

## **ERAC Committee Meeting June 2013 Minutes**

### Communications

Tom Yencho distributed the spreadsheet that lists the different departments and different people that will serve as liaisons starting next fall. Tom Yencho and Denise Stangl will be meeting throughout the summer to flush out processes. Confirmation was requested for the liaison roles for which everyone has signed.

### Committee Sign Ups

Existing members are asked to sign up for their committees. New members will also be asked to sign up. People are asked to sign up for two to three committees each.

### **Faculty/Staff Relationship Update**

Just as a reminder, the representation from ERAC on the Faculty-Staff Relationship committee is Catherine Headman-it has always been a joint ERAC/Human Resources project and basically was a way to have a more structured model and be integrated with the university activities promoting enhanced faculty/staff relations. Recently, Jackie Matthews was a key note speaker at the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education HR Conference at Shippensburg University. They had invited Jackie to talk about our faculty/staff relationship work. They were interested in the things that we are doing. Sometimes we need to go outside the university to realize the good things that are happening on our campus. People were very impressed and excited to learn what we are doing and to think about ways that they may do some of these things on their own campuses. Jackie reported that several people commented on our use of appreciative inquiry to focus on the positive things that are going well with faculty/staff relations. They thought that this was a much better approach. There has been a lot of work about bullying in the workplace and bullying in the higher education workplace. It is easy to get pulled down in that spiral of all the negative things that may be happening in relationships with any groups on campus. But when you start building on what's working well, that is a good avenue to take. The Staff-Faculty Relations Research Proposal was developed by our faculty-staff relations committee working with Susan Christy. There will be something in Spotlight and an email communication will be sent to faculty and staff. The next step is to actually have Susan Christy interview faculty and staff pairs that work effectively together. She would have a 15 to 20 minute phone interview with each of them and would be able to pull together some examples that people are doing to build those strong relationships. This all ties back to being as productive and effective as possible in our roles to support the university's mission. In fall, we are looking to have Susan Christy come to campus and have a special luncheon with those faculty-staff pairs where she will present her findings. She will also conduct some workshops – some as follow-up to the ones originally held in 2011 and some new ones.

We have had a couple of people who contacted Mary Jo McNulty regarding volunteering for the faculty/staff pairs which is wonderful. Mary Jo went back through the past three years of nominations for the Tradition of Excellence awards and Spot Bonus awards and she came up with approximately 60 Faculty who had nominated staff. We thought we would do a special out-reach to those faculty to see if they would be interested in participating. Then we also want to do a large out-reach across campus to promote this.

Judy Zavalydriga will be stepping into the committee so we have continuity. We are also looking to add another ERAC member to the committee as well. Cindy Moser volunteered to join the committee as the second ERAC representative.

Toni Lee Febbo wanted to remind ERAC that a special meeting may be needed over the summer to update ERAC on the details regarding the retirement program, flexible benefits, and augmenting our health and wellness programs. Toni Lee indicated that a meeting after July 15th would be good.

Some of the transitions taking place...we know that Peggy Plympton is leaving her role in August. There is search committee in place which sent out an RFP to find a search firm. Once the search firm is in place, interviews will begin. In the interim, the various departments that report to the vice president have been re-assigned different reporting structures. Human Resources, Judy Zavalydriga and Toni Lee Febbo, will be reporting to General Counsel's office. Facilities Services and Campus Planning will be reporting to the Provost. Other departments that currently report to Peggy will report to Denise Blew.

As far as ERAC is concerned, Denise Stangl will need to think about the best channel to forward updates from ERAC to the President. Once the new Vice President is in place, introductions will need to be made to the ERAC committee.

### **Year In Review**

From Seth...In looking back at the year, we had a number of brown bag lunches and what may have been a record breaking well attended sessions, the technology session regarding ipads, iphone, etc. We sponsored the Iron Pigs day and we continued our REACH program. We had a number of successes on the administrative side where we engaged in a good deal of strengthening and consolidation. We are working to boost communications and awareness which is really important for the work with our upcoming liaison program. In addition, ERAC has continued to maintain representation on a number of committees including Counsel in Equity and Community and Lehigh 150th Anniversary committee to ensure that staff have a voice in how these things move forward. A special shout-out goes to Ainsley Lamberton for heading up the bylaws committee and solidifying the process as to who was elected to what for how long. Each year 6 people will be chosen – three from exempt side and three from non-exempt side.

In addition, we also served as a sounding board to leadership regarding human resources issues. It was a very heavy year with regards to health insurance, retirement benefits, short term disability policy, etc. In each of these situations, ERAC was able to present staff perspectives to senior leadership especially when Pat Farrell and Peggy Plympton came to our meeting and asked for feedback.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:32 am. Ainsley Lamberton made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Seth Goren seconded the motion.