Transforming Staff-Faculty Relationships: Closing the Great Divide

ULEAD 2019

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Executive Summary

Our mission is to serve as a center for research, scholarship, and creativity and to teach a diverse community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to become the next generation of leaders. Through the efforts of our exceptional faculty and staff, and with generous support from North Carolina’s citizens, we invest our knowledge and resources to enhance access to learning and to foster the success and prosperity of each rising generation.

--University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel-Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill), faculty and staff are pivotal to the University’s mission to support the education of students as well as research and scholarly activities. Strong relationships between and among faculty and staff are critical to the success of this mission. Under the auspices of the University Leadership Education and Development (ULEAD) program, our five-person project team set out to explore and better understand the nature of faculty and staff relationships at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Data collected from published literature, campus surveys and key informant interviews about the state of staff-faculty relationships on campus identified areas of challenge as well as areas of strength at both the micro and macro levels, including the following:

1. Misperceptions about roles and responsibilities can lead to misunderstandings;
2. Communication challenges exist at the interpersonal level as well as the university level;
3. There are skills gaps for those faculty and staff in supervisory and managerial roles;
4. Variations in security, power and recognition between/among faculty and staff are divisive; and
5. Despite these challenges, there are pockets of excellence where engaging in shared goals with common purpose leads to success.

As a result of our findings, we developed a set of recommendations to further the goal of improving faculty-staff relationships by deliberately fostering a sense of community between all employees on campus. This can be accomplished by:

1. Creating and facilitating a common sense of purpose and reframing the work of faculty and staff around established goals;
2. Recognizing the contributions of both faculty and staff towards the mission of the University; and
3. Fostering a culture of mutual respect among and between faculty and staff.

Our report contains a detailed analysis of identified themes as well as a set of practical recommendations for university leadership and individual units centered around the idea of building a better university community.
Introduction

As the first public university in the United States, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (“UNC-Chapel Hill” or “the University”) strives to “serve as a center for research, scholarship, and creativity and to teach a diverse community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to become the next generation of leaders.” The University’s faculty and staff are at the center of this endeavor. Strong relationships between and among them are critical to the efficient functioning of the University and the continuation of the University’s mission.

The purpose of our project was to investigate the current state of these interdependent relationships at UNC-Chapel Hill. We anchored our work around several key questions:

- How do faculty and staff perceive each other, themselves, and their respective roles in the University community?
- What are the structural and social underpinnings that lie beneath those relationships and how do they contribute to the quality and quantity of interactions between and among each group?
- What recommendations can we make to strengthen the relationships between faculty and staff on campus?

Methods

This project utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. We used a three-prong approach consisting of (1) a literature review, (2) key-informant interviews, and (3) a review of additional data sources including institutional surveys.

The literature review served to familiarize the group with the existing literature on the topic of faculty-staff relationships and to frame our project. We also used this literature review to create interview questions for our potential key informants. A full list of references is provided at the end of this report.

We then selected faculty and staff who could give a high-level view of the climate at the University and asked them to participate in 30-minute interviews. In order to encourage candor, key informants were promised confidentiality. A total of 11 key informant interviews were conducted over a period of 6 weeks. Each interview was conducted in teams of two with one team member serving as the interviewer and another serving as the note-taker. Interview questions focused on three key areas of interest:

1. The current of the state of faculty-staff relationships
2. Ways to improve or enhance existing relationships
3. Examples of positive faculty-staff collaborations on campus that could serve as models

A full list of questions asked of key informants is attached as Appendix A. Interviews were free-flowing and interviewers and participants were allowed to expand on additional relevant topic areas.
Findings & Themes

UNC Employee Classifications and Structures

UNC-Chapel Hill is part of the University of North Carolina System (“UNC System”), a public, multi-campus university system composed of 16 institutions of higher education, one residential high school, and other educational, research, and public service organizations. The UNC System is governed by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the University President, but the authority and responsibility for the everyday management of each institution has been delegated to that institution’s Board of Trustees and Chancellor.

