MEMBERS PRESENT: K. Schultz, L. Normand, C. Stodd, T. Akey, B. Peters

OTHERS PRESENT: T. Fritter, P. Seitz, J. Perkins, A. Pierce

At 2:30PM, Chair Peters called the meeting to order and instructed the Secretary to note those present.

Chair Peters paused for public comments. Mr. Terry Fritter noted that it was this week in 1912 that the textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts came to an end.

Chair Peters opened discussion on the upcoming Climate Survey and recognized Mr. Paul Seitz for the purpose of providing a report in this regard. Mr. Seitz provided a summary of the survey and noted that it is the first time that the VCFA Office and Provost have joint sponsored a campus survey. Mr. Seitz informed the Committee that the survey would be open for three weeks. Mr. Seitz stated that the Administration is committed to providing the survey in translated and hard copy versions. Mr. Seitz stated that the survey will be confidential and an analysis of the results will be conducted over the summer and analyzed in the fall. Mr. Seitz informed the Committee that the survey will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete and will be taken without loss of pay.

Discussion was heard regarding clarification of anonymity of respondents. Clarification was provided that while confidential, the survey is not anonymous but that it is arranged upwards so as to prevent reverse engineering. Results will be tabulated by the Survey Center.

Discussion was heard regarding events that will promote the survey. Discussion was heard that both daytime and evening events will be scheduled and employees with limited computer access will come to locations to take the survey, with CLS personnel being present. Employees may also have a hard copy sent to their homes and can reply with a postage paid envelope.

Clarification was sought if participation was mandatory. Reply came that participation is not mandatory and there will not be a list maintained of those who do not take it. Discussion was heard that the language used to promote the survey should be clear that it is not mandatory.

Discussion was heard that supervisors should not be present at group events if unbiased replies to the survey are the goal.

Concern was expressed that the survey makes inquiries on such matters about political and religious beliefs as well as mental health status which many will view as intrusive at best and illegal at worst. Reply came that the reason these types of questions are included to uncover those who might find themselves less valued if they hold certain views or affiliations.

Concern was expressed that many employees used shared devices that they can only access during break times.
Objection was heard that the verbiage ‘direct reports’ appears in the survey and that this language had long ago been discarded in campus documents as it was viewed as demeaning.

Question was heard if the communications outreach to the staff regarding the survey will include how the results will be used. Reply came in the affirmative.

Discussion was heard in the past that surveys have failed in the past due to poor participation, which in turn was the result of improper outreach.

Concern was heard that supervisors have too much influence over those who will be taking the survey and that someone other than front line supervisors should deliver survey information to the employees.

Concern was raised that the questions in the demographics section of the survey are being posed by the Administration, rather than an independent company outside of the campus. Question was raised if an outside agency could be used. Reply came that this is not being considered and that the engagement of the Survey Center provides a level of independence.

Clarification was provided that respondents can take all or part of the survey, skipping questions they do not wish to reply to. Question was raised if a ‘do not wish to reply’ option will be added to the questions as this might reveal more information than an unanswered question. Reply was in the negative.

At 3:33PM, Ms. Stodd moved, seconded by Ms. Schultz, to adjourn the meeting. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: J. Lease / Secretary