



What a Great Day!

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Thank you to everyone who participated in our annual retreat on July 1. Once we got past Greg's confusion about the name of the event and some of his own special communication issues, I thought the day was a great success. We wanted to know one another better, celebrate the many good things happening at the School, make progress on communication issues, and have fun. Well done!



More Pineapple?

The planning committee felt strongly about beginning to improve our communication skills at the retreat—as opposed to just planning for future improvements. Peg Carlson's session was perfect. It focused our attention on common challenges to effective communication and guided us through some exercises to improve our skills. I especially liked the exercise on identifying genuine and false questions. I'm trying hard to avoid failing the "you idiot" test. Peg is excellent—focused teaching, good humor, and the ability to put her audience at ease. Jim Drennan says he put extra pineapple into a fruit salad this weekend just to avoid the question. Peg's knowledge of our work made her session even more effective. The retreat was just the beginning of our efforts to improve communication. The Collaborative Work Environment (CWE) Committee will decide on next steps and I hope they will consider ways for Peg to continue working with us.

The hypothetical scenario in the afternoon allowed us to continue practicing our skills from Peg's session. It also produced greater awareness and good discussion about balancing responsiveness with our capacity to respond—in a variety of different circumstances. The folks at my table got into deeper questions about responsibility, authority, and respect for different roles. Like our session with Peg in the morning, it was intended as a starting point for future work on communication and collaboration. I am confident that the CWE Committee will study your suggestions from the retreat in deciding on our next steps.

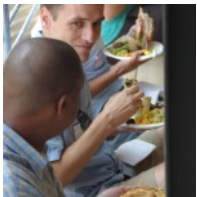


Todd and the Ripple Effect



I thought the afternoon demonstration of the ripple effect was terrific. It is one thing to know intuitively that lots of people are necessary to support our work. It was entirely different for me to see so many people forming a line that nearly went out the door. We all need to think about the consequences—the ripple effect—for others that flow from our individual work decisions. I did not have time to look at all of the leaves on the tree from our first activity, but I can't wait to check them out.

Lots of people were thanked on July 1, and they deserve enormous credit. The planning committee for the event was wonderful, and Greg and Cindy provided magnificent leadership. Maggie and Betsy were incredibly helpful during the planning stage, and their instructions for each exercise were crystal clear. The day was seamless largely because of their facilitation. I loved the Botanical Garden. The room was louder than ideal, but for me it was worth it to be in such a great setting.



Good Food, Good Company

Now I want to know what you thought about the retreat. I heard positive feedback and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, but this is the chance to share your feedback with the CWE Committee by completing the online survey:

https://uncodum.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eG8UfYw6fjuCL40. I don't want to hear any complaints about my van driving, but anything else is fair game. It is a short survey and your feedback will help Greg's and Cindy's committee as they continue implementing our strategic planning priority on communication and collaboration "for years to come." Thanks again to everyone for a wonderful day.