

Response and recommendations from the Vice-Chancellor

Following the release of the Consultation Structures and Procedures Survey, I have asked all Deans, PVCs and the Executive Director to report on actions planned to discuss the issues raised in the survey and to seek clarifications on some of the responses. For example, if staff want to be consulted on key decisions: What do you regard as key decisions? How do you want to be consulted?

I myself use VC's Perspective in Smith's for general discussion of issues, and the two Open Forums each year, the two two-day Strategic Forums for Heads and Deans, Directors and PVCs for flagging developments and getting feedback. I am always happy to visit schools and other sections of the University and have taken up every invitation offered.

Deans and PVCs have made the following replies to my request for actions plans and I urge you all to participate in the discussion forums, assemblies, or other meetings proposed.

Each Faculty is reviewing its communication structure. Ask your Dean, what is happening in your Faculty. These are some common approaches suggested by the Deans:

Faculties:

1. Ensure inclusiveness and efficiency of the committee structure of the Faculty. (All Faculties made reference to reviewing, reaffirming or modifying their Faculty Committee Structures)
2. Faculty representation on Central Committees. Faculty representatives to be responsible for ensuring up-to-date communication on all issues which could have a significant bearing on the Faculty or priority issues for the University. (Central C'tee/Faculty links mentioned by The Sciences, EBL, Arts)
3. Emphasise the importance of passing information from Faculty and School Offices to academic and general staff. (The Sciences)
4. Increase number of Faculty Forums/General Assembly Meetings. (The Sciences already has this and EBL is to begin similar meetings soon.)
5. Seek more regular visits to the Faculties by Senior Executive members. (EHPS)
6. Discuss communication issues within the Faculties. To discuss areas of perceived lack of communication and suggestions for improvement. (EHPS).
7. Establish a mechanism for staff feedback. (EHPS)

8. Utilise a Faculty mailing list for the delivery of advice and information to all staff and research students, including committee agendas and minutes, and to allow discussion of Faculty issues and the impact of University issues on the Faculty. (EBL)
9. Include all Faculty policies on Faculty Web page (EBL).
10. Open Faculty committees to attendance by Faculty staff on all non-confidential issues.

Academic Division and Academic Policies:

1. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) pro tem will set up a forum of elected academic staff (one from each School) to discuss some of the issues raised in the survey, with a particular emphasis on those related to academic policy and procedures.
2. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) pro tem will seek opportunities to attend School and Faculty meetings to discuss issues of interest to staff.
3. Members of the Teaching and Learning Committee will be asked to set up consultation processes within their respective areas to ensure that draft discussion papers and policies are thoroughly discussed within Faculties before they are finalised and recommended to Academic Board.
4. Staff will be alerted to all new academic policies and procedures through UNE Official and the documentation associated with these will be accessible through the UNE policies Website. Information about academic policies will be included in induction material available to new staff.
5. Staff within the teaching and Learning Centre will be canvassed to determine how they feel consultation processes within the Centre should be improved.

Research and International Division

The PVC is holding regular sessions with manager level staff and less frequent staff meetings with the respective groups.

He has met with Deans once a month, and with the Heads of Centres similarly.

He is now contemplating a regular e-mail communication to the staff in each area, in order to bring them up to date and to get a little more direct contact.

He is also thinking about a "research circular" - ideally by e-mail. If there is a demand for a similar international circular he is happy to look at it.

Resources Division.

Discussions have commenced with Directors within the Resources Division on the enhancement of our Communication and Consultation process with staff both within the Resources Division and across the Faculties, Schools, Divisions and other Directorates.

Some of the mechanisms to be considered are:

1. Ensure that the meetings that currently occur between the Executive Director (Business & Administration) and Directors; Directors, Managers and Supervisors; and Supervisors and staff allow and encourage two way communication.
2. A system that allows staff members the opportunity to express ideas and concerns.
3. A series of focussed newsletters keeping staff informed of the latest news within Directorates, similar to the current Human Resources report.
4. More visits to Faculties, Schools, Divisions and Directorates by senior administrative staff.
5. Supervisors to ask staff for their views on the issues that they wish to be consulted on and the ways that this may occur.
6. To have staff identify obstacles to the current consultation process.

Information Services Division.

The PVC IS will

1. Adapt an existing external team briefing protocol for internal ISD use and trialling before offering the protocol to the university at large. This protocol features two-way information flows and is designed to achieve rapid and detailed information dissemination throughout an organisation and to quickly gather feedback from staff. In the instance of ISD, this will be used to strengthen the consultative processes already in place within the division.
2. Continue a program of regular meetings with Deans and extend this to the Heads of major central units
3. Institute a client services management program to better determine client and patron needs and to inform ISD clients and patrons of services that ISD can provide to support them in their activities

4. Involve ISD clients and patrons in joint activities such as the formation of policies and procedures and joint purchasing activities that will benefit all participants

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