

JSIS Staff Meeting September 29, 2016

In response to the anonymous letter delivered to all faculty, staff, and offices outside of JSIS last spring, complaining about staff conditions in the School, JSIS hired Debby Seaman, outside HR consultant. Debby conducted an anonymous survey of staff, and we're meeting today to discuss results of the survey and look at how best to proceed.

- Debby asked everyone to introduce themselves and state their primary concern and hope for today's session.

- Ground-rules for the meeting were discussed:
 - Listening for understanding
 - Give all ideas fair hearing
 - Share resources
 - Stretch comfort zone
 - Ask questions
 - Manage interruptions
 - Address comments directly to each other
 - Be informal

- **Progress:**
 - Debby explained that results of the survey were shared with Resat first, to give him an opportunity to understand what JSIS staff are thinking and feeling.
 - Resat then explained what he gleaned from survey
 - Resat also explained that he has been proactively talking with people since before the survey.
 - He mentioned with the survey he notices four themes
 - Communication – in terms of interpersonal relationships and between units
 - There appear to be bottlenecks in processes
 - Workload in the business office and how work is processed.
 - Flow of work within the school, in the business office and amongst other offices
 - Relationships among people who work here. (He mentioned that over 100 JSIS faculty and staff work here, along with 500 undergraduates and 200 graduate students in JSIS, but that he recognizes that this does not minimize the importance of respectful communication and partnerships.)

- Solutions – Resat mentioned that he has already begun to institute the following:
 - Regular staff meetings
 - Monique - Online newsletter for staff about staff – called The Jackson Scoop
 - Andrea – created an onboarding document for new staff
 - Training of new Chairs in centers so that they are better equipped to supervise their staff
 - Planning a lounge space for more informal interactions for faculty and staff.
 - A formal workload survey for the Business Office, conducted by an external consultant, is now underway and results will be available on November 4.
 - Everything discussed in staff meetings will be taken into account too
 - Resat is grateful to all staff for coming to this meeting. Dean Judy Howard is aware of, and very supportive of, what we’re doing and continues to support JSIS.
- Staff were divided into five small groups and then given an opportunity to read through the results of the Workplace Climate Survey,
 - Each small group took a portion of the data and analyzed it through the following questions
 - Themes
 - Personal reactions to the information
 - What needs clarification?
 - What are the top priorities from this section?
 - Groups reported back to the rest of the room:
 - Group 1
 - What do you like about being a member of your Jackson School unit?
 - Themes:
 - Independence
 - Support
 - Variety
 - Collaboration
 - Access to continued education/speakers
 - Reactions
 - Something to build on
 - Great sense of personal fulfillment
 - Suggestions for the future
 - Some of the issues seem to be central to the centers themselves, and possibly work on center specific solutions

- Group 2
 - What problems do you see?
 - Themes:
 - Favoritism amongst centers
 - Problems with business office
 - Workload
 - Communication and relationships
 - Reactions
 - Not really surprising
 - Sense of relief – that staff responded and made honest responses
 - Clarifications:
 - How results put together – qualitative attempt and quantitative effort in the results but not explained
 - Top priorities
 - No clarity on the roles of different offices
 - Nurturing relationships, face-to-face communication, formally and informally, build respect for each other and time and space to do so. Staff members can take initiative.
- Group Three
 - What if anything gets in the way of being able to do your work?
 - Themes:
 - Lack of support
 - Negativity
 - Intimidation
 - No respect
 - Lack of training, processes
 - Reactions
 - No one greatly surprised
 - Questions:
 - It wasn't possible to tell if individual respondents chose not to respond to any questions
 - Top Priorities
 - Negative atmosphere
 - Improving documentation and processes
 - Opportunities for staff to meet/collaborate
 - Snacks at next meeting
- Group Four

- What suggestions do you have to make things go better for group or self?
 - Themes
 - Staff to have more participation and input in school and academic conversations
 - Lack of communication – staff don't find out changes and updates in timely fashion
 - Need to add capacity – new people creating/filling new roles
 - Onboarding and training concerns
 - More two-way communication
 - Stronger atmosphere of respect and kindness
 - Separation with HR relations and hiring and firing
 - Reactions
 - Diversity of reactions – ranged from understanding and expecting these issues, to surprise that they existed, and also knowing they existed but not feeling that they were universal
 - Questions for clarification
 - There's a broad range of issues, so unclear how to figure out which ones need to be clarified further
 - Priorities
 - Structural changes
 - Adding capacity
 - Increasing kindness
- Group five
 - What would you like to see come out of the work we are beginning?
 - Themes
 - Desire for mutual respect
 - Communication
 - Opportunities for more positive interactions
 - Being proactive
 - Reactions
 - Relief and sadness at other's experiences
 - Finding safe way to raise complaints w/o reprimand
 - Frustration
 - Questions for clarification
 - What work are we beginning?

- What do we do with all this information
 - How do we streamline this information
 - Priorities
 - Mutual respect
 - Having more clarity in processes and roles
- Debby explained that the next step of the meeting is answering the question: What work are we beginning:
 - Self-disclosure – first step of building trust and community.
 - Reading and digesting of the information needs to be done in a managed way – purposeful
 - What do you want to do with this information?
 - Whose job is it to answer that question?
 - There are things we can take ownership of as staff:
 - Need to have the tools to know how to address communication, leadership and management styles so that we can all take ownership
 - Without the tools – we could take themes from each of the groups and work on them to find a solution
- Groups met and addressed one priority from each group and came up with solutions:
 - Group 1:
 - Kudos
 - “Victory Laps” during staff meetings – everyone writes down one thing they’re proud of. Comments collected in the meeting and Resat reviews and does call outs
 - Scoop Newsletter – Center’s achievements/contributions etc
 - Annual party/Holiday party
 - Celebrating anniversaries - business office – HR
 - Group 2:
 - Communication identified as primary concern
 - Concept of the staff/faculty lounge and how that could facilitate communication – informal conversations etc.
 - Neutral and supportive space.
 - Move mailboxes to that space as a draw.
 - Bulletin board to feature staff accomplishments
 - Group 3:
 - Negativity
 - Diversity and Equity committee
 - Outside reporting
 - Universal code of conduct for faculty and staff

- Accountability & consequence
- People could be encouraged to go to the source of the complaints
- Groups 4:
 - Adding capacity
 - Payments and processing
- Group 5:
 - Onboarding manual for faculty supervisors, guidance on supervisory roles, and universal code of conduct
 - Specific attention by unit with some goals of mediation and addressing issues that are unit specific.

Debby wants to see the ideas we've expressed brought to action. She explained that she is open to checking in with Resat to make sure these ideas are followed up on, and she is willing to help with staff and faculty meetings, as needed and appropriate. Debby greatly appreciated everyone's participation, and Resat's willingness to be open to this process.