CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES PERSONNEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CEPAC)

360 REVIEW, JUNE 2005

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Review Summary: General

History:

In the Spring of 2005, in keeping with an increasing enthusiasm across campus for evaluation and accountability, CEPAC volunteered to undergo a 360 review (a comprehensive collection of feedback). CEPAC invited its constituents, campus associates, peers, and those to whom CEPAC makes reports, to evaluate its performance and offer input aimed at enriching working relations and effectiveness. The information gathered will be used in CEPAC’s activities planning, budgetary justification, and service enhancement.

CEPAC’s expectation was that, based on the perceived effectiveness of communications to date, staff responses would be split (likely delineated by EEO category): that some would have a fair degree of familiarity with CEPAC’s work, while others (probably the larger group) would know very little, if anything, of who and what CEPAC is. CEPAC’s current relationship with other participant groups, being largely new, provided little insight for predicting trends in input.

Participants:

1. The Classified Employees of MSU-Bozeman.
   Personnel and Payroll Services provided CEPAC with a list of classified staff, as at March 30, 2005, totaling 1,160 employees (locally and remotely employed). From this, job titles least likely to have easy access to electronic resources were identified, mainly belonging to Service Maintenance and Skilled Crafts. A bulk mailing list was consequently produced consisting of the members of those EEO categories. A letter explaining the 360 review, and a hard copy version of the survey, was mailed to the entire list (354 people) on April 18, 2005 (with a reminder letter mailed on April 25). Addressees were asked to return completed surveys by May 6.
   The remaining employees, belonging to Classified Professional, Secretarial/Clerical and Technical/Paraprofessional EEO categories, were assumed to have adequate e-mail access. A random selection of about half the members of each of these categories (totaling 392) was sent an e-mail explanation of the 360 review, along with the URL of the on-line version of the survey, on April 14, 2005 (with a reminder on April 25). The survey was closed to on-line submission on May 1.
   Eighteen e-mail addresses were discovered to be invalid, and addressees added to the hard copy mailing.

2. CEPAC’s Partners in Shared Governance.
   An e-mail explanation of the 360 review, along with the URL of the on-line version of the survey, was sent to President Gamble, the 13 members of the President’s Executive Council, the director and assistant director of Personnel and Payroll Services, the chairs and vice-chairs of Faculty Council and Professional Council, the president and vice president of ASMSU on April 14, 2005 (with reminders on April 18 and 25). The survey was closed to on-line submission on May 1.

3. Board of Regents/Commissioner of Higher Education.
   An e-mail explanation of the 360 review, along with the URL of the on-line version of the survey, was sent to each of the seven Regents, and to the Commissioner of Higher Education, on April 14, 2005 (with reminders on April 18 and 25). The survey was closed to on-line submission on May 1.

4. CEPAC-equivalent Organizations within the Montana University System.
   Over the last couple of years, CEPAC has facilitated and hosted various communications between the CEPAC-equivalent organizations across the Montana University System (“Senates”). Stemming from a University of Montana Senate suggestion in 2003, CEPAC has spearheaded inter-Senate collaboration and interaction, specifically on Board of Regents presentations. CEPAC has experienced these communications to be very useful and, as part of CEPAC’s 360 review, it is appropriate to evaluate these processes to determine whether the Senates were gleaning equal benefit from them.
   An on-line tool, for the anonymous review of existing means of working collaboratively was created by the MUS Staff Senates/Associations/CEPAC, and utilized in June, 2005. Senates from the University of Montana, UM-Western, Montana Tech, MSU-Bozeman, MSU-Billings, and MSU-Northern (the recent participants in combined Regents’ presentations, conference calling, in-person meetings and listserv communications) were asked to use the on-line tool. A total of 16 people.

Response:

1. The Classified Employees of MSU-Bozeman.
   Using the e-mail random selection and hard copy mailing contact methods described above, a total of 764 (66%) classified employees were invited to participate in the survey. This number includes 30 voting and nonvoting CEPAC members (currently, or within the last two years). Two-hundred and fourteen responses were received (45% of the e-mail, and 11% of the hard copy groups) representing 28% total return. A detailed breakdown of the response is included in the Full Survey Data documentation. Due to the high rate of Classified Professional, Secretarial/Clerical and Technical/Paraprofessional participation, and the uniformity of Skilled Crafts and Service Maintenance responses (even
though in lesser proportion), CEPAC considers it appropriate to take the data received as representational of those groups as a whole.

