

## **EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY**

Thursday, October 3, 2013, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
Njord Conference Room, Rampton Complex

**PRESENT:** Carlos Braceras, Executive Director  
Shane Marshall, Deputy Director  
Boyd Humpherys, Region Three  
Cherissa Wood, Operations  
Cindy Manchego, Administration  
Denece Sheppick, Region Two  
Donna Beagley, Region Four  
Ivan Hartle, Project Development  
Jake Brown, Region Two  
Jessica Rice, Project Development  
Keith Oman, Region One  
Kristi Urry, Program Development  
Liz Olschewski, Administration  
Michael Cole, Region Three  
Nick Kenczka, Program Development  
Ryan Halverson, Region One  
Tawnya Lang, Operations  
Diane Josie, Executive Assistant

**EXCUSED:** Ree Schena, Region Four

The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

### **1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

Carlos welcomed everyone and thanked them for agreeing to participate on the Employee Advisory Council (EAC). He explained the purpose of the Council is for employee representatives from the Department to gather and discuss pertinent issues with himself and Shane. Carlos told the group they can discuss whatever they want. He asked them what can be done to make employees be proud to work at UDOT. Carlos said he anticipates the minutes from these meetings will be distributed to the Department.

Everyone introduced themselves and provided some background information.

### **2. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **Employee Morale**

An EAC member began the discussion and said employee morale is low. He asked what the Council can do to address this issue. He said a lot of employees feel unappreciated because there is no way to acknowledge their work.

### **Performance Plans**

Employees feel there is no value to the current Performance Plans. They understand the goals and their value, but they ask what it means to their job performance. The inability to mark “exceeded expectations” is not an option on the Plans. Supervisors can’t point out an employee’s excellent efforts. Another EAC member said the goals on the Performance Plans are not personal. There is no flexibility for the goals. The Performance Plans are not user friendly.

### **Performance Recognition**

The EAC discussed communication to employees for a job well done. It is important to recognize the hard work of employees even if there is no money to give them. One EAC member pointed out it is a management style.

A few of the EAC members said they spend their own money to buy their groups pizzas or breakfast to thank them for their hard work. Another EAC member said supervisors do not feel burdened by doing this. A small reward goes a long way.

One EAC member said part of the issue is how things are perceived by employees. Why does one agency get something and another does not. Another EAC member mentioned getting coats for the maintenance crews every other year. The coats get old and dirty and lose reflectivity. He has started looking at things inside his budget to improve morale.

### **Outsourcing**

Outsourcing was discussed. Employees, both maintenance and office staff, are concerned they are going to lose their jobs. In the offices, consultants are hired to replace employees. This causes low morale. Carlos said nobody is going to lose their job because of outsourcing.

### **Policy Explanations**

An EAC member said he thinks the leaders need to do a better job of explaining the “whys” of policies or decisions. He mentioned the ethics and gift policy. It listed the things employees can or cannot do, but not the reasons why. A comment was made by Carlos or Shane that change is going to happen, and UDOT leadership will do their best to not only explain the change, but the “why”. However, everyone has to realize that sometimes the “why” is because it is the law or state policy.

### **Market Comparability Adjustments**

An EAC member mentioned the Market Comparability studies that are conducted by the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM). They provide a blanket statement about where employee positions fall within the market. They don’t include an explanation as to what

this means to employees. The member would like HR to explain how they come up with the information in the MCAs and why the employees may be below the market.

### **Employee Communication**

Carlos said he's struggling with how best to communicate with employees. He asked for ideas from the group about better communicating with employees.

One EAC member said she appreciates the convenience of webinars. Another member suggested some platform to explain UDOT's Strategic Plan to employees. Carlos asked if it would be helpful if he visited more employees. The employees thought if Carlos visited a couple of maintenance stations, his message would be spread to the other employees.

Shane mentioned that a relationship between the leaders and employees needs to be built. One member said some employees don't feel comfortable going to their managers. Shane said leadership is considering training for the managers. One EAC member said it's critical for information to get to employees.

One member suggested sharing feedback from this meeting at the UDOT Annual Conference. Carlos and Shane discussed the possibility of a breakout session where employees could ask questions. Carlos would like to keep it to employees only. One member suggested putting questions into a basket for those employees who are reluctant to ask questions in person.

### **3. RESPONSE TO DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Carlos asked the EAC if they want to hear responses on the issues discussed. The EAC members said they want to take the messages from this meeting back to the employees.

#### **Leadership Response to Morale Issue**

Carlos said he understands the morale issue. The leaders do not do enough to appreciate employees. They are putting some things in place to address this issue within the parameters we have been given. He explained money for the day-to-day items comes from the gas tax and managing empty FTE positions.

Carlos said during the last Sub-Cabinet Meeting he attended, a discussion was held with a representative from the Governor's Office who understands the need for a pay increase. The Governor will not allow increases for UDOT to be any different from other State agencies.

**FUTURE DISCUSSION ITEM:** Carlos offered to explain the process of funding at the next EAC meeting. The group would like a short explanation of the budget and funding at the next meeting.

**FUTURE DISCUSSION ITEM:** Carlos said he could explain the programs available to recognize employees at the next EAC meeting.

## **Leadership Response to Market Comparability Adjustments**

**FUTURE DISCUSSION ITEM:** The group would like to invite Carlos Rodriguez to the meeting to address the questions pertaining to the Market Comparability Adjustments.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

Carlos asked the group if they want the minutes from this meeting to be published Department-wide. They could be posted on the UDOT blog and a message sent to employees notifying them of the posting. The group agreed they wanted the minutes to be distributed.

**ACTION ITEM:** Any EAC members who have items to be discussed during future meetings can e-mail them to Diane Josie.

**ACTION ITEM:** Shane will review the minutes and they will be sent to the EAC members for review. Any changes will be noted before they are posted on the blog.

**ACTION ITEM:** The length of the meetings will be changed to two hours and will run from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.