The North Carolina State Human Resources Act (G.S. 126) established a system of personnel administration for employees of the State of North Carolina, including University employees. As a result of this Act, employees of the University who are subject to this Act are identified by the abbreviation “SHRA” and those who are exempt from the Act are identified with “EHRA.” University employees may fall into either category. All faculty positions are designated as EHRA while staff positions may be designated as SHRA or EHRA Non-Faculty. In addition, within these categories, there may be an additional designation of exempt or non-exempt which refers to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). At UNC-Chapel Hill, the Office of Human Resources’ Classification and Compensation Department determines the FLSA regulations status for each staff position based on “the nature and the requirements of work performed and is not directly related to job title or to competency level.” As of Fall 2018, UNC-Chapel Hill had 12,741 permanent employees, comprising of 6,453 SHRA employees, 2,338 EHRA Non-Faculty employees and 3,950 Faculty employees.

These classifications of SHRA, EHRA Non-Faculty, and EHRA Faculty directly inform the compensation and benefit policies for each employee and the classifications are handled by different units within the University. The Office of Human Resources within the Workforce Strategy, Equity & Engagement Division is the central office responsible for personnel operations for all non-faculty (SHRA and EHRA Non-Faculty) employees. The Office of Academic Personnel within the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost is the central office responsible for personnel operations for all faculty (EHRA Faculty).

As a result of this structural separation within the University, we have chosen to include both EHRA Non-Faculty and SHRA employees in the category of “staff” even though in some situations these individuals may have duties which overlap with faculty roles such as teaching, mentoring, advising and research.

Exploring Faculty and Staff Relationships

Our literature review found that universities have been trying to understand their organizational structure and cope with the points of conflict in their institutions for decades. In addition, the form and function of the different faculty and staff roles at universities have changed over those decades, impacting the nature of the relationships among/between faculty and staff groups. While much of the literature has simplified the discussion into binaries such as “faculty and administration” or “faculty and staff”, even deciding on definitions for faculty, staff, and administration is a difficult and complex issue and sources do not agree on these definitions. In addition, much of the published findings focus
narrowly on a sub-group within these different categories (e.g., adjunct faculty, tenured faculty) precisely because of the complexities related to salaries, benefits, authorities and other issues.

Recently, the conversation has centered on a perceived, and growing rift, between faculty and staff. Several articles cited challenges in how different groups view themselves and their roles within the University and that conflicts arise through misperceptions around roles for self and other as well as different ‘cultures’ that operate within higher education institutions which may prompt conflicts as different values come into play.

The importance of this problem extends beyond simply employee satisfaction into the strategic objectives of universities, as organizational culture influences recruitment and retention. The National Faculty and Staff Health Assessment, conducted in early 2017 surveyed more than 2,000 faculty, staff and graduate students at institutions of higher learning across the U.S. and found that participants noted high rates of un-collegial to hostile behavior among co-workers. In addition, participants cited lack of perceived supports and resources to carry out work which impacted productivity and motivation. It is important to note that overall university organizational culture influences students’ overall educational experience. One critical aspect of a student’s positive campus cultural experience is the strong sense of community largely established by a constructive working relationship between faculty and staff. Several publications noted that alignment towards collaborations around a common purpose, with the most common example being engagement towards student success helped align faculty and staff as did aligning rewards systems with institutional mission.

Our Context: UNC-Chapel Hill

In 2018, the UNC System implemented the UNC System Employee Engagement Survey to further its strategic planning efforts. This annual survey collects data related to employee experiences at each of the 17 institutions within the UNC System. Faculty and staff respondents were asked to rank how strongly they agreed or disagreed with various statements related to employee engagement, job satisfaction and benefits satisfaction. 4,744 employees (38% of eligible employees) at UNC-Chapel Hill participated in the first annual survey. Responses were categorized into 5 different categories: Exceptional-Very Good, Fair-Good, Yellow Flag, Red Flag, and Acute.

