Meeting date:	Tuesday, September 19, 2023
Time:	11:30 pm - 1:00 pm
Attendees:	Hope Burnell, Patty Rooney, Nora Molloy, Alec Morrissey, Andrea Trumble, Jess Berry, Joe Castonguay, Keiko Konoeda, Mark Cayer, Zach Brown-Cross, Sylvia Deschaine, Curtis Johnson, Megan Couch

MINUTES

1) **Welcome and icebreaker activity**
   Members shared what their favorite Karaoke song would be.

2) **Review of previous notes and agenda**
   No post meeting notes were collected following distribution of the previous set of minutes

3) **Summary of Hope's presentation to Senior Staff on Monday 9.18.23**
   Hope presented an update to senior staff on 9.18.23 detailing the work of the working group. Hope discussed the rationale for starting with an engagement survey, the strategy, the operational plan, actions and results to date, and near tem next steps. Hope highlighted:
   - Employees are committed to Bates and are ready to help make their workplace the best it can possibly be. This is a tremendous strength. There is a seed of culture change in front of us that is ready to be nurtured.
   - We are working to implement an employee engagement survey because it will maximize voices/perspectives, identify key issues and opportunities that when addressed, will help us foster a positive culture and improve our ability to attract and retain great employees. Hope cited the importance of starting with a date and the need to be careful about what we think we know for sure.
   - The employee engagement working group has defined its purpose and scope, and adopted meeting practices, including structured agendas, meeting minutes, how the group will reach consensus and closing each meeting discussing what went well in the meeting and what can be improved. The group has built trust and meetings are interactive with people participating and sharing perspectives.
   - The working group has reviewed data from the listening sessions in the fall, BESO materials, and performed a SWOT analysis to uncover important topics impacting our ability to attract, engage, and retain employees that were not identified elsewhere. After reviewing the data, the group recognized that people who may have been perceived as having opposing viewpoints care about the same things and there is more alignment than previously thought.
   - Information on the communication plan, with an overarching goal of transparency was shared. Working group meeting agendas and minutes are posted to the engagement website to maximize transparency and so any employee looking for information on engagement has a

central location to find updates. Campus wide communications are anticipated for September, November and January.

- The working group will begin reviewing potential engagement survey vendors and will provide three recommendations to choose from to Senior Staff in December with the goal to launch the survey in February.
- Hope requested and received unanimous support from Senior Staff to share the summary of the data collected to date in a community email and for the working group to provide an update at an upcoming President's Council meeting.
- **Decision Point**
  - i)   Group reached consensus for a preference of giving a presentation to the President's Council in October vs. December
    - (1) This will be a tight turnaround. Hope and Patty will create a framework for the presentation and time will be allocated at the next meeting on 10.3.23 to prepare.

4) Discussion of best practices for employee engagement surveys
   The group was provided with a pre-read article from the [Forbes Human Resources Council](#).
   - Survey best practices
     - i)   Simple
     - ii)   Data driven
     - iii) Great user experience
     - iv)   Alignment of target areas, questions, measurement
     - v)   Security and confidentiality
     - vi)   Flexibility
     - vii) Action planning tools
     - viii) Compatibility with existing technology
   - A member expressed interest in a survey that is repeatable to track progress. Patty confirmed that is a useful practice but that the decision on repeating surveys would be made in the future.
   - A member pointed out that the article had a lot of assumptions on people's access to technology and that the mobile compatibility criteria made assumptions that people would complete the survey off the clock. Patty confirmed no one would be expected to do the work off the clock and further discussion is needed regarding accessibility to ensure everyone is able to participate in the survey.
   - A member noted that flexibility in everything for how the survey is created and implemented can help us create access for everyone.
   - A member noted a tension between the ideas of simple and the need to get comprehensive data to be actionable. Some focus is important and a follow up survey is a good idea.
   - A member expressed that the success of the survey is based on the framework of how people who are responsible for promoting the survey frame it. There is a need for the survey to be reasonably comprehensive and for the survey to be promoted the right way.
   - A group member asked why there wasn't a plan for an open forum with senior staff. Another member expressed this would be repetitive to the spring 2023 input sessions and that if we do the survey correctly and pick the right survey vendor, which is the charge of this group, we end up achieving the goal of having the staff being heard.

- Patty will be leading the work to plan, promote, and maximize participation in the survey.

5) **Survey Types Discussion**
   The group was provided with a [pre-read article on vendor types](#)
   - Do it yourself survey platforms
   - HRIS survey tool add ons
   - In-house pulse surveys
   - Survey in a box
   - Engagement survey specialists
   - Management Consulting Firms
     i) Group discussed the need for customization and guidance but also noted that we are not "reinventing the wheel".
     ii) A question of cost was raised and Hope shared that a specific parameter has not been defined but that leadership is aware that there is a cost and cost will be a consideration when the vendors are presented. The engagement survey options we present to Senior Staff will include cost.

   - **Decision Point**
     The group reached consensus that preference should be given for an engagement survey specialist and Hope and Patty will use this decision to narrow down what vendors to bring in front of the group.

6) **Review of how DEI themes showed up in data from the Spring Employee Input Sessions**
   - Patty shared a slide on how DEI showed up in the input session data. This was a specific follow up to a discussion in the 9.5.23 meeting.
     i) 5% of total responses
        (1) Division between faculty and staff and further divisions within those groups - tenured vs. non tenured, hourly vs. salary, student facing vs. non student facing
        (2) Inconsistent training on DEI topics and perceptions that training is happening in silos.
        (3) Lack of transparency and feeling of inequity around compensation and career advancement
        (4) Challenges facing Bates and the state of Maine regarding the ability to attract and retain people from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds
     ii) The group acknowledged that the questions in the input sessions didn't lend themselves to bringing out all areas of concern and attention will be given to DEI questions when the group evaluates survey vendors.
     iii) A member noted that the survey should have appropriate options to allow people to self identify their gender, nationality, ethnicity and other demographic information.

7) **Intentions/goals for DEI questions**
   Patty presented how input from this group, from the input sessions data gathered and from the guidance of a vendor will help shape the question customization that we need for the Bates campus.

8) **Up next: reviewing potential vendors**
   - ○ Hope and Patty will use today's input to tailor a list and bring it forward in our next meeting. Time will also be allotted to prepare for the President's Council.

9) **Wrap up and ranking**
   - ○ Meeting feedback and ranking
     - i) Things that went well
       - (1) timekeeping
       - (2) participation
       - (3) feels like progress is being made
       - (4) ice breaker was a good question
       - (5) Pre readings were very helpful
       - (6) Consensus making - two decisions made
     - ii) Things to Improve
       - (1) Have more pre-readings for the next meeting
       - (2) Have pre readings before the Presidents Council meeting
       - (3) Room temperature cold
       - (4) Reaching consensus - how do we identify decision points more clearly?

Meeting Ranking: 9