LEGISLATIVE AUDIT DIVISION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Legislative Audit Committee
Legislative Audit Division Employees
Legislative Branch Human Resources Manager

FROM: Angus Maciver, Legislative Auditor

DATE: October 20, 2021

RE: Results of 2021 Legislative Audit Division employee engagement survey

This memo summarizes information relating to our recently completed employee engagement survey. The survey results are being provided to both the Legislative Audit Committee (LAC) and the staff of the Legislative Audit Division (LAD) to facilitate a better understanding of the views of employees relative to their work environment and professional lives.

Background
Employee engagement surveys are a common means of assessing workplace morale and satisfaction. Although these kinds of surveys should never replace important one-on-one interactions between staff, they can help track and measure trends in engagement over time. The employee engagement survey is a standard part of the LAD Next50 strategic planning process. Measuring employee engagement is included as part of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) section of our strategic plan.

Survey Design and Administration
Our employee engagement survey is conducted annually in the fall. All LAD staff are invited to participate, although responses are not mandatory. The survey is designed and administered by the Legislative Branch Human Resources (HR) Manager, who retains control over the survey process independent of LAD leadership. All survey responses are provided on an anonymous basis and the HR Manager only reports results in a format that protects employee confidentiality. The survey consists of 15 positive attribute statements, which staff respond to using a Likert scale (Strongly/Somewhat/Neutral) for both agree (positive) and disagree (negative). The survey questions/statements mirror commonly used employee engagement survey formats but were also selected to reflect the LAD mission and vision statements, and organizational values and guiding principles. Supplementary narrative response questions were included to help identify additional positive and negative observations and experiences for employees. Two demographic questions were also included to help differentiate responses by organizational function/team and by length of service with LAD.

Response Rate
The survey was distributed to 42 LAD staff during early September 2021. Staff were provided approximately two weeks to complete the survey. The survey was completed by 34 staff, for a response rate of 81%. This response rate is down slightly when compared with previous surveys but is still large enough to provide reliable and representative results. This is the second year we

have seen declines in survey response and, although not critical, we will continue to find ways of encouraging staff to take part in this exercise and make their voices heard.

Results

Overall, 73%of responses to all questions were positive i.e. the employee responded on the positive side of the scale. This is only slightly lower than the 74% positive response in 2020, but otherwise shows a remarkable degree of stability. The past year has continued to be dominated by the impacts of the ongoing Covid pandemic. Given these circumstances and their impacts on the workplace, maintaining a higher level of positivity among employees should be seen as a sign of strength. Although there were variations between individual questions, we did not see a great deal of difference year-to-year in terms of how sentiment changed. The following table shows changes in how positively or negatively employees responded to each question based on the average weighted response from 2021 versus 2020. Higher (positive) values show improving sentiment for a question and lower (negative) values show decreasing levels of agreement.

Survey Question	% Change
I know my coworkers will take the initiative to help each other when needed	-2%
I am supported in my efforts to balance work commitments with the rest of my life	-2%
I am given the resources and time needed to do my job well	-1%
I believe in the division's mission	-1%
I understand how my work impacts the division's goals	-1%
I can discuss work problems in an open and honest manner	-1%
I believe we have successfully communicated our mission to the legislature	-1%
I would recommend this division to a friend as a good place to work	0%
I am encouraged to be innovative and come up with new ways of doing things	0%
I find it easy to collaborate with different people and teams within the division	0%
I get enough information from senior leadership about what is going on	0%
I have a clear understanding of my opportunities for career progression	0%
I am given the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect me	0%
I get the training and professional development support I need to be successful	1%
I am compensated in a way that fairly reflects the value of my work	2%

In addition to changes in response between the 2021 and 2020 surveys, the chart on page four of this memo shows all the questions/statements and ranks them using a weighted average to identify the most positive responses (top of the chart) and the most negative (bottom of the chart). The response scale for each question/statement is shown using colors in the chart. The combination of changes in response between 2021 and 2020, response sentiment in the current survey, and narrative comments provided by staff identify the following trends:

Compensation – survey results reinforce an existing trend toward greater satisfaction with compensation. We also asked a narrative question about recent changes in the LAD pay plan and career ladder. These responses were also generally positive, although some staff expressed concerns about the implementation timeframe, effects on promotion opportunities, and comparability with market compensation data. Overall, we should count our recent efforts to address compensation as a win. We are currently better positioned to weather what will be a very competitive labor market through the middle of next year (at least). However, some of the

comments provided by staff show we still have a communication deficit to address when it comes to the process for identifying comparable compensation markets. This is a challenge we should take on as the branch prepares its biennial market compensation survey in calendar year 2022.

Teamwork – this continues to be a strength area for us, but this year's survey does show some erosion in sentiment that we should take seriously. Questions relating to co-worker support, work-life balance, and time and resources all saw slight decreases in positivity between 2021 and 2020. We asked a narrative question about staff experiences with remote work over the past year, and many of the responses focused on the increasing strains and lack of predictability associated with the pandemic. This year's survey coincided with changes in both branch and LAD policies for remote work. These changes are designed to strike an appropriate balance between flexibility for staff and our division's business needs. Further evaluation of these changes through the course of the next year should help us stay ahead of any potential implementation problems.

The stability we see in employee engagement over the past year contrasts sharply with dynamic and often contradictory trends in the broader workforce and economy. We should not be complacent about these results as we are almost certainly going to deal with more change and disruption over the next year or more. LAD will not be immune from continuing changes in the labor market, and we will need to continue to evaluate the impacts of remote work culture on our organizational health. On balance, LAD staff sentiment shows we have come through the initial stages of the Covid pandemic relatively well, but we should not let our guard down or stop focusing on our existing strengths and our opportunities to get better at what we do.

2021 LAD Employee Engagement Survey Results

Chart legend: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree

Survey statements (top to bottom):
- I believe in the division's mission
- I understand how my work impacts the division's goals
- I am supported in my efforts to balance work commitments with the rest of my life
- I find it easy to collaborate with different people and teams within the division
- I know my coworkers will take the initiative to help each other when needed
- I am encouraged to be innovative and come up with new ways of doing things
- I am compensated in a way that fairly reflects the value of my work
- I can discuss work problems in an open and honest manner
- I have a clear understanding of my opportunities for career progression
- I get the training and professional development support I need to be successful
- I would recommend this division to a friend as a good place to work
- I am given the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect me
- I get enough information from senior leadership about what is going on
- I am given the resources and time needed to do my job well
- I believe we have successfully communicated our mission to the legislature