

Board of Management

Performance and Nominations Committee

Date of Meeting	24 June 2020
Paper No.	PNC5-G
Agenda Item	5.1
Subject of Paper	Update on Staff Feedback to co-creating our flourishing future
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	J Gribben; HR Director
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Action	For Information

1. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note and comment as required on the relevant developments.

2. Purpose of Paper

This paper will provide a general update on a range of participatory and 'appreciative' approaches undertaken to learn from the thoughts, feelings and collective wisdom of our staff about what is currently working well and what we can do to improve.

The data generated at this stage will be developed and staff will be invited to contribute further to the process of **co-creating our flourishing future**.

3. Strategic Context and Key Points

3.1. Rationale for co-creating our flourishing future

The conditions of lock-down caused by the global Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented uncertainty and challenge to how we live and work. The way we have rapidly improvised, created solutions, modified our living spaces into working and teaching spaces almost overnight, demonstrates extraordinary resilience, agility, and adaptive leadership.

Aware that effective leadership requires not only the skills to envision improvement and plan for change but also the capacity to secure full engagement from those who need to make change happen, a triangulated approach to involving staff in co-creating our flourishing future is underway.

This will help inform iterative operational and curriculum planning processes along with longer term workforce development and structural plans.

3.2. A triangulated approach

Staff have been invited to share thoughts, feelings and wisdom through a participatory approach to resetting, reframing and realising our flourishing future.

This is being conducted through three separate channels, which are:

- A live portal where through use of appreciative questions we can learn about what staff value (Qualitative Inquiry).
- An all-staff survey designed around four themes Wellbeing, Communication, Leadership and Working Effectively (Quantitative Survey).
- A contextualised Digital Insights Survey from JISC focused on digital needs, user preferences and access to resources and programmes (Mixed Method).

Clear communication about the purpose of approach and importance of contributing to each of the aforementioned processes is being distributed through regular Principal's Briefing, E Mail circulars from HR&OD and through postings on Staff Resource Hub.

3.3 Learning to date

The staff survey and Digital Insights Survey remain live at the time of writing therefore it is too early to comment on any data generated, although it is worthwhile noting in that over one week we have received over 400 responses.

The Live Portal Inquiry provides instantaneous and visible responses to questions relating to organisational change and transition. It also enables others to vote on a scale of 0 - 5 and also to comment on posts made by peers.

Using 'appreciative' questions we are focused on identifying and doing more of **what is already working**, rather than looking for problems and trying to fix them. By doing so we can begin to make rapid strategic change possible by focusing on the core strengths and then using these strengths to reshape the future. On a practical level, this ensures the platform does not become a mechanism for negative venting or complaints.

Inviting people to share in this way also increases feelings of security and confidence. Involving everyone in discovering what works, and in building a future vision based on that, means we don't have to 'sell' it to them - it's already theirs. This will prove significant in increasing trust and commitment at this time.

3.4 What we asked and what we found

Q1: "What have you valued most from this period that we should ensure is retained?"

Q2: "What new ways of working have emerged that we want to hold onto and implement in any future design?"

Q3: "What old ways do we not want to return to because they do not seem to add value?"

Comment on general patterns and themes:

- Colleagues value the increased level of democratisation experienced in being able to apply flexibility in relation to work prioritisation and work pattern.
- Increased trust, autonomy, ability to self-manage, self-organise and self-regulate were clear
- Incorporating what is valued within structured plans, policies and procedures
- Not commuting has increased level of life - work balance, quality time with family, agile working, increased productivity and feelings of empowerment.
- Transitioning to online working and meeting and the positive possibilities of such

- Recognition of participatory approach to sharing thought, feeling and wisdom

In relation to elements which do not add value, the following is figural

- Over beauracratic processes - impacting on decision making and agile working
- Non digitised systems - time consuming paper based processes
- Managing expectations – staff and students for learning and teaching online
- Rationalising the range of learning platforms to ensure quality and consistency

In general, there appears to be widespread appreciation for the approach. There is also a recognition of caring and compassionate communication from the College Principal/ELT/SMT.

“We are not working from home - we are at home trying to work in a time of crisis” will have inspired people.

Similarly, it is recognised that merely by asking and involving people we are inspiring change.

4. Impact and Implications

The findings from each of the aforementioned processes will help inform iterative plans and priorities for how we reset, reframe and allocate resource to ensure we realise our flourishing future.