CAS Faculty Meeting Survey Report

Attendance at CAS Faculty meetings has historically been very low. A survey was developed to capture the main reasons for low attendance, and suggestions for agenda items that could improve attendance. The survey was distributed electronically to 394 CAS faculty members, on 24 October 2008, with electronic reminders to those that did not respond on 3 and 10 November 2008.

The following message was included with the request to participate in the survey:

"Communication is essential if the college is to represent the broad view of the collective CAS faculty. One avenue to developing a broad view is to discuss issues as a college faculty. However, attendance at the CAS Faculty meetings is typically very low.

As chair of the CAS Faculty, I am responsible for scheduling and setting the agenda of the CAS Faculty meetings. I would appreciate your opinions on how we can improve the CAS Faculty meetings to facilitate communication on important issues. I will receive the data in summary form. Your name or email will not be associated with responses unless you put your name in there and want to discuss further in person."

Results

The results were presented at the Fall CAS faculty meeting on 3 December 2008. A summary of the survey results are presented here. 185 people responded to the survey for a response rate of **54.9%** (185 responses/337 valid addresses)

Profile of survey respondents

Rank of Respondent	% of Respondents
Non-Tenure Track	9.5
Instructor	6.1
Assistant Professor	13.6
Associate Professor	27.9
Professor	42.9

Question 1) How many times per academic year should a CAS Faculty Meeting be scheduled? and **Question 5**) If the faculty meetings focused on the items you found important in question 4, at what frequency should a CAS Faculty Meeting be scheduled?

Desired Frequency of Faculty Meetings

Number/Academic Year	Beginning of Survey (%)	End of Survey (%)
0	2.9	0.0
1	32.0	25.9
2	65.1	74.1

Eight comments were submitted. They indicated that CAS faculty meetings should be held "as needed."

Question 2) If you have not attended more than one CAS Faculty Meeting in the past two to three years, please indicate how applicable each of the following reasons are to you. (Not at all applicable, Somewhat applicable, Moderately applicable, Very applicable, Undecided)

Reasons for Not Attending CAS Faculty Meetings

Reasons	Moderately or Very Applicable
No substantive discussions that influence college actions	57.5 %
Information same as in departmental faculty meetings	56.5 %
Information same as electronic and paper information	52.4%
Schedule not convenient	48.4 %
Not able to voice concerns	37.4%

Thirty-five people supplied comments. The comments generally fell into 5 categories:

1. Nothing substantive is discussed
2. Nothing new is discussed
3. I don't have time, CAS Faculty meetings are a low priority for me relative to others activities
4. I'm a new faculty member and don't know about CAS faculty meetings
5. I am located off-campus, too far to travel for CAS faculty meeting

Question 3) Listed below are items typically on the agenda of CAS Faculty Meetings. How important is it to you that the following items occur during the CAS Faculty Meeting? (Not important, Somewhat important. Moderately important, Very Important, Undecided)

Relative Importance of Agenda Items

Agenda Items	Moderately or Very Important
Remarks from the Dean	86.5 %
Items from the floor	77.2 %
Introduction of new faculty and personnel	72.0 %
Remarks from Associate Deans	68.0 %
Issues for open discussion	64.8 %
College standing committee reports	58.8 %
Approval of previous minutes	19.8%

Question 4) How likely is it that the following activities would increase your attendance at a CAS Faculty Meeting? (Not likely, Somewhat Likely, Moderately Likely, Very Likely, Undecided)

Agenda Items that Would Increase Attendance

Agenda Items	Moderately or Very Likely to Increase My Attendance
Opportunity to provide input about decisions affecting the college	75.2 %
"Town Hall" – type Q & A for administrator or unit leader (submitted in advance)	64.3 %
Consider alternate solutions for CAS challenges, create recommendations for administrators	64.1 %
Discussion and input on college governance, topic announced in advance	63.8 %

Announcements of professional and financial importance	62.3 %
Create a mutual vision for CAS	60.4 %
Debate on topical issues, determined in advance	58.4 %
Opportunity to provide input about decisions affecting the college	75.2 %
Opportunity to network with faculty from other departments	53.0 %
Discussion with straw votes on topical issues	51.1 %
Strategic planning activities	44.5 %
Announcements and celebration of faculty successes	38.4 %
Short presentations on innovative research, teaching, extension programs	34.0 %
Refreshments	26.1 %
Door prizes	10.9 %

Eleven comments were provided. They generally agreed with this statement: "the CAS faculty meeting should be a forum for discussion of faculty/substantive issues." Examples of substantive issues included:

- Policy decisions
- Budgets/ investments in infrastructure
- Strategic initiatives
- "Burning issues" as opposed to committee reports (unless important issue for discussion)

Summary

According to the CAS Faculty Meeting survey, the CAS Faculty Meeting Agenda should emphasize:

- **Remarks from the Dean**
  - Include Q and A, address specific issues submitted in advance
- **Items from the floor**
  - Opportunity to provide input about decisions affecting the college
  - "Town Hall" – type Q & A for administrators/unit leaders, issues submitted in advance
  - Consider CAS challenges and opportunities, create recommendations for administrators
  - Discussion and input on college governance, topic announced in advance
- **Committee reports and previous minutes**
  - Submit and approve, distribute electronically with agenda in advance
  - Focus committee reports on issues requiring faculty discussion
  - Approve minutes electronically

Mary Barbercheck, 16 March 2009