Fermilab Employee Advisory Group Meeting
April 13, 2011
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, One North

AGENDA TOPICS

- Open Discussion
- Management Curriculum Committee Process and Recommendations
- Traffic Safety Regulations

MEETING SUMMARY

Management Curriculum Committee
Members of the Management Curriculum Committee Barb Brooks, Dave Harding, Heath O'Connell, and Kay Van Vreede attended the meeting and provided an overview of the committee's work. The committee was formed based on the employee focus group results. Members included representative from each division who had been through all of the management courses. The purpose was to discuss and review the effectiveness of the training and opportunities for improvement. The committee met three times for several hours each, and also shared ideas back and forth between meetings. Focus was placed on possible training changes, additions, and the need for making certain training elements mandatory.

Some recommendations have already been addressed. Others are fairly expensive to implement and are waiting for funding or additional management attention.

The following questions, comments, and suggestions were discussed:

- Is there any systematic way to improve management, do we feel these courses improve management? The committee believes that most of the courses are very useful. Much of this does not come naturally to a lot of managers at the lab so getting frameworks for interaction was very useful. The general impression is that the consistency of dealing with issues across the lab and human interactions has been a big problem. Only through giving information to managers and potential managers in a program like this can we coach people into being better managers.
- We can't always pick people who are already good managers, they have to be trained.
- The committee did not look outside the lab for ideas or experience as a committee, however the courses do rely on best management practices. The training provider has an excellent reputation and is very research based in its approach. These courses are the based on the same information and principles as are offered elsewhere.

- It is quite common that this kind of training is mandatory, but it is not mandatory at the lab. New managers do have these courses as part of their ITNAs and they are very receptive to the training because they need the help. However, if managers don't fill in their ITNA correctly, it does not automatically come up as needed.
- Was it the intent of the committee that training should be mandatory? Yes, but older managers should be able to opt out of some materials that are just review. We need to have that flexibility. There are a lot of old-line managers who might resent being told they need to learn how to manage.
- New courses are being recommended as mandatory. Law, interaction, and performance reviews all need to be taken even by experienced managers.
- Managers do not always recognize that they need the skills. For example, many managers find themselves suddenly needing to interview and need those skills quickly, but those courses are not available all the time. Since they are not required, managers find themselves without the skills, how should we manage that? The system will not allow us to keep a wait list. Managers do have to register when the courses are available. However, if it is in your ITNA, you will get an email when the course is available.
- Any thought given to a standing goal related to training? Members talked about needing to include it in performance evaluations, but this has not been done yet.
- We also need refresher courses over time.
- Three new courses were created as a result of the committee recommendations, adaptive leadership, influence and motivation, and a coaching forum. They were offered to folks who have finished the essentials. However, signups were low and we have not offered them again.
- EAG members encouraged the lab to offer those courses again. There are a lot of courses and we need to beat the drum to fill some classes, it is a problem. The required courses are always filled more frequently.
- Should there be goals at the directorate level to get higher levels of training for staff (it has worked for ES&H)? Pier responded that he, for example, would personally have to take every course. Pier does not support mandatory training. The question is whether we should make an assessment to judge what training people need and to target where the deficiencies are. It is certainly important for new supervisors.
- Bruce noted that there are many professions that require continuing education, and it works best when individuals can choose the areas where they need learning.
- EAG members pointed out that it is not the new supervisors where many of the problems exist, and those that most need the training are often least likely to recognize it and seek it out.
- EAG members also pointed out that there are two management paths: those who do administrative supervision and those who do project management and these two are very different things. While this is true, it

was noted that most of the 600 managers do manage people at some level and often conduct performance reviews and other key aspects of managing people.

- What about things like performance review training, everyone needs that, should we not require that? Over the past year or so, with the budget crises, management attention has been elsewhere, so this has not gotten as much attention. Reviews on the performance review course have been very high. Last year, the lab also conducted two hour refresher briefings on top of the standard class, which were attended by about 160 people.
- Why aren't people who do something wrong on performance appraisals not automatically sent to class? Mostly because we don't know, these are usually anecdotal reports and are not tracked specifically.
- Flex time decisions across divisions are also a real struggle, we want to give authority to supervisors but have some principles and uniformity across the lab.
- What if we looked at the essential function of the manager and used that to define training requirements? When we start to evaluate current skills then there is a risk of protectionism and we don't encourage people to engage new skills.
- What about managers who simply don't do the work, or don't get the performance reviews done, why are we not tracking that in a way that allows for a response? The committee noted that 360 degree reviews are needed to assess whether needed skills are in place, this would generate a lot of valuable information. If the culture of the lab does not make being a good manager important then taking the classes doesn't matter. The committee talked about this as a top-down need, the values need to be created and reinforced.
- It makes a big difference when managers are told "you need to take this", when it is made a priority.
- Did the committee see any groups that did this well, made training important? We did not talk about that specifically, but in technical division there are supervisors who make a real effort to get new supervisors into the training programs.
- One EAG member noted that the lab is an excellent system that needs a cultural tune-up, but that uniformity across the lab is a stick with two ends. There are six levels of management at the lab, each is responsible and they don't always deliver, we need to talk across tiers more. It was noted that this is a challenge as many people won't feel comfortable doing that.
- The lab is not one culture, there are differences between sections and other areas of the lab. Some sections are more top-down, less matrixed.
- It really comes down to whether managers value the course or not, unless there are clear expectations placed on people, this will not improve. ITNAs have to be put in place and then prompt action taken in order to be effective.
- With a few minor adjustments, the committee felt that the set of trainings in the basic trainings were appropriate, and the ratings that these courses

get point to their value. Even for experienced managers, this presents another set of tools for doing their jobs and working with people. It is actually good for experienced managers who can reflect on their own experiences as they do exercises in the training. You can get the same experience on the job, but you will fumble a lot, and can get a lot of practice in the training. Lots of folks never do learn the right lessons on the job.

