

# **JOINT RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM TASK FORCE PHASE ONE**

## **FOCUS GROUP SESSION**

April 15, 2002 morning; Classified Staff Focus Group

## **BACKGROUND**

As part of a multi-phase process, consultants Joan Goldsmith and Ken Cloke trained Classified Staff and Management to facilitate the Focus Groups for both Classified Staff and Management. To ensure confidentiality and freedom of expression, the Focus Groups were conducted separately. The Focus Groups were conducted on April 1, April 9, April 11, April 12 and April 15, 2002.

The Focus Groups were asked to address:

- A. What needs to change
- B. Barriers to change
- C. Suggestions for improvement
- D. What can Classified Staff and/or Management do to help

The following list of raw, unedited responses by the Focus Group participants were transcribed by the consultants.

## **A. WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE**

1. The way management communicates with staff. No input from staff- input without retribution.
2. Changes in management, priorities regarding budget decisions, toleration of poor decisions accountability, management infraction, ethical violations.
3. Employee morale.
4. Allocation of funds for college expansion vs. college departmental and adequate staff needs.
5. "Them" vs. "us" mentality (managers and classified).
6. Fear of knowledge by management of classified.
7. Failure to look at ones part in disagreements.
8. Favoritism/unequal training/job assignments.
9. Quality of service needs to improve. Hire more staff versus the use of student employees.
10. Training managers on the job in their departments.
11. Assigning special projects to favorites not within classification.
12. Managers should be held accountable for their actions/or lack thereof.
13. Job assignment overload- offer additional pay.
14. Vindictive managers.
15. Management should adhere to same vacation block out time.
16. Computer access for all departments.
17. Managers stop recruiting department "spies."
18. Managers stop threatening classified staffs job.
19. Ego adjustment for managers in the culture of SMC in the way that management relates to classified staff and the way senior management endorses it.
20. No more treatment of classified as 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> class citizens.
21. Accountability of managers.
22. Human Resources change their selection process for managers.
23. Training (effective) for managers.
24. Orientation and training for new employees, reclassified, lateral transfers employees.
25. Fill positions with qualified personnel for the allocated position.
26. No more crisis management.

## **B. BARRIERS TO CHANGE**

1. Rigid hierarchy structure with power at top- feels more like a corporation than a college.
2. Lack of respect from management; respect; professionalism; fear.
3. Upper management not supporting middle and lower management.
4. Failure of leadership; dysfunctional.
5. Communication.
6. Board, President, senior staff disconnected from realities of college.
7. Middle management inability to fulfill/manage due upper management blocking their efforts and effectiveness.
8. Ability of staff to function inhibited by management's agenda of image over function.
9. President and some senior staff.
10. Adversarial attitude.
11. Communication. Managers do not implement classified employee suggestions.
12. Managers should implement written procedures.
13. Overcome favoritism toward us/lower position/higher: both ways.
14. Failure/refusal to resolve problems.
15. Sand bucket mentality by managers.
16. Administrator having knowledge of department needs and doing nothing to resolve staffing needs.
17. Managers manage by intimidation.
18. Lack of encouragement to reach higher education.
19. Offer flex schedules.
20. Double standard management policies.
21. Managers use merit rules to their advantage.
22. Class distinction between classified and managers.
23. Lack of communication on an informal or formal basis.
24. Perceived bias by Human Resources- potential for retaliation for voicing an opinion.
25. Management delegates.
26. Training to other classified.
27. Classified is expected to pick up the slack of unskilled labor.
28. Deliberate misrepresentation of department budget or new position.
29. Total lack of trust.
30. Promotion by personal networks rather than by merit.
31. Confrontational management style: divide and conquer.
32. Managers not dealing with a specific problem or employee but holding the whole department hostage.
33. Vindictive managers.
34. Understaffing of classified and overstaffing of managers.
35. Managers not having enough positive work to do.
36. Misrepresentation of contract.
37. Inconsistent application of contract provisions.
38. Lack of support to the Personnel Commission.

## **C. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

1. Employee morale.
2. Addressing the needs of departments, staffing along with technology objectives.
3. President and senior staff recognize urgency in the necessity for change (accountability).
4. Better management- leadership.
5. President, Board and Senior Staff walk around and interact on campus.
6. Staff: survey implemented, be proactive. Management and senior staff show concern and respect for staff and students.
7. Independent Ombudsperson reporting to Board.
8. Actual rather than bogus shared governance.
9. End to favoritism, nepotism and gossip.
10. Classified impartial review/evaluation of management.

11. Review of senior management by Trustees.
12. Public annual evaluation of President by all constituents of college and community.
13. Improve response time.
14. Neutral Ombudsperson.
15. Encourage higher education.
16. Shared governance.
17. Higher education does not have to be related to positions.
18. Evaluate managers by staff.
19. Managers should be held to the same standards as classified employees.
20. Results of disciplinary actions of managers reported back to complainant.
21. Specific manager training, people skills: seminar, school.
22. Simplify grievance process.
23. Reclassify department positions.
24. Eliminate office snitches.
25. Get rid of dead weight (managers/classified).
26. Don't be a hindrance to employee's education.
27. Written policies/procedures for all departments for promotional purposes).
28. Management evaluation by classified.
29. Managers held to the measurable standards or higher and held accountable just like the classified personnel.
30. Neutral Ombudsperson for resolving conflicts.
31. Panel for adjudicating grievances.
32. Classified input in creation of new position in their department.
33. Honest two-way communication and mutual respect.
34. Good faith negotiation.
35. Resumption of trust.
36. Intervention prior to crisis, rather than after.
37. Implementation of the existing shared governance policy.
38. No mandatory uniforms.
39. Consistency between what is said and actual behavior.
40. Anti-harassment training for managers.
41. Single standards for all departments.
42. Review including classified input of upper level management by the Board of Trustees.
43. Agendized regular departmental meetings where minutes are taken.
44. At work more community building through social activities for all staff.
45. Acknowledging good managers by classified staff.
46. Inclusion of classified in departmental planning.
47. No spying.
48. Psychological testing of managers.
49. Vacation Planning should not be stressful.
50. Quicker follow through on implementations for change.
51. Leadership vs. Management.