One section of the survey asked specifically about faculty administration and staff relationships. For the statement:

"Faculty, administration, and staff work together to ensure the success of institution programs and initiatives"

UNC-Chapel Hill scored 66% which is considered fair to good in the survey scoring guidelines. For the statement:

"There is regular and open communication among faculty, administration, and staff"

UNC-Chapel Hill scored 46% which is considered a ‘red flag’ response.

Both of these measures are similar to scores for the UNC System as a whole but below all 5 peer benchmark groups, which included Modern Think’s Great Colleges to Work for Honor Roll, as well as
universities that participated in the Great Colleges program from the following groups: Carnegie Research I institutions, public four year universities, universities with a greater enrollment than 10,000, and Southeast Region universities.

Another source of data about faculty and staff relationships at UNC-Chapel Hill comes from the UNC-Chapel Hill Diversity & Inclusion Climate Survey, which was conducted with UNC-Chapel Hill staff and students in Spring 2016. This survey was designed to evaluate perceptions of the campus climate for diversity and inclusion. When asked,

*How important do you believe the following is at UNC-Chapel Hill currently:*  
*a sense of community among staff and faculty*

only 45% of staff respondents characterized it as a current high or highest priority at the University.

However, when asked

*How important do you believe the following should be at UNC-Chapel Hill:*  
*Developing a sense of community among staff and faculty*

81% of staff respondents said it should be high or highest priority.

Further information about faculty and staff relationships at UNC-Chapel Hill comes from the series of key informant interviews conducted with faculty and staff.

Key Informant Interviews

The responses we received during these interviews were, of course, subjective but we found common themes that emerged across interviews. This next section of this report will review these findings, many of which align with data from the literature review.

Misperceptions lead to Misunderstanding

Our interviews revealed that the state of faculty-staff relationships on campus is negatively impacted by a lack of understanding about constraints and pressures for each role. We asked our key informants what the biggest misconceptions faculty and staff have about one another and if the quality of relationships varied between subcategories of each group categories of faculty (tenured, non-tenured, adjunct, or by faculty rank) or staff (administrative, EHRA, SHRA). Responses indicated that relationships varied among sub-groups and were sometimes dependent on lines of authority or hierarchies. In addition, informants spoke to perceptions of widely held stereotypes that persist on campus. Negative stereotypes for staff included “lazy” or “unintelligent” and for faculty “arrogant” or “privileged” and they “do not work [as hard as staff]”. These stereotypes are not unique to UNC but to address these stereotypes we must acknowledge and understand that they exist and then deconstruct them. Several key informants recounted stories of misunderstandings and conflict that were divisive but that were resolved through deliberate engagement and communication.

There was clear consensus that in part, these misperceptions and stereotypes exist due to organizational silos which result in a lack of shared information and goals. In our interviews, we also found that these silos are not necessarily desired, particularly by staff and that there are perceived differences in how
faculty and staff are engaged with decision-making. Structures and organizational processes that contribute to and reinforce these silos need to be examined. Some examples of separation include governance groups, task forces and committees, and other structures including pay and benefits, all of which will be discussed below. In addition, key informants made suggestions about finding opportunities to better educate faculty and staff about recognizing levels of responsibilities for each group and provide a better understanding of the organizational constraints under which each group is operating.

Communication Challenges

Our interviews also revealed that many of these misperceptions stem from communication challenges on campus. We asked our key informants several questions designed to allow for open-ended descriptions of the relationships between faculty and staff, including asking them to describe what their typical interactions were like with the other group and finally to give examples of good working relationships and poor working relationships. Across all interviews, communication was the underlying factor in the examples of poor working relationships as well as the solution to improving those relationships.

Key informants cited issues at two levels: (1) structural, university, school and department-level communications; and (2) interpersonal communications. With respect to the first of these, many staff informants spoke about the need to increase the visibility of staff in formal University communications. Nearly all of our informants articulated that staff were less visible in University-wide and department level communications than faculty, a situation which many felt contributed to the distance between the two groups. For example, one informant explained that in department news briefs, faculty projects and undertakings will dominate, with very little coverage given to staff. In addition to communicating the message that staff contributions matter, and indeed are essential to the functioning of the University, shining a brighter spotlight on the ways in which staff contribute to the University could enhance faculty-staff relationships by bringing greater understanding to the roles and responsibilities that staff take and they ways in which they support the key work of faculty.

