

Town Hall Meeting Notes  
October 2, 2011  
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Small Group Discussion notes: “Improving the Staff and Board Experience”

Our small group did a go-around to make sure that everyone at the table could express his or her primary concern or idea. After hearing from everyone, we were out of time, but I was able to cluster ideas into three main themes. Below, I list those three themes and all related ideas that were either shared verbally or written on our butcher paper.

1. Improve communication within and between all Free Geek entities.
  - Improve communication between collective and non-collective—institute regular all-staff meetings
  - Support the union workers—bargaining unit needs time and space to make changes and ensure that the union contract is being followed
  - Allow on-the-clock time for bargaining unit/non-collective staff meetings
  - Create a way for people to communicate with the board (website?)
  - Liaison between staff and board [already exists]
  - Open directors’ list to all paid staff (if not public) except for executive session topics
  - Increase involvement in board activities, like we’re doing at this THM
  
2. Improve conditions for the staff so that turnover is reduced
  - Make Free Geek a better place to work
  - Keep improving physical space
  - Improve morale
  - Allow employees to grow—already true informally, provide a formalized professional way to do this
  - Allow promotion from within (especially in collective hirings)
  - Observation: there has been a lack of basic HR policies, and the “organic” versions of these policies that have grown over time have caused problems; there is a need for clarity and formal HR procedures
  - Observation: FG has changed such that the majority of staff is no longer on the collective
  - Recollectivize regular full-time workers
  - Improve benefits (bus passes, gym membership)
  - We should take advantage of all the “fresh blood”—lots of new staff members mean we can move beyond problems of the past and focus on making FG work
  - Pay the staff better!
  - Create new positions: Development/grants, dedicated PR person, more drivers

3. Utilize outside expertise
  - Observation: FG doesn't hire people for managerial skills, but they are expected to be managers
  - Hire an outside consultant/consultant with experience in collectives and labor relations that can act as a regular helping hand to Board and collective and union reps through the overhaul/rebuilding process