2 CEPAC’s Partners in Shared Governance.
Twenty-two people were invited to participate, and 7 (32%) responded. Due to the high rate of participation, CEPAC considers it appropriate to take the data received as representational of this group as a whole.

3 Board of Regents/Commissioner of Higher Education.
Eight people were invited to participate, and 1 (13%) responded. While the input of this respondent has been reviewed, and comments included in our reporting, it may not be indicative of the views of this group as a whole.

4 CEPAC-equivalent Organizations within the Montana University System.
Nine of the possible 16 participants (56%) responded, and the data received is considered to be indicative of the views of the group as a whole.

Reporting:
1. Full Survey Data – a series of spreadsheets containing details of each participant group’s response to each question posed.
2. Comments – a series of documents containing each comment received to each question posed. The participant group from which the comment is derived is provided.
4. Review Summary: general – (this document) a summary of the survey outcomes in general.

Combined Survey Outcomes:
The following observations have been drawn from amalgamated data, where responses to the same questions were submitted by each participating group. Detailed information relating to each group’s input is provided in the Full Survey Data documentation. For the sake of brevity, this report refers to CEPAC’s Partners in Shared Governance as “Partners”, and MSU-Bozeman’s classified staff as “Staff”.

The recurring theme throughout the combined survey outcomes is that CEPAC’s Partners (a small group, generally having contact with CEPAC in higher proportion to the larger, Staff group) report greater familiarity with CEPAC activities. A consistently large number of staff is, as yet insufficiently aware of CEPAC’s work and therefore unable to comment.

a. Shared Governance
Partners and Staff similarly reported is interested in committee work and Shared Governance activities among classified staff. Since the survey outcomes are considered representative, CEPAC deduces interest in Shared Governance to exist in at least half the workforce. The number of Staff reporting no knowledge on the subject is disappointingly high (26%).

One quarter of Staff report that supervisors promote/suggest staff participation, with similar numbers (22%) having no knowledge of whether or not such encouragement exists within their departments.

Partners wholeheartedly report supervisory support of staff Shared Governance activity, once an employee is involved. Staff are far less certain (38%), and half the workforce offered no opinion on the subject. However, combined survey data clearly demonstrates significant Staff awareness, interest and support of the shared governance protocol on campus.
b. Awareness of CEPAC

Nine percent of respondents reported having no knowledge of CEPAC or its work. CEPAC concludes from the responses of the remainder that, at most, one third of Staff have endeavored to make contact, as have perhaps half its Partners in Shared Governance. This is substantiated, for example, by the number respondents offering no comment to three statements:

- “When I contact CEPAC I receive a prompt response” – Staff 72% no response (Partners were not asked this question)
- “CEPAC provides thorough and useful answers to my questions” - Staff 69% and Partners 57% no response
- “CEPAC’s Administrative Associate’s interactions with me are professional, timely, and thorough” - Staff 68% no response (Partners all responded)

Those having contact with CEPAC generally report a good experience, with the largest proportions of both Staff and Partners receiving thorough and useful information delivered in a professional and timely manner.
c. Familiarity with CEPAC’s Work

Fourteen percent of both Staff and Partners were unable, or unwilling, to answer the question: “Is CEPAC adequately advertising what it does?” However, 71% of Partners and 44% of Staff answered positively. The Staff response is surprisingly high considering the consistently high level of “cannot judge/did not answer” responses to questions throughout the survey.

Partner and Staff opinions of the appropriateness of CEPAC’s focus were, of course, reported in relation to each group’s familiarity with CEPAC’s work. Partners are resoundingly confident that CEPAC works on issues of importance to the University and its staff. Staff, while less familiar, are generally in agreement.
Staff Survey Outcomes:
The following observations have been drawn from data submitted by MSU-Bozeman’s classified employees (working locally and remotely). Detailed information is provided in the Full Survey Data documentation.