In addition, key informants noted the need for better communications at the interpersonal level. Some of our staff informants described multiple situations where they were not treated with respect by faculty colleagues and, similarly, some of our faculty informants also discussed knowing, with regret, that other faculty have behaved poorly toward staff. They attributed this "bad behavior" to a lack of understanding about the staff role at the University. Both faculty and staff informants also felt that this lack of understanding and recognition occurred at all levels of the University.

Focus on Management and Leadership

In addition to communication challenges, almost every key informant spoke to the need for additional training for those that are given management, supervision, and leadership responsibilities. Interviewees spoke to the fact that in the University setting, the indicators of success that will lead to promotion (both in faculty and staff roles) may not always align with the qualities, skills, and experiences we look for in good managers and leaders. The most obvious example is a faculty member who is an expert in their field, and a highly recognized researcher but who may not have ever had the opportunity for skills-based training in supervising people, or leading organizations. In addition, once a faculty member is in a position of leadership, there is currently little active and accessible training at UNC to help the person develop those skills early in their career as a manager.

While indicators of success that lead to promotion may be appropriate for academic advancement, there can and should be opportunities to give new managers and leaders the support they need to be
successful in those roles. Almost every key informant spoke to the need for management training for new and emerging leaders, particularly faculty members, as well as resources for mentorship and support, especially women leaders. While the University as a whole and specific units currently have management and leadership training resources,\textsuperscript{21-27} it was noted that these are not widespread enough, only open to certain categories of employees, difficult to access, or, that those most in need of such training are not encouraged or mandated to take such trainings.

For example, the Carolina BEST (Blueprint for Engaged Supervision Training)\textsuperscript{22} was repeatedly mentioned in our interviews as a quality training program. Ostensibly, this training is required of “every front-line supervisor of SHRA employees at the University” but, due to capacity issues, is, for all practical purposes, only utilized by supervisors who are themselves SHRA employees and not required of/extended to other employees in supervisory roles. There is also inconsistent (or non-existent) messaging and enforcement for faculty with supervision responsibilities to take trainings beyond those that are minimally required (e.g., around leave records or performance reviews). Many training opportunities may not be broadly communicated or may be perceived to be only for certain groups, even while open more broadly.

**Morale, Power, Benefits**

The topic of morale and power came up frequently in our interviews. Some of our informants suggested that there were “classes” or “castes” on campus and that the relative level of security, power and recognition varied between, and within, faculty and staff groups on campus. They spoke to the vulnerability that temporary or contract staff and part-time, non-tenured faculty feel in their positions which stifles their ability to voice issues and concerns. This perception is supported by data from the staff climate survey where less than half of staff members agreed with the idea that UNC encourages staff to have a public voice and share their ideas openly.\textsuperscript{21} They also spoke of quasi-faculty administrative positions where the individuals in those roles often felt out of place in an academic world which sees them neither as faculty or staff.

These imbalances in power are reflected in poorly defined role definition, in the governance of individual units, and the University governance as a whole. Some interviewees spoke to widespread perceptions that “expertise” at the University rests with faculty and that there is a lack of understanding that additional expertise (e.g., academic administration, student affairs, instruction and others) exists within staff. EHRA Non-Faculty staff, commonly hold doctoral degrees, may find themselves feeling out of place within the academic world which sees them neither as staff nor faculty or considers them as part of one group for some benefits and another for others.

In addition to the perceived hierarchy between and within faculty and staff groups, the structure of monetary and non-monetary compensation were also mentioned as factors contributing to low employee morale and a perceived disconnect between faculty and staff. All informants suggested that the salaries for both faculty and staff are perceived to be low when compared to peer institutions. This perception is supported by survey data including the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) faculty work-life survey, data from which was released at the November 2019 Faculty Council meeting where one-third of tenure and tenure track faculty respondents cited compensation rates as the worst thing about Carolina and one-quarter suggested changes in compensation benefits were a means of improving the workplace.\textsuperscript{28}

It is also important to recognize that the non-monetary ways of recognizing faculty and staff can also cause conflict between and within the two groups. We heard from our informants that they felt that
these awards generally favor tenured or tenure track faculty over other employees at the University. Informants expressed that when faculty and staff are asked by leadership to do more with fewer resources, tensions rise as all employees compete for the same scarce resources.

