M I N U T E S  
Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs Retreat  
Smithfield Room, Skelton Conference Center  
May 5, 2006, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Christi Boone, Tom Gabbard, Lou Gorr, Mike Harness (representing Gerhardt Schurig), Pat Hyer, Frances Keene, Joan Moore, Mike Roberts, Lori Anne Sheppard, Carl Stafford, Cathy Sutphin, Matt Swift, and Linda Woodard

Guest: Tony Gambill (facilitator)

Absent: Ellen Biltz, David Moore, Kerry Redican, and Toni Stroter

1. Commission members agreed upon the retreat objectives as:
   - What to do with the survey? (define key themes from the survey; develop survey results report framework)
   - What is CAPFA’s role? (identify CAPFA’s role in addressing key survey themes; develop a plan for increased visibility of CAPFA)
   - What will CAPFA do next year? (develop goals for one to three specific action items for 2006-07)

2. Commission members broke into smaller thematic groups to discuss the positives, negatives, and any disconnect between comments and quantitative results:
   - Group #1 (M. Swift, L. Woodard, J. Moore, M. Roberts) – Leadership and Two Most Important Issues
   - Group #2 (P. Hyer, C. Stafford, C. Sutphin) – Initiatives and Governance
   - Group #3 (Mike H., C. Boone, L. Gorr) – Work Environment
   - Group #4 (T. Gabbard, L. A. Sheppard, F. Keene) – Salary and Policies

3. Small Group Reports – Looking for Common Themes:
   - Group #1
     - Leadership:
       - Positive: looking at the quantitative data, a majority of respondents have confidence in all levels of leadership.
       - Negative: there were two major negative themes—communication issues tied to turnover and significant changes in leadership roles
       - Recognition of A/P faculty as core to the institution:
         - invisibility, lack of fit within strategic planning and university initiatives, and for off-campus A/P faculty, the disconnect is greater
         - A/P faculty don’t find themselves in the strategic plan
       - Comments:
         - Demographics may figure in these results — many junior faculty?
         - P. Hyer, L. Woodard, and Institutional Research can provide further information regarding demographics.
         - Is there a top-down flow of communications? What is the stopping point? Do demographics exacerbate the problem (i.e., many new faculty)?
         - The further removed from central administration, the less confidence A/P faculty have in leadership.
         - Problems/technicality of getting information out?

     - Two most important issues:
       - #1 = perception of inconsistency or unfairness in compensation as related to longevity, responsibilities, and/or performance.
- #2 = opportunities for professional development and career advancement— institutional commitment with resources needed.
- #3 = development of "real" performance management system
- #4 = travel policies and procedures was actually #2, but this may already be addressed.

**Group #2**
- Surprising that many A/P faculty feel their voices and opinions being adequately represented, considering no Senate, etc.
- Approximately half are aware of CAPFA’s existence.
- Academic Support A/P faculty were more aware of restructuring; not as widely known in Extension and Student Affairs.
- There is a widespread knowledge of the Principles of Community.
  - There is an opportunity to do more informing with Academic Support and Extension A/P faculty.
- Most groups have reservations about becoming a major research university.
- Strong comments — concerns regarding the impact on instruction and outreach missions of the university.
- Comments reinforced by quantitative data.

**Group #3**
- Work environment theme was broken into 3 topics: advancement, supervision, and general culture.
- Overall positive responses.
- Work environment was perceived as very good, but those who do not feel that way feel strongly about it.

**Group #4**
- Salary:
  - Positive:
    - Salary was the most commonly discussed issue.
    - CAPFA could increase knowledge about salary processes/raises.
  - Constructive:
    - 20-30% have no idea whether their salaries are competitive.
    - Do we benchmark salaries?
    - Confusion about job titles.
    - Don’t forget the "don’t knows"! Look at the statistical significance of the fact that so many don’t know if their salaries are competitive.
  - Disconnect:
    - How are salary decisions made?
    - There is no clear understanding on competitive pay—some do not feel it is competitive, but do not know who is comparable. This is as much an internal as external issue.

- Policies:
  - Positive: travel reimbursement hits a nerve across all areas.
  - Constructive:
    - There seems to be dissatisfaction being expressed on two levels:
      - dissatisfaction with the frustration of daily travel and inadequate reimbursement, and
      - the dissatisfaction with travel policies that require the faculty to “front” their own money for travel, and inadequate travel funds.
    - Reimbursement rates are too far behind increases in fuel, hotel costs, etc.
    - Federally-funded travel is easier than state-funded travel.
    - There is no consistent travel policy between departments.
    - Professional/developmental travel is a reward, but policies by which you can travel can make it difficult and personally expensive.
    - Policy issues may be out of the control of CAPFA, but it is something that can be brought up in the report. Is there a mechanism for looking objectively at data?
Common Themes

- Communication issues/inconsistencies affect all themes.
  - Need to inform A/P faculty about CAPFA’s role.
  - Lack of confidence in leadership stems from poor communication.
  - Lack of understanding about major initiatives stems from poor PR on the part of administration.
  - Need for a consistent commitment to professional development.
  - A/P faculty are an “orphan” group; they are not attended to with regard to application of resources, etc.
  - Need for an A/P faculty structure/system.
  - Question of the quality of yearly feedback.
  - No practical guidance for managerial supervision.
  - Need for best practices model.

