



SAC Meeting with President Martin

Friday, September 29, 2017

Below are questions asked by Staff Advisory Council Representatives and by staff members in attendance followed by President Martin's responses. The information provided in this document is not intended to be official meeting minutes nor is it verbatim of all remarks but rather a summarization of information for staff review

Where do you see the most immediate changes to our FGCU organizational structure as it relates to staff?

I promised I would give myself 3 months to understand FGCU before I tinker with it. Looking at ways to improve efficiencies across campus, in the coming months we will be rolling out some things to try. If it doesn't work, we'll stop doing it. There may be some displacement as well as structural changes and consolidation. We will be starting a new unit focused on Student Success and Enrollment Management charged with the way we guide students through the university. Some think the best way to improve graduation rates is to improve admission standards but we want FGCU to be a ladder and not a filter.

It was noticed that when discussions occurred regarding changes to the University due to hurricane Irma, both Student Government and Faculty Senate were consulted in the decision making process. However, SAC representatives were not actively involved in the conversation. How can SAC best partner with administration to be represented and included in the conversation for other university decisions?

I am sorry. It was not a conscious decision to exclude SAC. There were staff from functional areas at the table but no specific SAC members.

SAC is an important part of shared governance but there has been some resistance from directors and administrators (and supervisors) to allow employees to participate in SAC. How might you encourage active participation so that all staff feel able to be a part of SAC?

I will send a memo out in writing if it helps to endorse SAC and every staff person has the right and obligation to participate in shaping the university.

During recent dialogues with staff, a common theme was that staff believe that SAC serves an important purpose. However, most staff have 'given up' on SAC being able to effect change because historically suggestions have not been able to get past leadership. What will you do to ensure that SAC's voice is heard and considered by your cabinet?

I will engage personally in both formal and informal ways to bring issues to the administration. You have an open invitation to have coffee with me at Einstein's in the morning. Invite me personally into conversations that you feel is important.



In the past, all staff (meeting a minimum threshold) have received raises when faculty have received raises due to their collective bargaining agreement. Will you continue this practice?

Yes.

How do you see the future with performance based funding in the next three years?

We are taking a look at the modification to the formula because not all universities are the same. We are in the position to greatly improve our scores by looking at retention rates specifically. We can also focus on increasing our 6-year graduation rates by a few percentage points per year, it will help with funding as well.

What steps will be taken to ensure that staff are fairly and competitively compensated to ensure that we have “talented staff” (as mentioned in the five pillars: “FOCUS on enhancing the student experience by recruiting, retaining and exposing students to world-class researchers, outstanding faculty, and talented staff”)?

We need to be aware of what is happening around us so that our pay structure attracts, retains, and rewards good people. This will be answered when we look at classification. I am wanting to meet with the new HR director to review classification. I believe quite energetically that anyone who pursues higher education should be recognized for that as we are an institution of higher learning; it sends the message to our students that education is important.

Do you agree that employees perform better when they are treated well and what do you think about allowing flextime?

Of course people should be treated well. Flextime is acceptable if it does not impact student success and the function of the department. It is beneficial to many families and even my own daughter and son-in-law have utilized it – at their company. As long as we can get work done and work at a high level without impact to student success or the operation of the department, I am open to further conversation. It will be up to areas to determine if they can function that way. Lead, don't chase. Inspire and don't demean.

Due to the state funding budget deficit, staff did not receive a cost of living increase this year. Will you support non-monetary benefits to employees in lieu of wage increases? What non-monetary benefits have you implemented in the past that you believe have been successful in increasing staff morale?

I am not aware of the non-monetary benefits we offer now, so it is hard to answer, but I am open to some conversations about this as long as we are meeting the needs of the institution. If we define responsibilities and how they can be carried out at the highest level, I am open to conversations. Some things could be discounted tuition for children, there are some things where telecommuting works. We must be able to keep the business of the university.



There seems to be an increasing need to offer summer courses and revenue-generating programs. However, the lack of services such as transportation and dining are hindering our ability to fully serve our students and the community. Do you support providing the necessary resources for summer classes and programs?

We need to take a serious look at summer school to improve graduation rates. Can we also be more effective for students that come home to the Fort Myers area from other institutions during the summer and provide courses to transfer? We need to look at some creative ways to provide continuing education to create programs for private sector, certification programs and courses, etc. We need to fully assess the market; perhaps offer mini-semesters; maximize our utilization and have a bigger impact on our bottom line.

What are your thoughts about the Buckingham location?

No idea what our plans are for that location. Learning laboratory possibly?

What are your thoughts on offering more online classes?

We need to Blend and hybridized curriculum but need to make sure that faculty are trained to do so. We do have a space issue. We have 12.9 million of 45 million needed to build AB9. We will be buying some modules that will give us some space. We will be doing an evaluation of every unit on campus to determine who really doesn't need to be on campus and can we find a nearby office building to house some units.

What are your thoughts on Sabbatical leave for staff?

Again, I am open to conversation of it is a benefit to the university.

There is some feeling that even after following the proper process for dealing with workplace bullying, some staff still experience retribution or fear of retribution. How can workplace bullying be addressed if a staff member has used appropriate university resources such as Ombudsman and HR?

I strongly urge you to use the resources, like the Ombuds office and HR, but would encourage people to seek out the President (me) anonymously if you really feel you are not getting any resolution. Continue to remind yourself what we are all here for. We need to get to the point where we can do peer enforcement. Make it clear that bullying is not a value we have here at FGCU. But really, encourage them to come to Ombuds office first.

What is HRs involvement in this process? Advocate for employees?

Role of HR is to define and enforce the policies of this institution. Fully informed and formal complaint.

Civility issues?

Guiding principles in place, and policy, and that's publishing what our core values are. Have a conversation on how to publish this as an institution. Code or contract of mutual respect. Going through the exercise to make the commitment and respect certain principles.