Shared Goals and Common Purpose Lead to Success
When we asked informants to give specific examples of groups or units on campus where faculty and staff worked well together, numerous examples were cited which had one thing in common: shared goals or purpose. These included academic initiatives in support of student success such as Carolina First. Specific causes or initiatives such as hurricane relief efforts, building more lactation rooms, or engagement around the state health plan or even Silent Sam were cited as instances where faculty, staff (and students) were fully engaged together. Other past initiatives that were viewed as positive collaborative moments included the creation of the Ombuds office and the restructure of the Service Award Program in 2016 to include faculty.

Multiple people spoke to specific organizational units on campus where relationships between faculty and staff were strong due to unit leadership/organization culture or within “identity groups” where individual status and role were secondary. The Women’s Center, Carolina Black Caucus, and the LGBTQ Center were cited as current examples of “pockets of excellence.” These groups appear to be successful because they incorporate multiple facets of good collaboration. By limiting their focus to a specific group or purpose, they are able to create strong communities of learning and outreach within the larger university. It is likely, as some interviewees suggested, that grouping by identity or by a short-term common goal allows faculty and staff to overlook each other’s titles and focus and see each other as people beyond hierarchy. There was wide agreement that projects succeed and organizational culture is positive when individuals mutually acknowledge and affirm each others’ roles.

Recommendations

Our work on this project revealed multiple opportunities and avenues for campus leadership to take action to improve faculty-staff relationships on campus, all of which can be pursued under the umbrella goal of Building Community. Our recommendations that follow aim to foster a greater sense of university community in three ways:

1) By creating a sense of common purpose. Our literature review and our key informant interviews made clear that diverse groups of people with competing interests and priorities can be motivated to work together for a common purpose. Here at the University, we think that common purpose is our mission – educating the students of this State. Our recommendations focus on how we can do that moving forward.

2) By recognizing contributions of both faculty and staff equally – by communicating to all audiences the importance of the contributions of faculty and staff to the success of the University and how each contributes to the larger purpose helps establish the interconnectedness and mutual dependency of all employees for success.

3) By fostering a culture of mutual respect – by valuing kindness, collegiality, and collaboration and supporting both skills, as well as accountability, to ensure this is distilled throughout the organization’s culture.

These recommendations align with larger University and system goals. In 2017, the UNC Board of Governors and then-University President Margaret Spellings unanimously approved a five-year strategic
plan for the University of North Carolina System. This plan defines goals in five key areas—Access, Student Success, Affordability and Efficiency, Economic Impact and Community Engagement, and Excellent and Diverse Institutions. With respect to the area of Excellent and Diverse Institutions, the plan includes the following goal related to Human Capital:

*The University will systematically focus on recruitment, retention, and development of the most talented and diverse workforce possible at all levels over the next five years.*

Furthermore, while not formally released, recent months have had presentations from the UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor and leadership team on the importance of building community on campus. As shown in our data, efforts to strengthen relationships between faculty and staff are of high value to employees.

What follows are some tangible recommendations to move forward in pursuit of these goals.

**Fostering Connections**

We recommend that any initiative to build community on campus be undertaken with a goal to foster both formal and informal connections between faculty and staff. One way the University as a whole and individual departments can do this is by promoting inclusive communications, such as The Well, which is designed to be a centralized news source for faculty and staff.

