

Fermilab Employee Advisory Group Meeting September 29, 2011

9:30 AM – 12:00 PM, Comitium

September 30, 2011

AGENDA TOPICS

1. Management update and results of the all-hands meeting
2. Discuss feedback received on the survey results
3. Employee Input to WDRS initiatives
4. Ideas for recognizing employees
5. Handling of comments to the EAG Website
6. Membership of the EAG

MEETING SUMMARY

1) Senior Management Update

- Bruce Chrisman provided an overview of management topics. He will meet with Harry Davis from the University of Chicago next Tuesday to discuss a possible presentation to the EAG.
- Young-Kee Kim distributed a draft report of future plans for Fermilab 2011-2030. The report is a scientific plan for experiments and facilities, and designed for the scientific community. A shorter version in more lay language will be produced in conjunction with the final version some time in September. Pier Oddone noted that these are the ideas and scope that drive the program at Fermilab. The upcoming energy frontier workshop will be very important to the future as well.
- Feedback can be sent to Katie Yurkewicz or Young-Kee by October 14. Young Kee noted that they have been meeting with scientists and engineers and IT as part of this process to understand their needs as the lab moves forward. These meetings have included about half the staff, and she is also hoping to meet with administrative staff and technicians. An EAG member noted that IT folks were a little confused about who should attend these meetings and what they would get out of it. Young-Kee said that everyone should attend to get information about the future of the lab, and to discuss other types of IT jobs and functions that might be needed to support future work and projects. The groups were organized mostly for convenience and to focus the information accordingly but it is important that everyone is informed about the future of the lab. That message will be reinforced in future invitations to note that these meetings are for everyone to talk about the future of the lab. The suggestion was made to consider taking the word “scientific” out of the title to make it more universal.
- There may be some interesting rules coming out of the Administration in the

coming months that could affect decisions at the lab. For example, there is now a rule stating that only undersecretaries can approve conferences. We can expect more of these types of rules.

2) Feedback on Survey Results and All Hands Meeting

- Received mixed messages on the all-hands meeting, both positive and negative. Some managers were offended as if they were being personally attacked. Others felt Pier may have been too dismissive of the survey results. Some members of the EAG have been asked to provide briefings on the survey results to specific groups. People are also asking how we intend to use these results to focus on making improvements at the lab. EAG members noted that the survey was designed to understand current conditions and do not provide much insight into specific improvements to be made.
- The presentation of survey results to the senior management was well received and people were interested. Pier noted that much of this is hard to measure. Pier noted that he gave a higher level view of the issues, but People could use a more detailed briefing, with some discussion afterward. It would be useful to go out to specific organizations and provide these types of briefings. Can customize data specific to individual groups, but it is a smaller sample size than the groupings in the survey. We could sample the narrative statements which align well with overall results. The lowest response was from the technical division, and it may not represent a large enough sample size to break out. The other divisions saw a reasonable percentage of responses.
- The survey is closed and should only be reopened if there is a specific plan to do something with the new data. The value of this data is to reflect on how management works within a department and use it to spark conversation and ideas for improvement. One option would be to conduct surveys on a regular basis, perhaps annually or every 18 months. The opportunity for briefings and conversations about the survey will be noted at scheduling meetings to encourage divisions to request a presentation. Eileen Berman is willing to provide the presentation for any group and to team with other EAG members. It was thought a team arrangement would work best.

3) Employee Input to WDRS Initiatives

Kay VanVreede identified recent improvements implemented by WDRS:

- Redesigned web site
- “Who does what” brochure to help people understand where to get help
- Whiteboards on all offices in 15th floor and signs on the 15th floor to identify different people and functions
- Developed customer service standards to hold all WDRS staff accountable
- Developed customer service surveys
- Mechanism for providing feedback to WDRS and one for suggestions

- Electronic suggestion box on front page of website
- Retirement information sessions held throughout the lab
- General information sessions are now held at least two locations in the lab (not just Wilson Hall). Attendance has been based on issues, open sessions draw few people.
- Conduct serious disciplinary actions and terminations outside of the 15th floor
- Placed generalists out in 6 locations (started about 6 months ago).
- Launched “Ask HR” and “Tell HR” (most popular questions were about benefits, this is not as active now that generalists are out in the lab)

EAG questions and comments included the following:

