

Fermilab Employee Advisory Group Meeting
October 7, 2010 - Meeting Summary
Final

1. Miscellaneous Issues

- **Future topic: Construction.** There was a brief discussion of upcoming construction to improve safety on Atrium stairwells. It was decided that the EAG does want to talk about construction issues and how they are communicated to staff.
- **Future topic: Workplace stress.** Members questioned what actions the laboratory has taken to address in-house stress and depression issues. The EAG would also like to explore this issue further.
- **Timesheets.** A member received an e-mail from an employee on the new electronic timecards regarding additions after 10 a.m. on Monday. As a result of this issue, there were a number of comments:
 - This is a problem for some individuals who work in the field as they don't have their own computers. They have to account for all hours and it takes a lot of time. Staff members from the Machine Shop have to return to the village to find computers.
 - Entering multiple task codes every day takes a great deal of time and could be made much more efficient
 - There should be a link to timesheet assistance right from the timesheet
 - The laboratory should conduct a lessons-learned review on the system, get input and feedback, figure out where the challenges and problems exist
 - The group responsible for the time card system roll out should consider writing a column and response to Kronos issues.
- **Action item: Responding to Questions.** The EAG should share the questions we are getting with the appropriate people at the laboratory and help to get answers that we can post on our site in a Q&A section. If there already is a laboratory mechanism to answer the question, we need to point folks there. If there is not, we need to hand off the question to the appropriate place. In general, individual EAG members who bring the question to the group will be asked to take ownership of ensuring that a question is answered.
- Juanita Frazier has been getting good response from her articles in *Fermilab Today*. A few hundred responses to the survey request were received.
- **Communication.** The lab needs to get the positive stories out in addition to recognizing the challenges that exist, and we need to communicate to staff how to do things better, how to solve your own problems, and promote communication between divisions.

2. Scope and Feedback of EAG Work

- **Scope of EAG work.** As far as issues the EAG will take up, the EAG should only address things that are systemic and not being dealt with somewhere else
- **Recommendation Formats.** There are three likely levels of EAG recommendations:
 1. Informal feedback to management in the meetings. These will be recorded in the summaries and feedback requested.
 2. Informal written recommendations, in the forms of reports or findings such as with the report on New Employee Orientation are sent to the appropriate department with request for feedback on how they were considered and any resulting actions.
 3. Formal written recommendations will represent consensus recommendations on very important issues. These recommendations will be detailed and thoroughly researched and sent directly to the laboratory director.
- **Feedback.** It is important that the EAG get feedback on all of its recommendations and share these recommendations and their impacts with all employees. Sometimes it might be the start of a dialogue with the appropriate group. All types of recommendations should specifically ask for feedback. The EAG will then use the website and *Fermilab Today* to communicate its activities and achievements.

2. New Employee Orientation Report

Decision and Action item: Final Report. The committee has incorporated comments into the revised version of the report. EAG members are given one more week to review this and then it will be submitted to HR. All agreed.

3. Client Engagement Meeting

Members of the EAG met with a recruiter to get feedback on issues raised in a previous EAG meeting and to better understand the approach and activities related to hiring. It was noted that some of the issues raised in the earlier EAG meeting were probably communication issues instead of real structural problems. The following observations were shared:

- There is an electronic process to track all job requisitions, and these can be tracked from the divisions seeking staff.
- The lab needs to educate our managers on what it takes to get new employees on board.
- Often supervisors are not the hiring managers, so sometimes the people who need the information are not getting it.
- Managers really need to access the information in the "how to hire" training, and can start with the information and flowcharts on the web.

- The biggest challenges are for the folks who don't hire often, again, it comes down to a communication and management issue.
- **Decision and action item: Final Report.** EAG Members are to send additional comments and details to Cons and Rhianna within one week to finalize this report. All agreed.

4. Path Forward on Performance Reviews

The committee reviewed the updated report and refined recommendations. There was a lot of conversation regarding how such recommendations about mandatory training and better monitoring of performance could be achieved. Members made the following observations:

- Once an item it is an ITNA requirement it is tracked and does get attention.
- These types of recommendations are going to run into resistance and complaints of being too corporate (e.g. to require training).
- How do we get across issues really cannot be addressed through training?
- We really need to address the issue surrounding "downgrading" due to lack of money, this is the key issue and it is not addressed in this document.
- WDRS does track lack of submission and where managers are not really taking performance reviews seriously, but how is this dealt with once it is recognized? This should be the responsibility of the second level manager.
- **Action item: Next draft of report.** EAG members should send comments directly to the committee and they will update the report and send it back for further review prior to the next meeting for additional discussion.

5. Management Issues

The EAG decided previously to focus the majority of its attention over the coming months to the management issue as outlined in the focus groups and in previous EAG meetings. The group discussed the range of issues and concerns that might be considered and made the following observations:

- We don't have enough scientific (physicist) members on the EAG and need to make sure we get that point of view as we move forward.
- We need to hear from managers at the lab at different levels to understand how they operate, their concerns and points of view.
- There is also a very large community of individuals at the lab who are not scientists and they are often not sufficiently included in these conversations. Many of these non-scientists are managed by scientists.
- It is not obvious to many employees that management is a focus at Fermilab. Why does the bad behavior continue to exist, will Fermilab need a cultural push in the end to make this change?

- There is a difference between supervisors and managers, some supervisors are not managers.
- Leadership is also an issue. Both managing and leadership are skills that can be taught, but also have a significant cultural component.
- The laboratory has changed dramatically over recent years, but the culture has changed more slowly.
- There is often a sink or swim attitude toward scientists in management positions, without sufficient regard to the ramifications on other employees.
- The lab needs to get past the “us vs. them” scenario regarding management.
- Management positions as a reward is not working at the lab for many folks.
- We need to be clear about what is broken before we take any action or make any recommendations.
- The physicist track at lab was originally designed to mimic the university system and this does not seem appropriate to today’s laboratory and within DOE oversight.

The following information needs were identified:

- The EAG needs to see an overview of the management issues and initiatives where the lab is already working, to help understand where the EAG can be most useful.
- The EAG needs to understand how decisions get made about who manages, and whether the laboratory is acting strategically about picking management personnel.
- The EAG would like statistics on who manages at the lab and percentages of how many managers there are, how many people they manage, etc.
- The EAG would like statistics on who works at the lab, how many of what types of jobs and personnel.
- Reference was made to a presentation by Herman White and the EAG would like copies of his slides.
- The EAG would like to understand a concise history of management at the lab and an overall history of the lab and how culture has changed over time (to the degree that someone is available to provide this)
- The EAG would like Barb Brooks, the training manager, to provide an overview of training offerings, and provide statistics on who has taken what training.
- Kay Van Vreede, WDRS head, will provide a copy of the manager's curriculum committee document.
- The EAG needs to identify the right level of detail for the information we are seeking. Information at too high of a level will not be very useful, but if it is too detailed then the EAG will not be able to process and address it all.

Action item: Issue Framing. The EAG Steering Committee and Doug will help to frame the issue, based on previous conversations and focus group results, and identify the possible range of issues for the EAG action.