

**Employee Engagement  
Summer Retreat Summary  
(July 12 & 13 on the Campus of UMC)**

**Facilitators:** Jennifer Engler, Employee Engagement Manager/Leadership and Talent Development  
Rosie Barry, Employee Engagement Manager/Leadership and Talent Development

**Attendees:** Greg Benoit, Jana Brekken, Brandy Chaffee, Diane Christianson, Michelle Christopherson, Dave Danforth, Nell DeBoer, Sue Erickson, Mary Feller, Kim Gillette, Lorna Hollowell, Les Johnson, Barbara Keinath, Dale “Doc” Kemble, Megan Kragness, Donna Larson, Soo-Yin Lim-Thompson, John Loegering, Harouna Maiga, Venu Mukku, Peter Phaiah, Debi Race, Lisa Samuelson, Tricia Sanders, Jim Schaar, Jeff Sperling, Andrew Svec, Dan Svedarsky, Kevin Thompson, Elizabeth Tollefson, Stacie Varnson, Kristie Walker, Owen Williams, Chris Winjum, Fred Wood, Deb Zak

**E2 Survey Topics:**

1. Staff Development
2. Confidence and Trust in Leadership
3. Leadership Development

**Working Definitions:**

**Project Leader** is the person responsible for ensuring that the Project Team completes the project. The Project Leader develops the Project Plan with the team and manages the team's performance of project tasks. It is also the responsibility of the Project Leader to secure acceptance and approval of deliverables from the Project Sponsor and Stakeholders. The Project Leader is responsible for communication, including status reporting, escalation of issues that cannot be resolved in the team, and, in general, making sure the project is delivered in budget, on schedule, and within scope.

**Project Sponsor** is a leader with demonstrable interest in the outcome of the project who is responsible for securing spending authority and resources for the project. The Project Sponsor acts as a vocal and visible champion, legitimizes the project's goals and objectives, keeps abreast of major project activities, and is a decision-maker for the project. The Project Sponsor will participate in and/or lead project initiation and the development of the Project Charter. He or she will participate in project planning (high level) and the development of the Project Initiation Plan. The Project Sponsor provides support for the Project Leader; assists with major issues, problems, and removes obstacles; is active in planning the scope; approves scope changes; signs off on major deliverables; and signs off on approvals to proceed to each succeeding project phase.

## **Brief Workgroup Reports**

### **Topic: Confidence and Trust in Leadership**

**Project Leader:** Lisa Samuelson

**Project Sponsor:** Fred Wood

#### **Summary:**

The group agreed this is an extremely important topic and was fully engaged in the discussions. The group, however, struggled with this topic for a number of reasons related to uncertainty regarding the data and its interpretation (understandings who is in “leadership” varied greatly) and varying views of the definitions (how to define “trust” and “confidence”). Due to these challenges, the group then found it difficult to envision and develop a cohesive program which would include a comprehensive set of action steps to address this critically important area.

The group did, however, create a substantive and thoughtful list of independent action steps that could be taken to address the important area of confidence in leadership. Examples include:

- Improved communication (i.e., greater consistency, honesty, and transparency)
- Valuing all employees (i.e., providing all employees with additional opportunities for development)
- Encouraging employee engagement (i.e., soliciting input and either taking action or explaining inaction)
- Greater accountability of leaders (i.e., regular evaluation of leaders which would include input by supervisees)
- Greater opportunities for feedback (i.e., personal professional development plans and mid-year evaluations)
- Greater access and knowledge of supervisees’ work (i.e., “leadership by walking and doing”)

Careful examination of the initiatives being developed by the other two workgroups brought to light the considerable overlap in topics. Thus, we decided to incorporate these independent action steps into the work of the other groups. This is done with the understanding that confidence in leadership must be kept at the forefront of discussions within the Staff Development and Leadership Development groups. Members of the Confidence and Trust in Leadership group were strongly encouraged to join one or both of the other groups to ensure ideas to build greater trust and confidence in leaders are fully incorporated into discussions related to overall employee engagement.

**Topic: Staff Development**

**Project Leader:** Jeff Sperling

**Project Sponsor:** Les Johnson

**Summary:** The workgroup discussed the importance of staff development and had a robust dialogue on ideas and direction. As result, the following guidelines and objectives were formulated.

**Needs Statement:** Staff development and training is essential to sustaining the campus and helping it attain its mission. Investment in staff will improve individual growth, effectiveness, efficiency, and engagement.

**Purpose Statement:** UMC is committed to providing opportunities for employee development and training. The purpose of staff development is to nurture life-long learning and enhance personal and professional growth.

**Principles:**

- UMC is committed to creating and maintaining a healthy work environment.
- All employees have value.
- Employees need to be actively involved in planning for their individual growth and development.
- Supervisors need to work with employees to help identify areas of growth and future development.

**Objectives for 2016-17**

- Create Staff Engagement Committee
  - Develop two to four staff-led “Brown Bag Lunch Sessions” on topics of interest. Subjects might include understanding U of M policies, HR processes, classification and pay structures, higher education trends, Fair Labor Standards Act, Union/Civil Service rules, working with difficult employees, new software programs, etc.
  - Develop agenda and activities for staff during spring Professional Development Day.
- Communicate resources and opportunities currently available to staff (sent out once each semester)
  - Regent’s Scholarship Program
  - Professional Development Funds
  - Advanced Degree Tuition Reimbursement Program
  - New employee on-boarding materials
  - Campus speakers, evening events, etc.

**Possible objectives for years two and three**

- Provide training to improve supervisory skills
- Train supervisors to work with employees to develop individualized professional development plans.
- Help employees establish career goals and understand advancement opportunities (both internal and external).
- Promote strengths assessment to help employees understand personal assets and interests

**Topic: Leadership Development**

**Project Leader:** Kevin Thompson

**Project Sponsor:** Barbara Keinath

**Summary:**

Conversations on leadership development began last November with a request by the Faculty Assembly chair for leadership development for faculty. Shortly thereafter, minutes from a Twin Cities meeting included a sentence about a pilot leadership development program for new associate professors. With these as catalysts, starting a cohort of UMC faculty members in that program became the focus of several conversations with the UM Leadership Training and Development (LTD) team.

When the 2016 Employee Engagement survey data reflected an opportunity to improve trust and confidence in campus and department leaders, the message seemed clear. Thus, leadership development was identified as one of the focus areas for the summer retreat.

**Needs Statement:** To accomplish our mission and ensure future excellence, UMC must invest in leadership development for faculty and staff at all levels of the institution.

**Purpose Statement:** To foster current and emerging leaders as they advance the institution and inspire others through their careers.

**Work Would Inspire:**

- Be an organization of “difference makers” with students, employees, and community
- Enhanced collegial collaboration through the organization

**Objectives for 2016-2017**

- Launch a *Crookston Leads* cohort in the UM faculty development program led by the LTD group
- Begin work on creating a sustainable UMC leadership development program for all staff and faculty

**Next Steps**

- Work with the LTD group, faculty, and department heads to recruit and select a *Crookston Leads* cohort for a January 2017 start
- Reconvene the leadership development group from the summer retreat, along with an open invitation to all employees to be part of the work group on UMC’s leadership development program for staff and faculty