Focus Groups Feedback

- 7 Students
- 41 Staff
- 14 Faculty
- Vice Presidents

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Feedback: Key Themes from Focus Groups

A Relaunched Human Resources Function Should...

- Deliver basic services well.
- Be accessible.
- Provide equitable, fair and inclusive complaint procedures.
- Provide advocacy for faculty, staff and students.
- Build an inclusive, anti-racist and safe culture.

Deliver Basic Services Well
Staff & Administration's Comments Regarding…

Policies:

HR should write and implement College-wide policies with accurate communication—e.g., Work from Home Policy, Whistleblower Policy (Had one formerly, but it "disappeared." Need transparency),

HR needs clear policies, processes—too loose.

HR needs a deeper understanding of laws and policies.

Recruiting, Paying and Retaining Staff:

There is the perception that there is no guidance or rules for managers when hiring and paying employees. HR needs to publish a classification system.

HR should help managers hire employees (help with defining the job, sourcing candidates, and selection).

Faculty contract area is "a beast." HR should be able to help with that.

HR Functions

Staffing--

- Needs to be fully and properly staffed (not enough people; need experts in functional areas).

- Needs a stronger, more stable team.

- Needs a strong leader with a deeper understanding of laws and policies.

- Should focus on compensation, job descriptions, and performance evaluation.

Professional Development

- Should provide onboarding and training opportunities.

- Needs more, transparent opportunities for professional development for staff. Professional development is generally lacking for staff members.

- Needs to focus on professional development, career pathing, organization development and restructuring.

Deliver Basic Services Well
Staff & Administration's Comments Regarding…

HR's Role & Functions

HR should be empowered to communicate its purpose—What is HR? What does HR do? What is the right structure for HR?

Timeliness--

HR provides valuable services, but they need to be FASTER. Currently, you go in knowing this is going to take forever.

Things move too slowly in HR.

Strategic--

Strategic role is critical, but HR is not delivering on the basics.

Managers/Leaders need a thought partner.

HR should develop manager's training.

New VP needs to be able to relate to a lot of different constituencies in a shared governance environment.

Deliver Basic Services Well
Staff & Administration's Comments Regarding…

Processes & systems--

HR needs to own Workday as an HR System. Business processes need to be strengthened.

Vice President for HR needs to build processes, use technology effectively.

Recruitment, hiring & onboarding—

HR should ensure a consistent onboarding process across the College—set standards or at least provide a checklist. It is currently left to departments.

HR should manage the hiring process; help managers set compensation; have standard classifications; and help with sourcing candidates.

Deliver Basic Services Well
Faculty's Comments Regarding…

HR Functions Generally:

HR needs to better define its role at MICA. Faculty don't know what to expect from the department.

Timeliness--

Every interaction with HR goes at a glacial pace.

Professionalism—

HR needs to be more professional. They need to do a better job of managing expectations and communicating with those seeking their services.

Processes & Systems:

Faculty members have a difficult time using Workday. They need more support from HR, especially with recruitment.

Deliver Basic Services Well
Faculty Comments (cont'd)…

International Expertise—

HR needs to communicate more face-to-face and to demonstrate more understanding. HR needs to restore trust with international faculty.

HR needs someone with international employment expertise—someone who knows the rules and benefits that are particular to international employees. International faculty created an informal group to help each other navigate MICA and all of their needs.

Deliver Basic Services Well
Faculty's Comments (cont'd)…

Knowledge of Faculty Contracts—

HR has no understanding of the faculty contract. They don't know the difference between part-time and full-time faculty. They are all over worked—the department is understaffed.

Support for Hiring and Onboarding--

Faculty need more help in onboarding. New faculty (and some who have been around a while) still don't know what benefits are available.

Hiring Committees are messy and support from HR is spotty.

HR needs to improve the onboarding process for faculty. It takes a long time to complete all of the paperwork, and faculty have a difficult time getting the basic information about their employment, including pay rate.

Be Accessible
Staff and Administration's Comments Regarding…

Visibility

HR's web presence is outdated and inadequate.

There is no HR staff directory published anywhere.

Provide a safe place for students and staff to voice concerns.

Provide Equitable, Fair & Inclusive Complaint Procedures
Student Comments Regarding…

Filing Complaints:

Initiation & Review—

Need a "whistle-blowing" mechanism.

HR needs an objective party to review Title IX and Title VII cases. Currently, MICA "centers white."

MICA (and HR) should center the person impacted by the act of wrongdoing.

Safety--

Students need a psychologically safe space. There is hope that HR can help with that.

Students do not feel protected by HR. HR needs to train staff to handle acts of racism.

Provide Equitable, Fair & Inclusive Complaint Procedures
Student Comments Regarding (Cont'd)…

Filing Complaints:

Resolution--

Would love to have restorative justice practices in place. Counterpoint: Restorative Justice favors the aggressor.

Need a mechanism for seeking mediators.

There should be consequences for faculty and students who violate anti-racism policy.

Provide Equitable, Fair & Inclusive Complaint Procedures
Faculty Comments Regarding…

Processing & Recordkeeping:

HR needs to provide clarification of the Title IX process.

HR needs to do a better job of case management and recordkeeping.

Provide Advocacy for faculty, staff & students
Faculty & Students' Comments

Advocacy & Support:

Students--

BIPOC students feel no one cares. They need an administrator to take a stern position.

HR Needs an Ombuds role for inclusion.

Faculty--

Students with Title IX issues need more support.

People with disabilities—temporary or otherwise—need more support. Need help with accessibility of the campus, help with navigating insurance. The Hartford is slow and poor communicators. (Related to short-term disability, ADA and FMLA).

FMLA claims filed with the Hartford take too long. The process is too cumbersome and inefficient. HR should provide better support and advocacy to employees going through the process.

Build Inclusive, Anti-Racist & Safe Culture
Student Comments Regarding…

Training & Education:

Incoming freshmen need anti-racism training. HR could make that happen. Online anti-racist training is not taken seriously and does not work.

HR needs to educate faculty about managing racism in the classroom.

Add a Class plus test that is a threshold for admission.

Build Inclusive, Anti-Racist & Safe Culture
Student Comments Regarding…

Filing Complaints:

The "N" word and other discriminatorily offensive words should be regulated on campus.

MICA (and HR) should center the person impacted by the act of wrongdoing and should not use the First Amendment as a cover for the bad behavior of the privileged at MICA.

HR's Impact on Campus Culture Generally
Staff & Faculty Comments…

Staff—

HR should help to negotiate relations between different employee groups.

HR should be employee-centered and not institution-centered, as it is today.

Faculty—

Employees laid off by MICA this year had a no-disparagement clause in their severance agreement that was overly broad and too restrictive for MICA employees. The layoffs were implemented like the corporate sector—employees were informed at the end of the day on Friday—stripped of their keys, ID card, email cutoff, and escorted out by Campus Security.

What happened to the Friendly MICA? HR needs to make MICA friendly again.