STAFF CONSULTATION MEETING: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
FACILITIES AND SERVICES DIVISION 2010 - 2011
MEETING NOTES

A summary of the meeting held on Monday 08 November at 10.00 in the Conference Room, John Yencken Building is provided below.


Apologies: N/A

Absent: N/A

In Attendance: Karen Ford (Change Consultant - HR Division)

1. Meeting Purpose

Attendees were updated on the change management process to date and the objectives of the process; these being to capture and acknowledge the existing knowledge, expertise and strengths of the Division so it can move forward, leveraging and building on what works well and improving on what does not.

The facilitator explained the purpose of the consultation meetings; to collect a broad range of information and feedback from Facilities and Services (F&S) employees. Information will be consolidated into a report and recommendations made to senior management. Employees will have the opportunity to comment on the report prior to any recommendations being implemented.

An additional information session is scheduled for 18 November; key messages from the consultation meetings will be presented prior to the finalisation of the report and all F&S employees are invited to attend.

It was noted that some employees have expressed a fear of job losses as a result of the changes. The facilitator reiterated that this is not an intended outcome of the process acknowledging that employees want to know how the process will affect them and to what extent.

Attendees were reminded of the opportunity for individual meetings and of the self review process for teams which will be facilitated by their manager.

Discussion Points

2. Strengths of F&S

The facilitator acknowledged that employees may feel their skills and knowledge are not acknowledged in the change management documentation. This was not intentional; the process aims to recognise, highlight and build on existing strengths. Attendees were asked to list the other strengths of the Division has:
• A "common-sense" approach;
• Connectivity with all levels and areas of the ANU campus;
• Ability to communicate effectively across campus and more broadly;
• Diversity of people and skills;
• Good team "spirit"; in general people in the Division do their best to help their colleagues;
• Professional behaviour.

3. Areas for Improvement
• The F&S teams operate in 'silos'; improved communication and information sharing across the Division was seen as essential if the Division is to operate effectively;
• Co-location of F&S teams and the reinvigoration of social occasions were recommended as mechanisms that would contribute to the removal of the "silos" and "kingdoms" that currently exist;
• Shared administration across teams was also an approach that is seen to be working well in practice as regards to enabling information sharing;
• A clear picture of organisational structure, roles and responsibilities, reporting lines, zones etc is needed (better use could be made of the contacts pages on the Intranet in this regard);
• Process improvement and information sharing; an improved project management system providing a shared repository for project information was seen as essential.

4. What can Leadership do to Take the Division Forward (What Can be Done Differently)?
• Increased transparency and decisiveness of decision making; attendees expressed frustration that requests for funding are often met with requests for further information (even when the required documentation and information has been provided) and/or ideas are "blocked" and no reason given;
• Bring stability - consolidate portfolios and "get on with it";
• Communicate a clear vision and goals and ensure they are aligned across the Division;
• Support their staff;
• Ensure that tasks are allocated to those who are best skilled for the work.

5. Creativity and Innovation
• There was a widely held view that in F&S creativity is driven individually; people try to be creative “within their means” but the culture of the Division does not inspire creativity (it is not written in a mission statement, there are no forums for ideas generation / brainstorming etc);
• Attendees expressed frustration with what they perceived as the “entrenched views” of management which, in their opinion, “stifles” ideas generation; people believe “nothing will happen”;
• ANU Green was considered to be more creative than other F&S areas; attendees explained that they considered themselves to have more latitude and encouragement to be creative;
• The constant change at ANU was noted to be an inhibitor to creativity because "change on change’ creates a ‘holding pattern’ the result of which is limited and slow implementation of ideas and projects;
• It was acknowledged that not everyone is innovative but that new approaches are needed to enable acceptance and implementation of ideas including strong IT systems such as a project management portal and web functionality that enables information to be easily accessed, updated and maintained;
• Attendees noted that the external ANU branding of being “best practice” and “leading edge” is not mirrored internally; the environment is risk averse and cautious.

6. What do ‘customers’ think of F&S (how do we know)?
• Very pleased with service; feedback is given verbally and often face to face;
• Appreciation of the "personal contact" rather than e mails;
• There should be a definition of “customer service” which is common to all F&S areas so that people understand the standards that are expected.
7. Governance Processes
   - It was agreed that improvements are needed in relation to meeting structure;
   - A renewed focus on ensuring that people are going to the “right” meetings is needed;
   - Consider alternative practices for sharing information (example use of noticeboards for minutes in addition to e mail).

8. Training and Development
   - Attendees explained that the F&S culture does not “encourage” training; issues of work coverage, time and cost mean that employees often feel “guilty” when attending training;
   - There was perceived to be “variable” access to training and development across the Division;
   - It was acknowledged that not all training and development is classroom based and / or costly;
   - Attendees felt that the following would be beneficial: a web content system that is user friendly and “self service” with user training provided, project management, train the trainer;
   - Support for relevant conference attendance and / or professional memberships would be appreciated.

9. Describe the Worst Case Scenario of the Change Process?
   - No change; no outcome;
   - Reduced capacity;
   - Lose the momentum of engagement with the campus community;
   - Job responsibilities handed to another area / person;
   - Loss of credibility if things are left ‘on hold’ instead of being acted on;
   - Management allows people to “opt out” of the outcomes of the change process;
   - ANU Green loses its identity as a result of being disbanded / disbursed across F&S rather than being better integrated in to the Division

10. Other Discussion Points / Questions
    As part of the change process, attendees noted some issues that are specific to ANU Green:
    - Better communication and education across campus regarding the strategic role of ANU Green is needed; the ANU Environmental Management Plan is a long term strategic decision by the University while the role of ANU Green is often seen as one of enforcement (or an “imposition”);
    - New strategies are required for ensuring that projects involve ANU Green early in the process and to ensure that other Divisions understand the commitments that the University has made in the Environmental Management Plan (balancing long vs short term thinking);
    - Attendees stated that the F&S Division should “lead by example”; there should be a “cultural shift” with respect to environment and sustainability and it was suggested that the SOE for every member of the Division should have a mandatory “Green element”.

Meeting was concluded at 11.30am