- An EAG member asked what feedback WDRS has gotten in regard to the HR generalists in the field. It has been positive, after initial skepticism (worry about agenda for people being there), people seem to be liking it. It was suggested that the generalists go out and meet folks and ask how it's going.
- EAG members noted that the generalists have been viewed positively, and they are very helpful. It seems to be surfacing issues from employees that might not otherwise be heard and get those messages back to the 15th floor.
- The generalists can be located a little out of the way; might consider putting up pictures so people know who they are.
- Have the generalists speak at department head meetings and other meetings to help people know who they are.
- Place an article in Fermilab Today to let people know this is happening and how to get in touch with their generalist.
- Should also consider a FT article on some ideas and things that have come out of the survey. Need to promote some of the good things that are going on at the lab, create a place for good stories and reinforce positive behaviors.
- Kay produces a Friday Flyer, what has happened on the 15th floor that week, just a quick email on what is going on.
- Maybe there needs to be a place for managers to go to get ideas and advice. Monthly brownbags on a topic to allow discussion and sharing and bouncing ideas. An electronic forum to discuss issues, or find help.
- Need to find ways to get everyone connected to the science and understand their role in the mission of the lab. One of the survey results pointed out that people want to understand how they fit in.
- Need to have some brief notes from the scheduling meeting to connect people to what is important. Identify action items and information that needs to be shared with employees.
- Need to get employees to have access to the information, tours, and presentations that we already have available. The physics for everyone series is a good example of what works well.
- The photo of the week should include employees who have just achieved something really great at the lab and relate it back to the people who are making these achievements.
- Consider closed channel TV in the lunch room. Need to explore ways to make

better internal communication channels.

- People respond to personal touches, it is most effective when people talk to a group directly, and relate it directly to what that group is doing.
- Office of Communication is looking at creating a basic powerpoint about the future of the lab and keep it on the web and updated as needed.
- Great content already exists, like in the Frontiers book. This kind of material should be turned into presentations or videos that are easily accessible..
- Consider having scientists adopt a group, so that non-technical people have access to a scientist. It was noted that these types of efforts have been tried, and that relatively few people take advantage of it.
- It is important to consider is that people are just swamped with work, and all these great ideas require people to take time away from something else.
- Short, direct communication is most effective, and we need to get it to the people who need it. Young-Kee agreed that a few short few bullets from the scheduling meeting should be shared with attendees to remind them of key issues and actions resulting from that meeting.
- Short videos about WDRS topics are probably the most effective form of communication. Kay noted that WDRS is looking at a subscription to video service but cannot afford it right now.

4) Ideas for recognizing employees

The following ideas and comments were discussed:

- The EAG should create a document about this, organized by the level of cost and effort required so that managers can find things they are able to implement.
- Both reward systems and morale boosters are important.
- We need to provide a wide variety of ideas, how to implement the rewards effectively. Talk about ideas that work, and that there is a wide variety of ideas available.
- Key point is to ask people about what would motivate them.
- It is important to also identify boundaries (for example, liquor, time off are outside the bounds).
- Also ask people directly to identify the target activities and accomplishments they should be achieving. This provides for employee empowerment as well as the reward system itself.
- Managers pitching in to get the job done is one of the biggest morale boosters available.
- Need to create a wide variety of ideas for different types of managers. Some groups are not able to get everyone in the same place at the same time—managers just need to do what they can and what works in those specific circumstances.
- Any document should also identify the formal programs that are available at the lab and how to access and use them.
- The lab should review the current system to look for opportunities for smaller

level awards.

- Need to better publicize the people who win these formal R&R awards. One possibility is bulletin boards that identify the winners. Also need to help people understand why people are getting awards. There seems to be some unwritten rules at the lab that awards should not be publicized and given privately—this seems to go against one of the main purposes of rewarding folks.
- If rewards come directly from your manager, it means a lot more and is more motivating and giving it as close to the time of the accomplishment as possible.
- Good parking spaces could be a great reward.

Action Item. Establish a web page that provides a manager resource center that has ideas, advice, a chat space, etc... This rewards report can be one of the first items.

Action Item and Committee Established. Aria, Cons, Teri, and Carol agreed to work as a committee to draft this report of ideas for manager incentives and rewards.

5) Handling of comments to the EAG Website

New Procedure Established. Procedures were established for managing employee comments to the EAG web site:

- All comments will go directly to all members of the steering committee,
- If immediate action is needed, the steering committee will meet and determine an appropriate response,
- Comments not requiring and immediate action will become part of the agenda for the next monthly or mid-term meeting as appropriate.

The EAG has received two serious complaints through the web site that correlate closely with a number of concerns that were raised in the comments section of the survey. The division is identified but not any of the individuals involved as this is all anonymous. However, we do believe that the concerns identified rise to a level such that the EAG should take some action. It is clearly not the function of the EAG to weigh in on the substance of the issue, but to help make sure that it gets resolved.

- **Recommendation and Action Item:** A decision was made for the steering committee to send a memo to Pier outlining the situation and asking that a specific and accountable process be put in place to investigate the issue, craft an appropriate response, request accountability from the appropriate manager, and provide a report back to the EAG about what was done.

6) Membership issues

The EAG needs to review the diversity of its membership to understand how different employee groups are represented, and develop plans for transition of membership at the two-year anniversary in March to include possible terms, term limits, ensuring continuity and opportunities for new members, and intentions of current members.

This will be the topic of the next mid-meeting.

7) Additional Topics

- Bruce Chrisman has announced his retirement, he will be stay at the lab at least through February 2012, and then help with transitioning to a replacement.

Potential agenda items for October:

- Management incentives report draft
- Compilation of feedback to WDRS into a possible formal recommendation
- Followup on issues raised to the EAG through the website
- Discuss process for establishing web site to support managers