

Final Report of the Situation
Facilities & Services
NMSU
October, 2012

Introduction

The Division of Administration and Finance at New Mexico State University executed an interview process of as many of its roughly 700 employees as possible, between Oct. 1 and 10, 2012. The purpose of these interviews was to gather data to describe the current state of the organization for a strategic planning initiative.

The Division also decided to perform a scan of up to 14 customer groups, in order to gather external data on the Division's performance and opportunities.

This report provides the initial results of the employee interviews and the customer scan for Facilities & Services.

While an interview and analysis process of this type usually delivers a relatively good snapshot of the non-technical characteristics of an organization, it must be kept in perspective as being only a 'snapshot' in time. The reported results must be integrated with the day-to-day and historical evidence available to the organization. Interview data is credible because we seek patterns of information and do not report stand-alone individual comments but this data is also one sided. The total picture should be considered before conclusions are drawn or actions taken.

The Division and Facilities leadership is reminded that FS employees in the interviews were promised that they would see this report at some time.

Report of the Situation for Facilities & Services

The situation, as we find it in the Facilities & Services organization, has been substantially shaped by some historical conditions. There was an incident a few years ago that led to sudden and substantial changes of control and oversight. Prior to this event, a culture existed that was very different from the culture that is required for the current time. That original culture, the 'good old days' if you will, is still the benchmark for many of the Facilities & Services employees. The 'good old days' still represent the way many employees feel things should be and it is against this benchmark that their satisfaction and comfort are measured. This is always a major challenge in significant cultural change situations.

The PPD incident began a period of substantial change. As noted, the incident drove imposed changes and much of the freedom of action and limited supervision that employees enjoyed before the incident changed in a flash. Then came the national recession and more change occurred, although some of this change was determined by AFD responses to the economic conditions. New management arrived in Facilities &

Services with, we believe, the goal of changing the culture to one that is on a par with similar institutions. That culture change activity has been going on for the last (roughly) four years.

Many of the issues raised by employees during the interviews appear to be highly correlated to the fact that the culture change has not proceeded far enough to get sufficient numbers of employees on board. This is not surprising given the magnitude of the change in beliefs and behaviors that is needed. It is strongly recommended that modifications be made to the culture change approach that is being utilized.

There are some good foundations on which Facilities & Services can build to become a stronger organization and which will offer some assets to the strategic planning initiative. There is an understanding of the need for positive reinforcement, recognition and appreciation of employees but the levels in the organization are not sufficiently strong to drive the behavior changes needed for the new culture. There is considerable performance data available in Facilities & Services thanks to the AIM system, and this is enhanced with customer surveys. However, the use of measurement at the employee level and for driving behavior is weak.

The organization understands the need for training and development and has ramped up these activities as funding and employee engagement allows, but there remains a perception that T&D has suffered in the past few years. The continuous improvement philosophy of the organization is dependent on management and on employee suggestions to supervisors. The methodology for improvement has not been well communicated at all levels.

Employee participation is quite limited. There is an employee advisory committee but it is still in the early stages. The intentional customer focus design is through organizing some functions in zones, but at this point only grounds and custodians are in this mode. There are several routine meetings for communications and these represent a good start. Even more is needed.

The performance evaluation system is used but not uniformly or as effectively as it might be. Some individual units have moved to more frequent visitation of the employee's goals than annually and this is something the entire organization should consider.

Finally, while there still exists some feelings of inequity between various work units, the employees of Facilities & Services seem to get along and work together reasonably well together.

There are many opportunities for improvement in Facilities & Services. The AIM system has greatly increased the amount of supervisory time spent on recordkeeping and paperwork, and a good deal of employee time is spent entering the necessary data and notes needed for AIM to provide the information requested. Given that AIM is just entering its third year of full use, it is not yet possible to gain all of the benefits that will be available that will make the record keeping investment worthwhile.

Employees and supervisors feel the heavy hand of micro-management, apparently from the Facilities & Services leadership as well as from AFD. This is because rules, procedures and regulations are being used to try to drive behaviors instead of the more powerful tools of positive reinforcement and measurement.

Many employees report fearing for their jobs and this may be driven by the behavior of a few supervisors. It does appear that a very few supervisors are not qualified, either by skill or personality, for their jobs. Others need additional development.

When the issues of an incomplete cultural change, micro-management and some poor supervision are seen as a whole, it is no surprise that the employees generally feel that they are not respected. This is something that will change as the culture change proceeds.

The Customer Scan for Facilities & Services

The results of the interviews of 14 groups of customers are reported in the following. This report consists primarily of actual customer input – unfiltered or edited.

Strengths

- “We have a good relationship with FS.”
- Good emergency service, including safety issues
- The Director (Glen) is responsive and transparent; helps us immensely
- Polite
- Very happy with the service – when we can get it
- Much better performance recently

Needs for Improvement

- FS service is slow; long turn times
- Still a ways to go on project management and performance
- Projects are not finished on time
- Too many layers
- Too many approvals required to get anything done
- A rigid chain of command
- Over promise and under-perform

The message here appears to be that the bureaucracy that exists in portions of the Division seems to be impacting Facility’s ability to perform.