Emerging Issues:

- Continuity of leadership.
- Reservations about how the university’s commitment to Top 30 status affects A/P faculty (no broad buy-in).

4. What was the initial intent of the survey? There were two purposes: to capture the mood of the A/P faculty and to forge a plan of work for 2006-07. The initial intent remains the same.

5. Report Format:

The goal should be a general report, with visits with senior managers to address specifics relevant to their areas.

- Begin with an executive summary, which includes a web address for more detailed data. Reporting will be in the spirit of “here’s what we learned,” as opposed to “here’s what senior managers should do.”
- Reinforce that the majority of responses were positive. The executive summary should include a statement to the effect that “people are more likely to comment when they have concerns than when they don’t.”
- Each major theme summarized in one or two sentences with bar graph representation of responses.
- Illustrative comments appear on each page.
- Demographic data will be summarized, but not tied to any specific respondent.
- Emerging action plan (or CAPFA’s “to do” list; here’s what we found and here’s what we will do).
- Conclude with “CAPFA: Who we are”; define CAPFA’s role.

6. Report Deadlines, Distribution, and Meetings:

- July 14 – Report drafted by P. Hyer (with data graphics prepared by L. A. Sheppard) shared with small group review team of L. Gorr, F. Keene, and L. Woodard
- July 21 – Small group review team’s suggestions/revisions due to P. Hyer
- August 1 – Revised report sent to the large group review team, which is all CAPFA members
- August 8 – CAPFA members’ suggestions/revisions due to P. Hyer
- August 15 – Final report released:
  - on the proposed CAPFA web site, with an additional link to more detailed data
  - by e-mail to A/P faculty with a link to the report as a PDF file
  - to senior management, with a recommendation to share with middle management
  - to the Commission on Staff Affairs and the Staff Senate
  - to the Commission on Faculty Affairs and the Faculty Senate
  - to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
  - to the VESA board
- September 30 – the following teams will meet with senior managers and present a customized report that includes data, comments, and emerging issues specific to their area (* = meeting coordinator):
- Extension Reporting Team – M. Roberts, P. Hyer, C. Sutphin*
- Student Affairs Reporting Team – F. Keene*, P. Hyer, J. Moore, L. A. Sheppard
- General Administration Reporting Team – L. Woodard*, J. Moore, P. Hyer
  - This team will meet separately with the Provost’s Council and the Executive Vice President’s staff

7. Actions for next year:

- Emerging actions are defined in the report, but specific actions to be addressed by the 2006-07 CAPFA.

- Communicate the report with the A/P community.

- What can CAPFA do to increase its visibility; to communicate its role to the A/P faculty?
  - Establish a CAPFA web site.
  - Include a FAQs section on the CAPFA web site.
  - Host CAPFA-sponsored forums/events with A/P faculty (this should be A/P faculty only; not “rolled” into other group events).

- What two issues could CAPFA “roll out” to raise its visibility?
  - Compensation and performance management issues (these are tied together)
  - Professional development

- What can CAPFA do to address the issue of leadership communication?
  - Visit with the leadership is areas of concern.
  - Increase their understanding of the impact of communication to increase awareness and develop opportunities for A/P faculty.
  - Host CAPFA-sponsored forums with appropriate leadership by topic.

- What can CAPFA do to address the issues of salary and performance management concerns?
  - CAPFA can gather information about how salary decisions are made and share that information with the A/P faculty by sponsoring seminars both on campus and off campus at various sites statewide.
  - Recommend a sound and systematic study of A/P faculty compensation and pay equity; make a case for routine benchmarking. (Note: CAPFA is advocating/recommending the study, but not doing the study.)
  - There may be a systematic means already in place for gathering that information regarding Extension and Student Affairs A/P faculty.
  - Develop a “real” performance management system; advocate a standard performance evaluation, help design a template for evaluation.
  - Collect best practices.
  - Develop a Faculty Activity Report for A/P faculty.
  - Advocate for and train new managers

- What can CAPFA do to address the issues of professional development and career advancement?
  - CAPFA could sponsor A/P faculty steering/leadership teams to create workshops and conferences (similar to what is done by the staff)
  - Create spin-off work groups.
  - VESA could help host meetings in the field.
  - Conversations with managers regarding career advancement are not taking place; there is nothing intentional about career advancement. This could be a part of the performance management piece (a natural fit in the annual performance review)—a performance management process that includes professional development.
  - Establish supervisory guidelines.
  - Establish professional development guidelines. Current process involves having a manager who cares and the dollars to support professional development.
8. Issues left for "parking lot" or further discussion:
   
   - Statistical relevance
   - Length of service assessment

Respectfully submitted,

Suzie Karlin
skarlin@vt.edu
231-2350