It is critical that faculty and staff collaborate and forge connections with each other as individuals. To do this, we recommend that more opportunities be created for faculty and staff to engage together in smaller cohorts outside of their academic units. One example where this mixed-group method already exists is the recently revised format of the New Employee Orientation, where faculty and staff are welcomed to the University together rather than in separate orientations. We can also look to other existing programs on campus for inspiration where faculty and staff have the opportunity to engage together such as the pockets of excellence sites sited earlier or programs that deliberately engage both faculty and staff or larger university level initiatives such as the Tar Heel Bus Tour.

In order to form common purpose and shared goals between faculty and staff, two models from other universities where initiatives were started to have faculty and staff co-teach classes. At Georgetown University, their Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship integrates technology and pedagogy in order to promote “discovery, engagement, and diversity in an ever-expanding conception of learning.” The Center collaborates across the university and includes staff, faculty and graduate students in the development of teaching practices.

At the University of Texas at Austin, a First-Year Interest Group (FIG) is designed to be a group of “18-25 first-year students who take two to four classes together during their first fall semester at UT. Each group attends a weekly seminar led by a peer mentor and a staff facilitator. FIG students develop a sense of community as they attend classes, study, and participate in various activities and events with their mentor and fellow first-years.” Additional examples from other institutions focus on collaborations between faculty and student affairs to support student success.

At UNC-Chapel Hill, the proposed IDEAs in Action Curriculum, approved by Faculty Council on April 12, 2019, will implement a “new an inclusive, contemporary, student-centered General Education curriculum.” This new Curriculum has the potential to be a way the University can strengthen relationships between faculty and staff through student success. As part of this new curriculum, one course that has already been piloted is EDUC 101: First Year Thriving, a two-credit course designed to acculturate first-year students to the University. This course is often taught by EHRA Non-Faculty staff in advising and other student affairs areas. Another place the University might consider investigating new ways to collaborate is with the new Ideas, Information and Inquiry (Triple-I) courses which are team-taught by faculty members across three disciplines.
Beyond academic courses, other efforts might focus where faculty and staff can be involved together in non-teaching capacities. These efforts can be framed around university goals such as community service or sustainability\textsuperscript{39,40} or academic advising and student success. Research on the topic of collaboration between faculty and student affairs has shown that these partnerships benefit students\textsuperscript{41} and, as cited earlier, the Carolina First initiative is already recognized as a pocket of excellence to build from here at Carolina.\textsuperscript{42} In addition, there is an opportunity to further prepare our students, both first generation and not, for success after university by encouraging collaboration between the separate offices of Undergraduate Retention and Careers Services.

**Structural Supports**

As noted by key informants, currently silos exist between staff and faculty governance structures. The Employee Forum is staff-centric while the Faculty Council supports faculty. Ensuring that staff is represented and has access to decision-making bodies and that policies and other considerations are thoughtful of staff needs would be important moving forward. Greater staff involvement in decision-making, clearer communication of roles and responsibilities, and an adequate rewards system can reduce faculty-staff tension.\textsuperscript{14} This could be accomplished by ensuring that staff groups have strong connections to university leadership as well as ensuring that there is regular communication between (or formal supports) between faculty and staff groups. When new initiatives are being formed, ensuring joint faculty and staff participation would be important, as would funding opportunities that jointly support faculty and staff engaged together.

Compensation and benefits is another area where deliberate and thoughtful innovation is needed given the overwhelming importance of these issues to all employees according to multiple data sources. The variations in compensation, benefits and job securities vary substantially and contribute strongly to perceptions of inequality and strain and discord.

Addressing these issues as feasible within state policies will be important. Examples could include exploring options for phased retirement (currently available only to tenured faculty), extending benefits packages such that premiums are deductibles are covered (similar to what faculty physicians currently receive) or exploring means of offsetting medical costs for certain employees with lower salaries where the impact of these costs is felt strongly. UNC System management of some benefits (separate from the main statewide system) should be explored.

