

Dear Faculty,

The Faculty Forum on 9/24/14 was attended by 198 people, according to three counts performed by a senator in attendance. At the forum, we very briefly explained the origins and analysis of the Faculty Climate Survey. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is attached, and is being posted on the Senate webpage. Most of the discussion focused on constructive proposals for restoring faculty morale, enhancing accountability and collaboration, and improving workload and support. In addition to suggestions during the forum, faculty were given the opportunity to provide feedback through Survey Monkey, in written form, and informally via direct communication with individual senators.

A summary of the major suggestions we have received to date is attached. Over the next few weeks, the Senate will be reviewing and prioritizing these and any additional items it receives for discussion with the president and the Board of Trustees. Your involvement in this process is critical. We invite you to continue to provide us feedback, to attend Senate meetings, and — perhaps most importantly — to feel empowered to get involved. This is a big job for the Senate, and we need your help.

If you see issues on the attached that you feel inspired and capable to explore in greater depth, please do so. If you do not see issues that are particularly important to you, let us know. It may be helpful that you keep us informed as to your efforts, so that we can coordinate action and minimize duplication.

In addition, the Senate has established a procedure for documenting faculty concerns about openness and workplace climate. If you have specific concerns or data in this respect, please feel comfortable reaching out to a member of Senate directly. We have instituted several precautions to ensure that confidentiality is protected — each senator takes that very seriously and, when anonymity is requested, we do not disclose even among ourselves the sources of the information.

Sincerely,

Dan Knauss
Faculty Senate President

Comments from the Faculty Forum September 24, 2014; 4-5 pm

Below, find a list of comments collected at the Faculty Forum by Senate. Note that these are comments that may have been mentioned once or multiple times, and in no particular order—Senate needs to spend some time looking at this feedback and prioritizing comments where we hope to see positive change quickly, versus things that may take more time. Please talk to your senators about comments you see here—and others you may have—we are happy to log all feedback we are given.

- The positions of Department Heads should be transformed into Department Chairs. The Department Chairs should be elected by faculty and not appointed by administration. Having elected Department Chairs would foster a greater sense of departmental collegiality and community.
- Administrative positions should be filled by searches, not appointment. Moving forward, all vacant administrative positions above department level must be filled by open searches, not appointments. Faculty should have a significant representation on all search committees.
- The Faculty Handbook needs to undergo closer analysis to ensure that principles of accountability, shared governance, and transparency are implemented at all levels of decision making. An ad-hoc committee that will review the Faculty Handbook should be created. Proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook must promote a transition from the present climate of unilateral decision making to a culture in which faculty input into executive decision making is guaranteed and valued.
- The Faculty trustee has no real defined role, little input, and no access to executive sessions.
- The bureaucracy has increased significantly over the past three years. Apart from the additional work for faculty, the ever-increasing bureaucracy is slowing down decision-making and ability of the institution to react to in a timely manner to internal and external pressures and opportunities. Different levels of administration should reach out to faculty (and staff) to form ad hoc review panels tasked to streamline operations.
- A new agreement on operations has to be reached between Faculty Senate and Academic Affairs. The Provost should be required to reply to requests and suggestions made by Faculty Senate in a timely manner.
- Sound decisions can only be made by individuals who are knowledgeable about, and engaged with, the mission of the university. Senior administrators should be involved in teaching and research. It is not desirable that senior administrators are detached from the academic day-to-day business of the university. Moving forward, involvement of senior administrative faculty in teaching and research should be implemented on a step-by-step basis, mimicking common practice at other U.S. institutions of higher education. Job descriptions for vacant positions should be written accordingly.
- Creation of an Ombuds office. Many faculty (and staff) members voiced concerns about the management style at CSM and that they are afraid to speak truth to power as there is a culture of reprisal and retribution on campus.
- A cost-benefit analysis of the College system is required. Faculty perceives the College system as inefficient. Each College should form a committee to conduct a cost-benefit analysis.
- It was pointed out that possible violations of the Faculty Handbook occurred over the past three years. An ad hoc committee should be created that will review perceived violations of the Faculty Handbook. If an Ombuds office is created, this task may also be carried out by the ombudsperson.