- The real question is how to make this important and how to get people to take the classes.
- As the supervised, we also need to know what a good process looks like, what the processes should actually look like and be like, like with the performance appraisal.
- It is a good idea to send some potential supervisors to class before they are promoted to see how they respond and whether they are looking to be a manager someday.
- Have the recommendations been prioritized vis-a-vis budget? Not specifically, though these sorts of things are generally funded after project work, so they are often starved for money.
- There is a form for communicating the need for training, but it is not well used.
- The question was raised as to should the status of training (and how well each division/section is doing on completing their training) be made more public (e.g. at the Scheduling Meeting)? Kay answered that they have done this, but not regularly.
- With HR generalists in the division and sections, are they publicizing this training? This has not been a specific charge, but they could, and they are just getting started. One of the roles of HR is not to be the police. However, they can encourage and educate, they are building the relationships in the divisions and may be more effective in getting this information across.
- Without making this mandatory, are there other ways that this information can be shared? One example is the workshops on the performance review, many of those folks had never been to the performance review class itself.
- **RECOMMENDATION**: Bruce asked if a one pager to all employees about what to expect from you performance review would help? EAG members believed this to be a good idea.
- Employees also need to have an avenue for redress. If employees start speaking up about bad processes, then this will put pressure to improve. Also make it part of the form itself.
- The report is delivered, committee is done, what is happening now? Recommendations sit with the senior management group now, and they have been distracted by budget fights, but this report is not forgotten.
- Can we establish management principles that get brought up in regular management meetings?

- What about outside training? This would certainly work; the committee did not specifically look at it but did not exclude it. A training function also needs to portray the culture of an organization, so outside training needs to be a follow-on to that fundamental training. It is important that the training does communicate that culture.

ACTION: The committee thought that it would be useful to organize and prioritize the report from the EAG perspective, and the EAG decided to pursue this.

INFORMATION REQUEST: Kay will provide the EAG with information regarding costs associated with the different recommendations.

Traffic Safety Regulations

Nancy Grossman provided an overview of the traffic safety regulations that were identified as a potential issue at the March EAG meeting. Over time, traffic has been the biggest safety concern at the laboratory, creating the most issues and resulting in two deaths. Spring tends see an increase in speeding tickets. Many of the violators are badged laboratory visitors. Visitors who engage in excessive speed got a letter from Director.

A significant increase in speeding was seen in 2009. There was little enforcement for employees at that time, and changes to the policy were discussed over the subsequent two years. A traffic safety web site was set up and the lab started to communicate more about traffic safety. It is important to be proactive. We don't want to wait for an incident. The new polices were distributed for a two week review (this is consistent with all FESHM chapters). A number of significant changes were made based on comments received and the policy went out for a second review. There is a question and answer section on the web page, but it does not get many questions. The policy states that three moving violations within 180 days or 5 parking violations within 90 days result in a five day suspension without pay.

The following questions and comments were offered by the EAG:

- Why is the lab responding this way? These metrics have always been used, however previously the highest level penalty was a letter to your file. The difference now is that the highest level penalty is a suspension. The lab looked at data to see how many folks this would affect. The goal was to have a consistent policy with some teeth. The lab did not choose to bring in external authority, with the one exception of DUI. At the time, it was believed that the minimum suspension under federal rules was 5 days. An EAG member pointed out that the regulation changed in 2004 for administrative actions and now increments of one day can be enforced. The laboratory will look into this and explore adjusting the policy accordingly. Now that we have the option, we may decide there are other

options for penalties. The only way to do this effectively lab wide is to make it automated and we do not have the automated system set up yet.

- What about appeals? There is a five-day window for appeals. When a ticket is written, it is not entered in database for 5 days to allow time for the appeal, if appeal successful then it never gets entered.
- A comment was made that it is not clear on the ticket how to post an appeal.
- People can also use the general grievance procedure of the lab to further appeal which triggers a detailed review and investigation.
- Suspensions are not immediate, and are worked out with the division to ensure it does not impact important project work.
- An EAG member made the point that the trend line in accidents had gone down prior to the policy being put in place.
- Why not just suspend on-site driving privileges? This is very hard to enforce on an open site. Can't the supervisor oversee this? This also would be difficult to enforce.
- An EAG member commented that there are lots of errors in the system in terms of who is getting the citations, and it is strongly undermining morale of the lab. People are getting citations in error and it takes 4-6 weeks to resolve these issues. It takes a lot of effort to fix these things.
- Suspensions in process will move forward under current policy, or no rules will ever be enforced. The grievance procedure is always there to deal with specific cases.
- Can there be different standings based on the level of violation? The committee will look at this, but it is important to recognize that the more complicated it is the more difficult it will be to enforce, and we need it to be uniformly enforceable.

ACTION: The EAG would like to be kept informed of the progress on revisions to the policy to provide more options for punishment. The EAG would also like an update in a few months as to how the errors in the system and issues regarding incorrect citations are being addressed.

ACTION: EAG members were asked to please put ideas forward through the traffic safety website.

RECOMMENDATION: The lab should remind employees that they can provide input to any FESHM chapter under development, and encourage them to take advantage of this opportunity for input.