

FRA Council Meeting with Fernando

Attendees

Alexandra Fries, Sabeena Nazar, Robin Paulman, Taryn Sudol, Theresa Murphy, Julie Trommator, Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm

Notes

FRA Council members introduced themselves

Discussion about UMCES and FRAs

- What are Fernando's goals for the first year?
 - He is trying to capture information from everyone to gain a better understanding of UMCES
 - As an organization we need a strategy
 - We are doing interesting things at UMCES the potential and talent we have is strong, but we aren't performing at the level we could
 - Communicate to the world a few of the big things we're doing
 - Our aspirations
 - We need to administratively get our house in order
 - Need to do the strategic planning
 - What is umces going to look like in the next 5 years?
 - He's been having both internal and external conversations about umces with constituencies
 - No one really knows what we do
 - UMCES image needs to be strengthened
 - UMCES identity and brand needs to be stronger
- This is Fernando's 5th university he's been at
 - This university is different than any other he's been at
 - He's trying to define umces
 - Centennial is next year
- Some people are concerned about UMCES being disconnected from USM
 - What would happen with UMCES in the future
 - We will still be part of USM no matter what
 - Fernando's idea of the rebranding, a university and a center are two different things, centers are usually part of a university, not the same thing
 - Think about UMGC and it's previous name, University of Maryland University College
 - Board of Regents determine our budget, he's been meeting one-on-one with them
 - Some of them it's the first time they've heard of UMCES
 - They don't understand we're a university
 - We compete with the other USM institutions for the budget, and we need to be seen as being the same level as them.

- They actually approve name changes
- One of our main concerns for FRAs is soft money
 - We could be here for 15 years and if the money dries up we're gone
 - Then all the expertise walks out the door
 - This is why we need a strategy for how we manage the organization
 - He wants all positions to be priority to have money for that in the budget
 - There should be some security to your employment
 - We need to find ways to generate more revenue for more sources to make the salaries funded and secure
 - Need a growth strategy
 - Diversity in the income strategies
 - Funding strategy needs to be flexible
- FRA salary
 - When Faculty salaries are reviewed, FRA salaries should be reviewed too
 - I am willing to bet this hard money/soft money is an issue in more of a traditional university, if we were more like a research institution this might be less of a concern. I want to address these coverage inequities in looking at umces as a whole. The good news is that the org as a whole, we're in good shape, we're not in any need to lose any muscle. There is quite a bit of financial security in the organization.
- Behavioral concerns
 - Do you perceive that we have a systemic behavioral problem?
 - Systemic academia issues
 - No training on being a supervisor/mentor
 - Fernando wants to have an overview of the policies to make sure that at least the policies that don't perpetuate this problem
 - Let's find what policies are making these issues worse/engrained
 - Can there be a neutral committee that helps take action if there is an issue at a unit, instead of the unit director.
 - Incident based issues we can deal with
 - More concerning is the mindset of power/status
 - We need to weed out these negative things
 - Because of unit/lab differences, there can be inconsistencies in responses and actions taken about things
 - We want to feel like we're truly valued, that can get lost
 - This council is helped get FRAs voices heard throughout UMCES
- Make sure the FRA voices are heard
 - Bring up issues, communicate to leadership
 - Trickle down communication hasn't worked
 - But it's been changing slowly
- FRA-paloosa???
- We should have a big meeting of FRAs!