UMSL EMPLOYEE FOCUS GROUPS: ONE YEAR LATER

What We Heard, What We Accomplished, and Where We Go Next
September 2022

Please scan the Menti Meter QR Code
OR
Go to menti.com and enter the code: 9114 1208
LOW STAFF MORALE: FOCUS GROUPS HOSTED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES

• 8 two-hour sessions in November – December 2021

• 147 registrants

• Facilitation method included individual, small group and large group discussions

• Focused on answering this question:
  – What actions can we take to improve UMSL staff morale?

• Each group identified 35+ responses
KEY THEMES

- Increase pay, flexibility and benefits
- Offer career advancement
- Build campus community
- Right-size staffing and workloads
- Support leaders and supervisors
THEME 1: INCREASE PAY, FLEXIBILITY, AND BENEFITS

What We Heard

- Increase pay: Merit, cost-of-living, market, higher minimum wage
- Provide more flexibility: Telework, flexible schedules, work/life balance
- Offer more benefits: HR-related benefits (e.g., health, retirement) and campus-based benefits (e.g., Rec Center membership, discounts for on-campus coffee/meals)

What We Accomplished

- Merit increases in August 2022
- Market-based increases coming in October 2022
- Unique UMSL remote work policy based on unit, position, and person, leveraging systemwide HR policies
- Hosted flex work training series
- Launched a Rec Center Membership Task Force

What accomplishments are we missing? Add to chat.
THEME 1 PRIORITIES: ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

MentiMeter: Vote for Your Top Priority

• Review pay grade/job titles within specific titles
• Continue prioritizing merit- and market-based pay increases
• Continue to support employees with tools and strategies for flexible work arrangements

Note: Please jot down other ideas and be prepared to contribute them at the end of the session
Please rank these priorities in order of importance

1st: Review pay grade/job titles within specific titles

2nd: Continue prioritizing merit-based and market-based pay increases

3rd: Continue to support employees with tools and strategies for flexible work arrangements

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THEME 2: OFFER CAREER ADVANCEMENT

What We Heard

• Support employee development with clear career paths
• Establish clear and equitable paths for upward and lateral mobility
• Encourage promoting from within
• Develop mentoring and cross-training programs
• Dedicate time for professional development

What We Accomplished

• Provided regular monthly trainings including sessions on topics such as:
  – Performance Appraisals and Self Appraisals; Merit Calibration; Responding to Feedback; and Compassionate Candor
• Launched the Emerging Leaders Program
• Participated in the Systemwide Staff Development week
• Posted salary ranges for staff job postings
• Streamlined and created more transparency around the HR processes for job code changes and promotions

What accomplishments are we missing? Add to chat.
THEME 2 PRIORITIES: ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

MentiMeter: Vote for Your Top Priority

- Host training on HR processes for job code changes and promotions
- Continue to invest in the Emerging Leaders Program and accept a new cohort next Summer/Fall
- Conduct a semesterly survey of professional development needs
- Assign a committee to explore a mentoring program

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1st | Host training on HR processes for job code changes and promotions

2nd | Continue to invest in the Emerging Leaders Program and accept a new cohort next Summer/Fall

3rd | Conduct a semesterly survey of professional development needs

4th | Assign a committee to explore a mentoring program
THEME 3: BUILD CAMPUS COMMUNITY

What We Heard
- Host more employee appreciation events
- Offer personal, targeted recognition
- Provide recognition for contributions to the community
- Give recognition to staff who go above and beyond
- Offer networking events
- Enhance inclusivity

What We Accomplished
- Provided a resource on fostering inclusive teams
- Created and regularly monitor an anonymous feedback portal
- Hosted Campus Community Conversations on two “key topics” – Facilities and UMSL Police & Campus Safety
- Partnered with Staff Association on updating the staff recognition award process
- Conducted a “pulse” survey for staff feedback

What accomplishments are we missing? Add to chat.
THEME 3 PRIORITIES: ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

