

ERAC Committee Meeting May 2014 Minutes

Leadership Succession, Vote for Vice Chair, Vote for Secretary

As it now stands, Tom Yencho was chair for this year in an interim role to take over for Denise Stangl when she resigned. It's been a productive year and there will be a lot more to do next year especially with regards to the two-year strategic plan. Tom asked Carla Kologie if she would mind stepping up as chair for next year and Tom would move on as past chair. That's the approach that we are going to take. Starting 2014-2015, Carla will be your chair. Tom will serve as past chair but because it is Tom's third year next year, he will stay on for one more year. The plan is to help Carla with the strategic plan and making sure we carry through a lot of the plan ideas that we had from last year and to make sure there is continuity on the leadership team. Tom would stay on as past chair and remain on the executive committee. Tom wants to make sure everyone is comfortable with that. It's not something we've done in the past because the past chair is normally in their 4th year and not their third year. Tom wants to vote to ensure everyone is OK with this approach. Carla would be chair, there will be a vice chair, Judy Zavalydriga will serve as ex-officio for Human Resources on the executive committee and Tom would join that committee for a year as past chair. It was proposed that we have a co-chair situation. From the Focus Groups held, there is a lot of work to be done. While Tom can do that as past chair, it is thought that a dual presence might be beneficial. Tom feels strongly that there should be a single head of the committee. Votes were taken for having Carla as chair, Tom as past chair.

A vice chair needs to be approved. Tom reviewed the responsibilities of the vice chair position. Chair must come from the first chair class. Glenn Strause nominated Bob Bruneio. Bob accepted the nomination. Lynn Takacs nominated Travis Spencer. Travis declined the nomination. Katie Radande Welsh was nominated but declined the nomination. Votes were taken for having Bob as vice chair.

A secretary needs to be approved. Brenda Bachman has been secretary for the past two years. Cindy Moser was nominated. She was not at the meeting. Tom will touch base with her next week.

Focus Group Recap

Over the past week, we had four different lunch sessions with staff across campus. Approximately 50 people participated. There was a list generated that went out randomly to approximately 200 people on campus. We invited past ERACers to be part of that discussion. We reached out to the CEC and other committees across campus. We also reached out to our campus liaisons. The approximately 50 participants were asked to honestly tell us what their understandings or ideas were about ERAC. This would allow us to identify any trends, any misconceptions, and get a better sense of how we are viewed across campus. The discussions were very animated and good. The ERAC members that participated were there only to take notes. They were not answering questions.

Highlights of the focus groups included the following:

→ Impressions of ERAC

- The campus isn't sure who we are
- Unsure of ERAC's authority
- If we want to be the voice of staff, how do we find out what the voice is saying?
- Questions regarding advisory vs advocacy
- Is ERAC for general staff issues
- Brown bag sessions and REACH received high marks in all sessions
- Lack of communication came across loud and clear in all sessions
- There was confusion about the purpose of ERAC – are we party planners or here for staff issues.

- Also confusing is the election process. People don't know who they are voting for
- Some did notice changes in the last year.
- Short and long term staff related issues
- Define our mission, purpose, what authority we have and clearly communicating that to staff
- There was a lot of discussion about staff turnover; staff moral; the inequity among staff depending on level and area
- Help connect the campus community
- Being in the Human Resources orientations
- Perhaps getting into Learning the Institution series
- There seems to be a lack of communication university wide
- People don't have an easy way to find ERAC
- The ERAC website should have a forum – more of an interactive space
- When something is brought to ERAC, they want to know what happens – to be able to follow the trail
- Staff is afraid of repercussions when speaking out
- Doesn't matter what the name is if there are no tangible results
- Name change may not be good since it's always been that
- When searching the website, what would you type in to be able to find it
- Meaning of the letters has been lost
- Have a single focus group to determine a new name
- The alumni group were in support of changing the name – to allow for a fresh start
- The two words that kept coming up were Employee and Advocacy/Advisory
- How can ERAC become the voice of staff? How can ERAC encourage staff to bring issues forward?
- Is there a better name for ERAC

Next steps will be for the communications team to review this and dive into it a little bit more. Tom asked what the committee would like to see as an actionable item from this event? Perhaps pick a few things to work on in the coming year – communicate that at the June meeting. We need to find a way to communicate this to campus. We should re-engage the people from the focus group. Let them know that we heard what they said. As a result, moving forward, we will ask the spring 2014 participants to be ambassadors for what we are doing.

Report on Committee 2 year strategic plan

Events Committee – all Brown Bags have gone well this year. Attendance for each was in the 80s and 90s. People like the topics. The challenge is finding relevant topics and pinning the presenters down. Some suggestions were given at the brown bags for future topics they would like to hear. By using the ERAC Google calendar, perhaps we can anticipate future topics. Perhaps have a ERAC sponsored table at some of the home sport functions.

REACH – We had two cohorts this year – both went well. The REACH project is very time consuming. One challenge with REACH is it spans throughout the year so attendance is spotty. One thing that seemed to go well was one of the cohorts attended one of the Brown Bag sessions. The other cohort consisted of new employees. They were there to get as much information as possible. A networking session was held. The challenge with REACH is that we promote and support it by the participants. They are the ones that determine the topics. It seemed a lot of people that participated in REACH this year were looking for Learning the Institution. Since that is full a year in advance, they looked to REACH for the same type of information.

Liaison Committee – Different units across campus were contacted. We established 15 connections. Recently we held the focus groups. We are planning to compile those results and then connect with our contacts again from the Liaisons group to distribute that information. Do we need to extend the list to reach more offices across campus?

Communications Committee – We did the Focus Groups. We are putting together a new ERAC member welcome packet. The ad campaign ran into a snag – namely budget. We may need to hire a photographer.

New Committee – Campus Climate

With 14 members this year and with committee overlap and committee structure, it was a lot to take in when we are all very, very busy in our regular jobs let alone ERAC. We had talked about adding a committee. We are trying to figure out how to make this work given our membership role – a committee focused on campus climate, diversity and inclusion issues. There are ways we will raise our profile with the other committees and groups across campus and be part of those conversations – especially around diversity. All of ERAC will be part of the VISIONS training. It shows our commitment to the idea of campus climate and our role in facilitating those discussions moving forward. With that in mind, does it make sense to somehow formalize our commitment to that through our committee structure? Do we have a separate committee or do we enhance our representation on the other committees and groups outside of ERAC? We need to find a way to manage those partnerships and ideas coming from the other committees and groups.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:43 am. Janice Stoudt made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Lynn Takacs seconded the motion.