Finally, while many of the issues of benefits are complicated due to state employment policies and regulations, the recent decision of the UNC System to extend parental leave to all employees is an excellent example of a benefits change that was widely supported and well-received.\textsuperscript{43}

**Building Leadership Capacity**

As noted earlier, there is a tremendous need to build expertise and capacity in leadership and management within employees. While the University as a whole and specific units currently have management and leadership training resources,\textsuperscript{22-28} such trainings are limited to certain categories of employees or certain units, difficult to access, or, those most in need of such trainings are not encouraged or mandated to attend. And, this need for training is not necessarily limited to management skills – it also applies to how we train our employees to work together under our model of shared governance. As one source put it, "The health of faculty governance may depend on its leaders devising practical courses for faculty on good practice in not only managing but in deliberating together efficiently."
While it may not be feasible to open up some training programs to all levels of employees, they still may be used as models for new programs, ideally those that target building leadership capacities for both faculty and staff, regardless of rank or position. Also, data show that training, in and of itself, can be a means of fostering community and collaboration and that leadership and leadership style at all levels of academic institutions are critical to governance outcomes and may be more important, in fact, than structural considerations.

Formalized Commitment
For our final recommendation, we believe that the University could signal its commitment to improving the relationships between faculty and staff on campus by establishing a task force or working group (or charging an existing one) with picking up where we left off. This joint committee should serve to formalize the endeavor and ensure participation at a structural level from all.

Any such task force or working group should be charged with three initial tasks:

1) Building from this initial ULEAD project effort to gather additional data, whether from additional surveys or listening sessions to better understand faculty-staff relationships at UNC-Chapel Hill, both in terms of challenges and to better understand the identified “pockets of excellence” and their success.

2) Evaluating and implementing specific action items based on the three pillars of building community. The task force should identify and oversee the implementation of "easy wins" that could serve as initial steps at strengthening relationships on campus, all of which should have clear outcomes and measurable goals. Some of these could be system-level efforts addressed at structural issues while others could be more social and informal. Examples we heard about in our interviews that might warrant further investigation and discussion include the possibility of an art exhibit featuring faculty and staff art, or a semi-formal program of assigning random faculty/staff groups for lunch or coffee meet ups.

3) Taking steps to evaluate and plan for longer range policy planning on topics of significance to this issue. One example here would be beginning a close review of pay and benefits structures and how they may differ for faculty and staff. From a curricular perspective, another might be to identify ways to incentivize faculty/staff collaboration in the classroom.

In addition, as with all strategies, it is important that the tone at the top supports the mission. In this case, in order to further enhance the faculty/staff relationship, University senior leaders should model and vocalize the importance of positive relationships between faculty and staff at all levels of the University. Leaders may believe that the faculty and staff relationship is important, but if they do not publicly express this, encourage collaboration, and demonstrate commitment, mid-level leaders and employees will not perceive that this is a priority for the organization.
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Appendix A – Key Informant Interview Guide

Short introduction with explanation of project, how information will be shared, confidentiality.

For our first set of questions, we are hoping you can give us your perspective from your specific role on campus.

1. How would you describe your role on campus?
2. What are your typical interactions like with the other group [faculty or staff]?
3. Do you work often with members of the other group [faculty/staff]? In what context and how?

For our next set of questions, we are hoping to hear your perspective about the state of relationships in the broader campus community.

4. What is unique about working in an academic setting like the University?
5. How would you describe the relationships between faculty and staff on campus?
6. Does the quality of relationships vary between subcategories of each group?
7. What is the biggest misconception you believe each group has about the other?
8. Please tell us about a time when you thought faculty and staff worked well together on something? Tell us about a time when they did not.
9. What are each group’s priorities? What is one topic or issue or priority you think faculty and staff can agree on?
10. If you could sit down with the chancellor right now and tell him one thing about the state of faculty/staff relationships on campus, what would it be?
11. What ideas do you have that would help to strengthen the relationship between faculty and staff?
12. Has anything been tried in the past and if so, what was the result?
13. What are some “pockets of excellence” where faculty and staff work well together? What are some best practices to encourage collaboration? Are there any formalized groups that do this well?
14. Is there any additional information you would like to share? Who are some other people you think we should connect with?

CLOSING: Thank you very much for you time. We very much appreciate your help with this project. When the project is finished we will have a final presentation and report and would be happy to share those with you.