MentiMeter: Vote for Your Top Priority

• Conduct a follow-up “pulse” survey for staff feedback
• Host monthly open “office hours” / coffee talks with senior leaders
• Provide a session for employees on ways to build community on a team
• Provide a session for employees on recognition
• Host a staff appreciation event

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1st | Conduct a follow-up “pulse” survey for staff feedback
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4th | Provide a session for employees on recognition
5th | Host a staff appreciation event
# THEME 4: RIGHT-SIZE STAFFING AND WORKLOADS

## What We Heard
- Hire an adequate number of employees for workload
- Refill vacancies
- Stop consolidating jobs
- Focus work tasks on most important or prioritized efforts
- Have realistic work expectations
- Ensure job descriptions reflect actual duties
- Streamline business processes

## What We Accomplished
- Streamlining HR business processes through Shared Services
- Hosted a hiring series to help equip our leaders to refill vacancies
- Started advertising jobs in additional venues
- Provided Equity Advisor training
- Centralized I-9
- Developed resources on HR’s website
- Staff Association supported Mirth Week

What accomplishments are we missing? Add to chat.
THEME 4 PRIорITIES: ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

MentiMeter: Vote for Your Top Priority

• Host training session on having work prioritization conversations
• Focus on recruiting metrics and improving the time-to-fill
• Re-offer and build upon the Hiring Series training sessions

Note: Please jot down other ideas and be prepared to contribute them at the end of the session
Please rank these priorities in order of importance

1st | Host training session on having work prioritization conversations

2nd | Focus on recruiting metrics and improving the time-to-fill

3rd | Re-offer and build upon the Hiring Series training sessions
THEME 5: SUPPORT LEADERS AND SUPERVISORS

What We Heard

• Promote authentic communication from supervisors and administrators
• Provide consistent transparency from campus leadership
• Enhance cultural competency
• Foster candid communication
• Demonstrate sensitivity to staff in messaging
• Provide more supervisor training

What We Accomplished

• Developed HR resources and HR website
• Launched anonymous feedback on HR’s website
• Offer open office hours with Provost’s Office
• Offer supervisory training on receiving feedback and compassionate candor
• Provide regular monthly trainings including sessions on topics such as: FMLA and Shared Leave; Job Postings; Applicant Selection and Interviewing; Employee Onboarding; The Wellness Team; Flex Work 101; and Flex Work Best Practices
• Implemented the Emerging Leaders Program
• Hosted regular HR meetings with unit leaders (Deans, IT, facilities) and staff groups (Staff association, BFSA)
• Provided 1:1 support with supervisors

What accomplishments are we missing? Add to chat.
THEME 5 PRIORITIES: ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

MentiMeter: Vote for Your Top Priority

• Continue to invest in Emerging Leaders Program
• Continue to offer supervisor specific professional development sessions
• Launch a “microsessions” series on HR/compliance topics that supervisor may encounter
• Pilot an Ombuds program

Note: Please jot down other ideas and be prepared to contribute them at the end of the session
Go to www.menti.com and use the code 🌟
What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?
COMMUNICATING AS WE GO FORWARD

• MentiMeter Options [voting]
  – More focus groups
  – Continued anonymous survey collection
  – Help employees have conversations with their supervisors
  – Leaders host regular conversations with employees in their units

• What else?
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What did we miss? Are there other ways you would like us to utilize to hear your input and feedback?
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!
Please rank these priorities in order of importance

1st: Continue prioritizing merit-based pay increases

2nd: Review pay grade/job titles within specific titles, such as academic advisors, maintenance/operations, and more.

