makers or changers of policy, and can have very open or controlled agendas.

The concept of using the word "communication" as code for "uncertainty" was brought up. Brad commended the Community Meeting format that Jacquie has introduced to

campus. He suggested that the topics be broadened and we get information directly from Jacquie. He also recommended more time to ask questions at the end.

Len Keeler made some observations on how information should be shared. He noted that there may be uncertainty regarding information and the venues, outlets, amount, what aspects (filter) and to whom the info is disseminated. Harmless info is shared, real information is guarded or filtered and everyone may be wondering, "Where do I share information, what information do I share, and who do I share it with?" At the very least there are varying interpretations of answers to those questions.

Some ending thoughts from the group:

1. How can we get information and news through all layers to the appropriate people?
2. VCs and other campus leaders have just as integral of a role in facilitating productive information sharing on campus.
3. Bad news travels quickly and needs to be balanced with good news
4. We are all ambassadors of Morris and we hope we would all be informed with good information so we can be good representatives.
5. Trust is key, resulting in confidence with those that represent you.
6. How much information is useful or necessary for people to know and at what point does it become productive or counterproductive if everyone is concerned with the same things?

Submitted by Jennifer Zych Herrmann