- There is a lack of trust in the budget process as there is no open and transparent decision making. An ad hoc committee should be created that will review perceived violations of the budget process. In addition, it is important that mechanisms have to be put in place in the future that ensure that annual budget allocation to departments are made in a timely fashion.
- Resource allocation and credit are arbitrarily assigned. Matrices used for resource allocation are perceived to be randomly defined. For instance, there is no balance between credit given to departments for undergraduate and graduate level education. Moreover, there is disagreement between data used by the Department Heads, Deans, and Academic Affairs. Some faculty pointed out that data used by senior administration is sometimes incorrect and that senior administration have been reluctant to admit this. If resources are allocated based only on such matrices, but the accuracy of such matrices is in dispute, an audit committee would be needed to ensure validity of data used in decision making (e.g., publicized faculty to student ratios and class sizes are perceived to be incorrect by many faculty). There has to be a realization in administration that the campus is diverse and that significant differences exist between departments and individual faculty. The one-matrix-fits-all approach by the current administration is ill-conceived as it does not take academic diversity into account.
- Departments are no longer in a position to make key budget decisions. Increasing micromanagement over the past three years has restricted the ability of departmental leadership to make key budget allocations, respond to changing conditions, capitalize on opportunities, and support faculty flexibly based on their professional judgment and knowledge of conditions “on the ground.” The role of decision making has to be redefined to empower departments represented by rotating Departments Chairs to make important decisions.
- To become a more research intensive university, resource allocation to graduate programs has to be reconsidered. This includes funding models for graduate students such as tuition waivers. Having more teaching and research assistantships available will benefit the institution at no additional cost. However, it would reduce the burden of fund raising for faculty significantly. Increases in graduate student tuition increase the pressure on faculty to raise more money for fewer students doing less research, which is counterproductive. An ad hoc committee should be created to review resource allocation to graduate programs and funding models for graduate students.
- There is a distinct shortage of support staff in departments (program administrators, financial administrators, lab managers and lab technicians). Faculty essentially have to do everything by themselves, ranging from accounting to cleaning laboratories. Hiring more staff will free up significant time for faculty, which in turn leads to the expansion of the research enterprise. The lack of support staff having lower salaries and the requirement of high income faculty to conduct such tasks demonstrates that basic business principles are not valued by the institutions.
- The Deans have to support fund raising for their Colleges as opposed to micromanaging. Departments and individual faculty need to be empowered to help in the fund raising efforts. Every additional endowment will be a critical step forward.
- Public acknowledgment by senior administration of the seriousness of the survey, expression of concern about feelings with respect to openness and retaliation, plus unequivocal statement that this is not the environment we wish to create at CSM along with steps to alleviate concerns plus assure faculty that no retribution or retaliation will take place for any member of staff who engages in open dialogue about campus climate and decision making.
- All levels of administration should review processes of communication to the faculty. Decisions at various levels of management appear to be arbitrary to faculty as the basis for decision making is not communicated (e.g. recent reduction of holiday days for post-doctoral fellows). The institution has to become a place where operations are transparent, effective, and

collegial.

- There is no culture of considering the needs of the employees. There is a lack of faculty recognition at all levels of administration. A healthy institution has to have procedures in place that investigate on a regular basis what faculty need to be successful in their fields, and what is needed to support them. The institution could be much more successful if faculty would not be forced to spend so much time defending themselves, but would have a chance to think forward to what is needed to build in the future.
- There is a general culture of mistrust in faculty by administration at all levels. The administration mistrusts data provided by the faculty and departments. As first concrete step, an ad hoc committee that reviews what data should be included in the annual Faculty Data Reports. The forms should be simplified substantially and many requirements removed (such as print-outs of publications).
- There is a clear lack in communicating where the institution is going. The Strategic Plan defines an ambitious vision (e.g. CSM becoming a top research institution) that are unrealistic to achieve in the present climate. Faculty concerns raised during the feedback sessions were apparently not communicated to the BOT. Many important suggestions have not been implemented. The institution needs a positive and inspiring, but also realistic vision.
- The expectations for promotion and tenure are not clearly defined and should be agreed by everyone involved in the process.
- Faculty are evaluated by students and administration. There is no accountability for administration and no evaluation of individual performances. Certain parts of the administration are perceived to be highly dysfunctional. It was suggested to implement 360 degree evaluations.
- The faculty morale is at a low. The possibility of conducting a vote of non-confidence in the senior administration was briefly discussed given some faculty's perception that the Administration is incapable of rectifying the problem.