

Professional Staff Organization
Functional Area Review Group
Observer Committee Report
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Committee Members

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Preface

A representative of the Professional Staff Organization participated in each 2006 FARG meeting. While several themes were garnered from this process, the following observations are the primary concerns for LCSC - as observed by the PSO.

Observations/Needs

1) Professional Development and Workload:

Many UAPs noted the need for additional staffing and the PSO, for the most part, agrees. However, the underlying concern in many of these requests is also the need for a more aggressive (or creative) approach to the development of current staff.

- The PSO is encouraged by the evolution of PG 54 (Professional Development & Training) and the creation of a corresponding committee to explore such issues. However, we also agree that appropriate off-site, professional training and development opportunities (conferences, user groups, etc) should be made more easily available to more staff.
- Many UAPs noted a lack of dollars that could be spent on professional development options (while this is not an issue in other departments). Perhaps funding for training and development could be extended beyond individual unit budgets so that those offices that cannot afford training could still receive it – particularly when it benefits the College as a whole.
- Workload concerns continue to be of principal importance to PSO and all current staff/faculty. Long hours and increased responsibilities for offices and staff create stressful and inefficient work environments.

2) Technology

Every FARG discussed the need for technological advances. These needs came in many forms but seemed to predominantly focus on the following:

- E-commerce: A much needed component for the campus to remain viable in a constantly evolving e-world. Students can apply to the College, register for classes, apply for financial aid, retrieve grades, and order transcripts online but they still cannot pay their tuition. This must be resolved.
- Web-programmer: The above bullet along with “future” developments such as instant messaging, blogs, etc. only underscores the need for more Web-related programming and development.
- Technology Fees: Some discussion was held on the overall confusion between instructional methods and technology fees. Many in PSO would like to see this messy relationship significantly simplified.
- General Technology Upgrades: The PSO observers agree that technology is paramount to our success as a College and that all related upgrades/purchases should be considered a major priority.

- Certainly, funding is the key concern for any tech-related initiatives but it seems that LCSC could do a better job of being on the forefront of adopting and managing new technologies for higher education.

3) Safety

The broad topic of general safety was very prevalent throughout the FARG meetings. Concerns such as the following came up in a variety of UAPs:

- Security: A continued concern for the campus – particularly with the addition of the two new residence halls.
- Travel: Much discussion regarding quality of vans/cars available through the Physical Plant motor pool. Athletics would prefer to charter buses and many faculty/staff prefer to use their own vehicles or cars from rental companies because of safety and cost concerns.
- Classrooms: Deteriorating chairs, tables, desks in classrooms need to be replaced. While this is certainly an aesthetic issue, in some cases it is also one of general safety. The PSO believes that every classroom should be evaluated and upgraded so that all instructional facilities have a minimum level of safe equipment and technical ability.

Summary

Clearly, every LCSC department/unit has its own specific needs and desires – some more realistic and advantageous than others. However, the LCSC Professional Staff Organization observed the 2006 FARG meetings and attempted to glean from them subjects that would be considered relative to the College as whole. As such, the following were key concerns across campus:

- 1. Significantly improve policies and processes relative to professional development/training for all faculty & staff. In times of pitiful salary increases, the College could do a lot worse than compensating its employees with development opportunities.**
- 2. LCSC should (and could) be a leader in technology. In particular, we need to work much harder and smarter in our pursuit and management of online services.**
- 3. LCSC is a very safe campus in general but clearly there are places where this safety is less than ideal. If anything, we need to have confidence that all students and staff of the College are working and learning in a safe environment.**

Lastly, it is the perception of the PSO that employee morale continues to decline. The general feeling is that staff & faculty are extremely frustrated with regard to salaries and compensation (particularly in reference to workload concerns) and this has led to sense of “defeat” across campus. This, then, is why such things as professional development, non-monetary compensation, and exploring ways to make our jobs easier are more important than ever. Our employee turnover rate may be low, but this should in no way be mistaken for complacency.

Respectfully submitted,
Ryan Gill
Chair, Professional Staff Organization