Similar to the observation regarding Partners’ familiarity with CEPAC’s work, respondents who are CEPAC members, or have been so within the last two years, are typically better able to rate CEPAC’s performance, and tend to do so at a higher level than the Staff group in general. However, the number of CEPAC members insufficiently familiar with its work is high.

It is worth noting that a disproportionate number of respondents within Skilled Crafts (43%) are CEPAC voting or nonvoting members, or have been so within the last two years.

The EEO category demonstrating, overall, the least familiarity with CEPAC’s work is Technical/Paraprofessional. (Please see the “EEO-specific Data” document).

a. Effectiveness of CEPAC Communications with the Staff

Eleven percent of respondents overtly disagreed with the statement “I know how to contact the CEPAC office”, and 16% made no comment. Seventy-three percent of staff owning to some idea of how to reach the office, a member, or the Administrative Associate, is consistent with the average number of respondents offering an opinion about CEPAC activities (e.g. the importance of the issues handled, whether or not CEPAC adequately advertises, etc). It should be noted, however, that more than a quarter of those (29%) confident in their knowledge of how to contact CEPAC have been voting, or nonvoting, members within the last two years.

Use of various media is somewhat predictable, based upon employees’ anticipated access to electronics. Staff familiarity with CEPAC’s email messages is greater among Secretarial/Clerical and Classified Professional employees, and less among the Skilled Crafts and Service Maintenance workers. However, there are some surprises as evidenced on the “self-reporting of staff use of CEPAC communications media” chart, below. Greater than expected use of electronic communications were nevertheless reported in the latter categories (Skilled Crafts usage at 28%, and Service Maintenance at 29%). Similarly, use of hardcopy mailings by Secretarial/clerical and Classified Professional were surprisingly high (64% and 55% respectively).

Generally, use of CEPAC’s web site is disappointing, but not surprising considering respondents’ comments to the effect that staff lack the time to search for updates and information, but are interested, and wish to receive targeted announcements.

Staff willingness to cooperate in solicited activity is evenly evidenced, across the EEO categories, for example, by respondents’ participation in CEPAC surveys.
Reference to CEPAC handouts at new staff orientation is omitted from the “media” usage chart as CEPAC felt it more appropriate to analyze this based on longevity, rather than EEO category. The results are predictable although, surprisingly, there is some frequent usage beyond a couple of years’ service.

Constituents’ views of CEPAC’s communications with MSU’s classified staff appear in keeping with the themes expressed in other responses. Predictably, satisfaction with levels of contact are higher among those categories (Secretarial/Clerical, Classified Professional) with which communication has proven more successful. Staff unable, or unwilling, to answer the question occur in high numbers among Skilled Crafts (29%) and Service Maintenance (58%). Interestingly, Skilled Crafts employees also register an overt dissatisfaction with communications (another 29% of respondents) versus only 15% (at most) Service Maintenance employees owning to similar views.
b. CEPAC Communications with Partners in Shared Governance, and the MUS

Staff Responses (%) to "CEPAC Communicates Well With Each Group:"

Disagree
Mid-range
Agree
Cannot Judge

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%
Disagree 2 3 4 Agree Cannot Judge/Didn't Answer

CEPAC Communicates Well With Classified Staff
An examination of Staff familiarity with CEPAC’s work, vis a vis respondents’ areas of employment, suggests an important consideration for CEPAC’s Shared Governance relationships. As one example, one quarter of respondents report being employed in “Administration”, 75% of whom are insufficiently familiar with CEPAC’s relationship with administrators to rate it. Therefore, staff awareness of Shared Governance activity generally, and CEPAC’s work specifically, might benefit from CEPAC increasing communications at the supervisor level. Another advantage to improved CEPAC/supervisor cooperation could be an elevation of Staff perception of supervisor encouragement and support for their Shared Governance activities.