3rd: Continue to support employees with tools and strategies for flexible work arrangements
Please rank these priorities in order of importance

1st: Host training on HR processes for job code changes and promotions

2nd: Conduct a semesterly survey of professional development needs

3rd: Continue to invest in the Emerging Leaders Program and accept a new cohort next Summer/Fall

4th: Assign a committee to explore a mentoring program
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Please rank these priorities in order of importance:

1st: Continue to offer supervisor specific professional development sessions
2nd: Pilot an Ombuds program
3rd: Launch a “microsessions” series on HR/compliance topics that supervisor may encounter
4th: Continue to invest in Emerging Leaders Program
What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?

- N/A
- Take a look at critical open positions and find solutions
- Market rate pay
- Some units are not supported by core funding and have to earn all their money themselves. Even with this, the units are always governed by the university rules even though there are funds to give more frequent and higher merit raises
- Cost of living has skyrocketed over the past year. Appropriate merit and market increases to combat cost of living increases is key.
- Continue to streamline and quicken hiring process
- Are you planning to meet with units themselves and talk with them about concerns or questions? Leaders can sometimes be out of touch
- I'd like to not lose 10 days of leave.
What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?

- Thank you for the hard work!
- Academic staff categorization
- Help find ways to improve staff retention.
- Training program for new employees
- Appropriate market increases to account for the increase in the cost of living
- Continue to improve onboarding/shared services hiring
- Cost of Living rate increase
- Continue to right work loads. Prioritization is great but if you are doing the jobs of 4 people that is hard.
- Look at equity of pay for our student leaders across campus to help increase with cost of living for student wages. Plus balance with staff/faculty to student wages so it is balanced.
What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?

- Opportunity for staff to evaluate supervisors
- Agreed on losing leave is unfair.
- Targeted training for supervisors who are poorly rated
- Merit raises or Market rate pay every year
- If merit increases are supposed to incorporate cost of living increases then there should be easier to qualify
- PTO hours not changing. Not taking away 10 days.
- Not decreasing the PTO hours we receive with the “proposed new leave modernization”
- I’d like to not lose access to leave I’ve accrued. I’d also like for regular review of job codes
- Easier process to realign job codes and make that more equitable
What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blue</th>
<th>The PTO program takes away leave from employees. If this is approved, it would be a negative for the employees.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>I don't think there's one good answer. Some people will be comfortable talking to the supervisor, some not. Multiple options would be best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Competitive market pay is necessary. Many positions are not competitive and this will help retain good employees. Turn-over rate has been high at UMSL. Focus groups and surveys are helpful for feedback. Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Do not change the staff leave policy. This would be another blow to staff morale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>I would very much like to not lose 10 days of leave per year! In addition, I'm really concerned about people choosing to go into work when sick, particularly in a pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>I really appreciate all the work you have done since the focus groups in the Spring. However, I feel that all your hard work is being undermined by the higher ups. With the “modernization” of the leave program, morale is at all time low in my team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>More transparency with open positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Explanation of the Justification committee who decides of merit-based pay increases, or more importantly, the clear lack thereof.</td>
</tr>
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What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?

Some transferred into new positions before January did not get a merit increase. Will they look at for the other type of raise? Between January thru summer promotional transfers, their raises were included with promotions.
What did we miss? Are there other ways you would like us to utilize to hear your input and feedback?

- More focus groups
- Small scale listening sessions
- More frequent pulse surveys

- More feedback sessions like this one
- Sessions that include other top leaders
- Continue to seek feedback on a regular basis

- More focus groups
- Focus groups or discussion sessions
- Targeted meetings with individual departments.
What did we miss? Are there other ways you would like us to utilize to hear your input and feedback?

- Discussions on specific topics
- We want to hear from other leaders too
- Meeting to help us understand the Justification committee

- Publicize meetings like B&P so people know about them and can plan ahead and have it on their calendar - and that they are open sessions to attend
- Having leaders meet with the individual departments and therefore putting faces to names. Knowing who the people are that are affected by decisions made by executive leadership, whether good or bad. Thank you for this opportunity

- Staffwide monthly meetings to know all general updates to campus.
- In person sessions for our staff who do not have computers
- Make sure we hear from facilities and janitorial staff.

