

Staff Perspectives Event Executive Summary

The Berkeley Staff Assembly Events Committee hosted the first Staff Perspectives lunch on Tuesday, March 28, 2017 in the Wells Fargo Room at Haas. The purpose of the event was to gather staff and campus leaders for an informal lunch to exchange ideas, questions, and best practices on topics of interest to staff. The broad categories that were addressed were: performance management, organizational change, employee satisfaction, and employee value proposition. The aim of the event was to foster casual, interactive discussions that would provide valuable takeaways for how staff can cultivate a proactive and engaging work environment at Cal.

The Berkeley Staff Assembly's Staff Perspectives lunch at the Wells Fargo Room at Haas. Before the event, staff signed up for the topic that was the most of interest to them and were assigned to a table dedicated to that topic. There were eight tables total with two tables per topic, and up to eight staff members per table. At each table, there was a facilitator from the Berkeley Facilitators Network and seven other staff attendees, including:

- Jennifer Chizuk, Central HR, Manager, Talent Development
- Jo Mackness, Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor, Human Resources
- Rick Bidgood, Haas HR, Management & Organizational Development Specialist
- Barbara Broque, Central HR, Lead, Organizational Effectiveness & Analytics
- Janet Speer, Director CSS Human Resources/Academic Personnel Support
- Jenny Kwon, Chancellor's Office, Special Projects
- Alex Gomez, CSS Recruitment
- Rich Lau, Central HR, Director, Total Rewards

Each table discussed two framing questions for 20 minutes each. The first information-gathering question was, "How are you impacted by this issue?" The second question, which focused on ideas/solutions, was, "How can we move forward?" The facilitators gathered notes from the discussions from each framing question, and reported out to the group with the main takeaways of the discussion at their table. A summary of these reports follows:

Organizational Change

How might staff get more involved? What are some ideas/best practices staff can recommend on managing organizational change?

One table that discussed organizational change relayed that there was anxiety around this topic on campus as staff feel that they lack information. They noted that staff need clear, consistent communication and a clear vision of where we are going. A positive side to the change is that there is currently a freedom to innovate and opportunity for professional advancement. To move forward, this table suggested looking at other UCs and universities to learn from their common challenges and successes, focus on goals and celebrate incremental success, and empower staff to participate in two-way communication with decision-makers.

The second table that discussed organizational change also stressed the need for communication during change, and emphasized that the communication needs to be via multiple formats (such as email, one-on-one, and in forums such as this lunch). The table recommended building in moments to check in and evaluate what is working and what is not as part of the change management plan, while there is still time to change course, rather than as an afterthought. The table also emphasized the need for greater transparency around who decides on changes and how.

Performance Management

How might we ensure the continuing development of managers to ensure that managers are meeting staff needs?

The first table that discussed performance management shared that we need to create a campus culture of engagement and suggested creating a “one campus” culture similar to the “one IT” initiative. They shared that there are morale issues on campus, and suggest mitigating them by providing incentives such as mobility, rewards, and recognition in order to retain high performers. They also suggested better supporting our managers by providing guidance, coaching, and support groups, and providing supervisors with information and “conversations starters” around what they should be communicating with their staff.

The second table that discussed performance management suggested offering refresher training as well as 360 degree reviews for managers. They also discussed career mobility issues on campus and how we might offer more career development opportunities for staff. They suggested facilitated networking, such as fellowship programs like the one offered in Student Affairs. They also recommend making staff development a performance goal in order to encourage managers to support staff development.

Employee Value Proposition

In what ways might we improve staff recruitment and retention?

The first table that reported out on employee value proposition shared their concerns impacting this issue, including the budget, lack of clear pathways for career growth, and compensation and wage stagnation in the face of the high cost of living in the Bay Area. They shared best practices from outside the university; management consulting firms invest a certain number of hours per employee, and Google employees are allowed to spend 20% of their time to work on a project of interest to them. The table discussants recommend proactively showing clear career pathways for staff. They also emphasized that we have many assets as an employer that we should encourage staff to take advantage of, including free music performances on campus, and a culture that promotes work-life balance.

The second table discussed the people-focused aspect of working at Berkeley. They note that people are here for the mission, to support students, teaching, research, and the community. They recommend empowering teams to work with transparency, and with

metrics and numbers that make sense. They want our campus leaders to acknowledge change and what it does to morale, since ambiguity leads to low morale. They also recommended focusing on professional development opportunities to retain talent, and encouraging peer mentoring and sharing resources.

Employee Satisfaction

How might we achieve top marks in employee recognition, morale, and motivation?

The first table that discussed this topic shared that satisfaction on campus is low, and staff feel either personally unsatisfied or have coworkers that are. They suggested connecting with one another and feel that people-power fights low morale. They recommend sharing tools, reminding staff of why we are here, and exercising compassion and humanizing work. They also recommend eliminating the “meets expectations” performance evaluation grid and moving to a 360-degree review model.

The second table also recommended encouraging personal connections across campus. They noted that we are challenged by centralization, which puts people far away from the individuals they are serving and leads to disconnection between units. They encourage engagement beyond the department (such as this forum), seeing people face-to-face, and practicing gratitude with your staff. Another recommendation was to hire for temperament rather than skill set, and prioritize personality fit, since skills can be learned. They observed that the values of staff can be different at different career stages.