

# Bates

*Office of Human Resources*

## **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP**

**Meeting date:** Tuesday, October 17, 2023

**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

**Absent:** Andrea Trumble

## **MINUTES**

### **1. Welcome and activity**

The facilitating group member asked each person to share what one of their favorite books is and why.

### **2. President's Council Debrief**

The group was asked to share their feedback on the presentation they gave to the President's Council on October 10. Members shared the following feedback:

- Enjoyed seeing who was on the President's Council and appreciated that there were some known and trusted faces.
- Proud of people's increase in comfort with public speaking between the rehearsal and the presentation. It was noted that the rehearsal was choppy but it came together very well.
- More than one member noted that it was very uplifting.
- General consensus that everyone did a great job presenting despite nerves and inexperience speaking to a large group. The team provided support for each other that made this possible.
- A member noted there were some people she didn't know which was a surprise given how long she has been at the college.
- A member noted that she had four different people comment to her how powerful the presentation was. Another member noted that the coherent voice made it powerful.
- Hope noted that the audience was engaged during the presentation, listening and paying attention.
- The audience was interested and had questions and engaged enthusiastically in the brainstorm.
- The audience seemed to appreciate the work being put into the engagement effort.
- President Jenkins had the opportunity to thank a few of the members that were there after the meeting ended which was appreciated.
- A member noted that the comments that the audience wrote would be helpful for the group to review in the future, and that the question and comment from the audience about what happens after the survey would be important to gain trust in the process and increase survey participation.

### **3. Preparing for vendor demos**

- Evaluation factors - determine the criteria with which we will assess survey vendors against
  - i. Hope explained what an RFP (Request for Proposal) is. It is an explanation to the vendor of who your organization is, what you want to accomplish, how you think you want to do that, and what your timeline is toward the goal of the vendor

providing a proposal that meets your needs.

- ii. The group discussed if the right approach was to issue an RFP first, or to ask for vendor demos first to learn more about their processes and capabilities

**DECISION:** The group consensus was to bring vendors in for demonstrations prior to developing an RFP.

- The group discussed information to share with the vendors prior to demonstrations so that they cover the topics the group has prioritized. The group highlighted the following as primary areas of interest:
  - i. Experience with higher education institutions was identified as an area of interest given the unique and complex needs of higher education organizations.
  - ii. Members discussed the importance of accessibility to the survey to be accessible so that all employees are able to participate. The group will ask the vendors to elaborate on how their survey can meet the various needs of our employees in the areas of literacy, language, technology and others .
  - iii. Security and privacy for information in the survey was expressed as important, particularly in relation to someone who may need assistance with completing the survey.
  - iv. There is a desire to be able to find out from people how they would like to take the survey. The group will explore ways to identify needs in order to meet people where they are at.
  - v. There was discussion about working to avoid people having the experience that questions are leading and will be a discussion point with the vendors.
- The group discussed what the vendor should know about our needs around DEI questions.
  - i. A member noted that the vendor should be able to speak to what DEI is to them and how that drives the questions.
  - ii. A member noted that it is important to focus questions for all employees and not have a set of questions specifically directed toward people of color or other underrepresented groups.
  - iii. A member noted that how a person answers questions is tied to their identity and we should be able to consider that when looking at results.
  - iv. It was noted that we should be transparent with the vendor that this is a particular concern and challenge for our campus.
  - v. A member noted that we will want to ask about how long a person has been at Bates as that impacts perspective.
  - vi. A member noted that we will want to ask about a person's job classification as that also impacts perspective.
- The group moved to a discussion of addressing needs for people who don't understand a question.
  - i. Pop up tooltips are one way to provide information beyond the question itself.
  - ii. The group will ask the vendors if there should be an option to have "I don't understand the question" as an answer.
  - iii. The group agreed that we will prepare questions for vendors on accessibility and

how they address the needs of a diverse workforce.

**ACTION:** Hope will put together an introduction for vendors about who we are and a high level of what we are looking for to present prior to vendor demonstrations.

#### 4. Determine potential demo dates and logistics

- Group decided that while it would be nice to have vendors and the group meet in person, that was not going to be practical.

**DECISION:** Vendor demos will be scheduled as a hybrid with options for in person and Zoom.

**DECISION:** Given the timeline, the group decided to add additional meetings and make the bi-weekly meeting schedule weekly. Meetings will be added to calendars for Oct. 31, Nov. 7, Nov. 28, and Dec. 5. The Dec. 12 meeting is anticipated to be a decision making meeting to determine which vendors to put forward to senior leadership for consideration.

- Hope asked for volunteers to work on a matrix to be used to evaluate vendors

**DECISION:** Alec and Jess volunteered and Hope will follow up with a meeting request.

- Hope asked for volunteers to lead a debrief after each vendor demonstration.

**DECISION:** Zach, Joe, and Curtis volunteered. Hope will ask Andrea as well.

#### 5. Geoff Swift asked Hope if the employee engagement working group would like to engage with staff at the anticipated Holiday Party

**DECISION:** The group decided that they would like to do this.

- i. The idea of having an opportunity for employees to engage with a broad question or two about employee engagement was presented. Hope indicated she will circle back to the group on this topic at an upcoming meeting.

#### 6. Bobcat Break

- Zach reminded the group that the next Bobcat break at the Den is happening on Oct. 19 and encouraged everyone to attend and to promote the event in their respective departments.

#### 7. Meeting Wrap Up

- What went well
  - i. Appreciation for quick decision making and the amount of work covered
  - ii. Appreciation for positive recognition of everyone's work for the President's Council meeting
  - iii. Appreciation for reinforcement of other's input
  - iv. Good that the group continues to raise new points about what is important
  - v. Timing of ending a few minutes early
  - vi. Getting volunteers for upcoming tasks
  - vii. Everyone having a sense of humor and sharing laughs
- What could be improved
  - i. Room very cold (Megan asked the front office if they can turn it off)

#### 8. Meeting Ranking: 9.11