- A min of two weeks notice ahead of HR feedback meetings. Some departments need this due to heavy clinical scheduling.
What did we miss? Are there other ways you would like us to utilize to hear your input and feedback?

- Allow stakeholders to attend Justification committee sessions
- Continue to use a variety of avenues to communicate with HR and the community as a whole.
- Continue to utilize multiple ways for us to communicate our input and feedback
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What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?

- Training for Mentimeter to use in our departments
- Set up Zoom sessions between staff and executive leaders
- Career progression pathways
- Doesn’t seem that the condition of facilities, food service, grounds were addressed in any of the priorities. Why
- Employee access to Rec Center at no cost
- Training sessions on how market is determined
- Find intentional ways to increase the fun factor on campus
- Cross department meetings, or updates.
- Flex work option AND competitive pay are necessary or we will continue to lose staff. Especially since BOC already voted to change PTO and staff were just now brought in for details about the changes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with individual staff members</td>
<td>Discuss specific issues that face them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide stress management sessions</td>
<td>Session opportunities for faculty/staff during busy times of the year (like the students have during midterms/finals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to work towards saving our days off.</td>
<td>Some people can't afford to lose 10 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to host informational sessions about equity and market rate opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short trainings or brown bags on technologies to foster collaboration, design, canva, social explorer etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>New PTO policy is still unclear, especially re: vacation days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff led professional development/conversations (i.e. senior staff members panel discussions/forums for new professionals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>More personalized HR support for UMSL staff, rather than everything going through shared services and UM System.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding the importance of staff recognition, pay, appreciation, and flexible work options to stop staff from leaving.</td>
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What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?

- But what are the results? What is being done to improve the facilities, food service, etc?
- Flexible work options (from home, flexible hours, etc)
- Structured training on tech skills.
- Is there a way to protect the 10 days we’re losing?
  Vacation/sick/personal days were a huge draw to me initially joining.
- sharing this list afterwards - can't read all as they scroll
- Hold some in-person sessions for staff without offices and/or regular computer access.
- Fully remote roles - some days I'm just in the office on Zoom with students.
- continue to educate supervisors on benefits of flex work
- Please share the slides and all of these comments after the session.
What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?

- South Campus would like some food and beverages. :)
- Flex work's importance noted to leadership
- More sessions on equity and market pay
- Continue to increase staff morale - for many it's still low.
- Transparent communication!
- Realizing that morale is low all across campus and that something has to be done to keep quality employees from leaving.
- Would you be open to doing a new survey on employee morale? Mine is very low, I'm curious if others are feeling the same.
- Did not get to watch this session or last session because we are understaffed so I'm not sure what was missed.
- Focus groups
What did we miss? What additional ideas/action items/priorities would you suggest to us this year?

Focus groups, small and medium chat groups.

focus groupsQ and As of what we're looking for.
Are there other ways you would like us to utilize to hear your input and feedback?

- **Focus groups**
- **Anonymous survey**
- **Brown bag sessions**

**Options**
- All of those are good methods. Find a balance and use them all.
- Focus groups and/or individual meetings
- Surveys, followed by focus groups
- Focus groups and webinars.

- **Focus groups**
- It is important that staff are able to talk with people who can take action. Otherwise you are wasting our time. Supervisors may not have the ability to change anything.
Are there other ways you would like us to utilize to hear your input and feedback?

- Focus groups
- lunch with the executive team
- I like anonymous surveys. The working HR session was great, depending on how much time we have...
- anonymous surveys can give a starting point for focus groups
- surveys
- focus groups are great
- anonymous survey
- Anonymous surveys
- Roundtable discussions.
Are there other ways you would like us to utilize to hear your input and feedback?

- Focus groups, anonymous chats and surveys, private Zoom sessions
- Work-life balance while teleworking
- Stop having all sessions during lunch periods

Ask us directly - don't ask the people in management possessions.