The Director of Personnel and Payroll Services, and members of PPS staff, regularly attend CEPAC meetings, offering a wealth of information. Consequently, PPS was the Partner with whom CEPAC anticipated greatest constituent familiarity. This assumption was supported (see “Awareness of CEPAC Communications within Shared Governance” chart above) and yet the level of familiarity was disappointing:

**Overall Assessment**

Partner and Staff overall ratings of CEPAC are, again, relative to each group’s familiarity with CEPAC’s work. Partners are confident of CEPAC’s more than adequate performance. More than a third of Staff cannot judge, while the same proportion (36%) consider CEPAC’s performance to be adequate. Both Staff familiarity, and approval, appears to increase with longevity. Responses also indicate that higher overall rankings coincide with more frequent use of e-mail, hardcopy and Staff Bulletin announcements, and CEPAC’s web site. Forty percent of CEPAC voting and nonvoting member participants in the survey gave the maximum overall ranking, while 10% were unable to judge.

The Board of Regents/OCHE respondent offered an overall rating of “4” on the scale 1(very inadequate) – 5 (more than adequate).
Board of Regents/Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education Outcomes:
The input of the respondent from this group is incorporated as appropriate throughout the report.

Staff Senate/Association/CEPAC Survey Outcomes:
Senates agree that joint presentations appear to benefit the Regents than diverse information sharing. This is corroborated by a comment submitted by the Board of Regents/Office of Commissioner of Higher Education group: “It's great to see the sense of caring and professionalism you bring to the university and to our collective efforts to make the Montana University System a great place for our students and other constituents. Your comments and suggestions are always offered in a respectful and collaborative manner, which is appreciated.”

When asked is there something CEPAC could do to enrich its presentations and interventions with the Regents/OCHE, the respondent commented: “In addition to your reports of the activities of CEPAC, continue to offer specific ideas or initiatives that you believe the board or the MUS should consider. Also, if there are some undertakings by CEPAC that have been particularly successful, be sure to share these “best practices” with other campuses”.

The majority of Senates feel that collaboration over Regents’ presentations is similarly beneficial to their Senate, and would like to expand this cooperation to include other activities.
Senates indicate that they value regular communication, particularly by telephone or in person, and would like more contact.

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Sixty-seven percent of respondents rated continued interaction as being very valuable to their Senate’s purpose and mission.

**Respondents’ Opinions of Continued Senate Interaction**

**Conclusions:**
The outcomes of the survey indicated that:
1. CEPAC has captured Staff interest in its work
2. CEPAC is contributing to Staff participation in Shared Governance activities
3. Staff are enthusiastic of the Shared Governance protocol
4. Supervisors are supportive of classified participation in Shared Governance activities
5. CEPAC’s Partners in Shared Governance overwhelmingly consider CEPAC to address issues of importance to the University and its classified staff
6. The majority (47%) of Staff consider the issues CEPAC addresses to be important
7. Ratings of CEPAC’s performance (both overall and per specific activity) are in relation to participating groups’ familiarity with its work
8. Respondents’ comments (please see the “Comments” and “Review Summary: comments” documents) are generally favorable and encouraging offering, as necessary, constructive feedback and ideas.
9. Senates value the communication and collaboration encouraged by CEPAC over the last two years. They believe it to be of benefit to their organizations, and to the Board of Regents, and wish to expand and enhance the interaction.

**Recommendations:**
Data and comments offered by each respondent group (Staff, Partners in Shared Governance, Board of Regents/Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and CEPAC-equivalent organizations) suggest that CEPAC should consider:
1. increasing outreach to constituents, specifically in the form of targeted announcements/bulletins providing a periodic update of its work and progress
2. researching and assessing the needs of each EEO category, and remote employees, before considering its constituents in the form of a single group
3. evaluating the effectiveness of existing communications methods and considering improvements as necessary
4. enhancing relations between CEPAC voting members and non-voting members with a view to each group increasing its potential for communications with constituents
5. increasing outreach to Partners, specifically supervisors of classified staff. Aim: to deepen their familiarity with CEPAC’s work, thereby enhancing Staff interest, and the realization of staff encouragement and support for Shared Governance activities
6. pursuing Senate requests for more contact and collaboration
7. develop presentation of ideas and initiatives for consideration/action by the Montana University System and/or the Board of Regents.