



COMMITTEE FOR DISTRICT OPERATIONS REVIEW

OBSERVATIONS, QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



**SEATTLE
COLLEGES**

Central · North · South · SVI

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INTRODUCTION

Soon after our new chancellor, Dr. Shouan Pan, arrived at the Seattle Colleges, he presented four guiding principles to the Board of Trustees. One of the four principles is integration and differentiation. This guiding principle along with a concept paper titled Achieving Systems Integration (ASI) were the catalysts that led the committee's work. The chancellor invited a group of employees, from both the district and colleges, to participate in an ad hoc committee subsequently named the Committee for District Operations Review (CDOR). The membership included three vice presidents, each appointed by their president; a representative from each union; and two district office employees (the vice chancellor of education, as convener, and the director of telecommunications). Two additional vice chancellors--human resources and finance--were resource people to the committee. The committee met from December 2016 through May 2017 but in February 2017 the chancellor expanded this committee's function to also serve as the taskforce to work closely with an outside consultant who was doing an in-depth study related to ASI.

COMMITTEE CHARGE/ SCOPE OF WORK

The initial charge of the committee was to review the staffing in each department at the district office, including their functions and responsibilities, and prepare a set of recommendations/ findings by the end of spring quarter 2017.

The following set of questions guided the review process:

Original Questions

- What district departments uniquely serve the campuses?
- Could functional areas be reorganized for efficiencies?
- Are there duplications between the district and campus positions?
- Are there district positions which should be reorganized or eliminated?
- Are there functions at both the colleges and district that should be more centralized?

The chancellor met with the committee and reminded the members of the following:

- Be confidential with information you gather.
- The colleges work is to serve students.
- The total number of employees has increased during a time frame in which the colleges are serving fewer students. The state funding formula will not allow us to sustain this practice.
- We need to find a way to pay our employees better.
- The committee should review the historical structure of the District with fresh eyes.
- Review other multi-campus districts for their structure: Pierce, Spokane, Portland and San Diego.
- Comprise a set of questions that can be used by others. Similar work on each of the campuses will follow.

DATA REVIEW

The data reviewed by committee members included the following reports:

Districtwide Budget Review Committee, March 4, 2011

IT Study, 2010

Districtwide Employee Survey, November 2009

Committee members also reviewed organizational charts from community college systems with multiple colleges within Washington as well as outside Washington.

Each job description at the district was reviewed to help committee members answer the questions posed in the charge. In some instances, there were no job descriptions.

OBSERVATIONS, QUESTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee reviewed all departments that reside at the district office. The following observations, questions and recommendations were developed during this six-month review:

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Observations

All workforce funding and student services occur at the campus level, where the students are. These are critical functions that are best located on campuses. Each campus workforce development area is led by a dean, which appears to be the appropriate level of leadership for this function. This is in line with how other colleges in the state of Washington are organized.

Two positions, the associate vice chancellor and 30% of the director of workforce projects and initiatives are state-funded. All other positions are temporary or grant-funded.

Several years ago, a position was created at the district to oversee the development of the Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) degrees district-wide, but since then the colleges have chosen to establish and manage their own BAS programs. Although there is a shared application process under development, all other program implementation is campus-based; i.e. faculty hiring and ongoing support, advising, financial aid/funding, and instruction. Campuses, through the deans and vice presidents for instruction, have the necessary leadership to shepherd new B.A.S. degrees through the SBCTC system. This is in line with how other colleges in the state of Washington are organized. If a more coordinated approach is desired, it can be achieved under direction of the vice presidents for instruction and the vice chancellor of academic and student success.

There is a vacant, grant-funded position which has been proposed by the Workforce Development department. It is proposed to be an executive director title to start-up a College for Working Adults program. The executive director title and position seems overbuilt for a small program that is not very complex and is yet developing. Executive director positions traditionally oversee complex areas.

Districtwide grant efforts could be coordinated at district but still must be implemented on campuses.

Questions

How much of this work is being duplicated at the college level?

How does the district associate vice chancellor coordinate with college workforce executive deans?
What criteria were used to establish the associate vice chancellor position for the district?

Does the role of the associate vice chancellor fit under the new vice chancellor of academic and student success position?

Could the college workforce deans specialize in certain area for the entire district such as allied health, trades, etc., instead of serving just one college?

Recommendations

It is important to explore the work and reporting relationships of the associate vice chancellor for workforce development and college workforce deans in more detail. This position should be reviewed for alignment with the new functions of the vice chancellor of academic and student success.

- Workforce development appears to be an area where campus and districtwide functions overlap. More review of these areas and how they integrate, support and/or work together needs to be done before an informed decision can be made.
- The associate vice chancellor position often serves as an agent representing the colleges to outside business and industry. It is recommended to consider consolidating the “agent” role into the vice chancellor of academic and student success responsibility. Likely, another coordinator position would be needed to implement other necessary workforce and economic development functions.
- Discontinue B.A.S. function of associate vice chancellor role. Strengthen the responsibility of B.A.S. expansion coordination via vice presidents for instruction and vice chancellor for academic and student success.
- Workforce Development could be decentralized. Positions which are not grant-funded could be restructured or eliminated.
- To create cost savings, eliminate the associate vice chancellor function from the district.
- Regarding the new but vacant grant funded position, create a lower level position like a coordinator or director (versus executive director) at the district level who can coordinate and support campus-level implementation of workforce grant efforts and the remaining work required for College for Working Adults (CWA).
- The grant-funded positions would persist to the end of the respective grants, and the coordinating director can work with campuses to make any positions state- funded to continue value-added grant-funded work after the funds expire. There should be a process in place to manage grant-funded positions so they do not roll over to state-funded positions upon expiration of the grant without full review and consideration.
- The grant funded position in workforce development focused on Career and Technical High School initiatives should be reviewed to determine value-added to the district and determine if there is overlap with campus-based initiatives.

- If it can be determined that Workforce Education at the district brings value to the colleges and contributes substantially to the Workforce programs at the campuses, the outreach coordinator in the department might be worthwhile.

CORPORATE AND CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

Observations

Corporate and Customized Training seems to have a limited reach in terms of revenue generation as compared to the training that happens on campuses. The district Corporate and Customized Training program has been operating as a 'third party,' rather than adding value to the campus-based training programs.

In an example shared from South, the district contract training office, when arranging for a training on campus, sought a "cut" of the fee from the company. This essentially created a loophole for the district to pay itself at the expense/effort of the college.

Since contract training actively takes place at the campuses, it seems inefficient to maintain a separate office. Further, the fact that these positions continue to be state-funded when the intention was that they become self-support a few years ago is concerning. These positions don't seem to be adequately supporting their function and the "incubation" period allowed for the work to get off the ground has lapsed. This department appears to be duplicating what the colleges are already doing without providing additional benefit.

Questions

Can this district department's function be absorbed by the campus-based continuing education departments?

Is the executive director position going to be replaced or will it be eliminated entirely? Is there a role of the district with the elimination of the executive director?

In addition to the vacant executive director position, there is a business development manager who is funded for 8 months. Will the position become permanent? To whom will that work shift to once the position is eliminated? Could the executive director have performed this work?

Recommendations

- The corporate and customized training department should be eliminated. The functions should be at the campuses or at one campus. If districtwide opportunities arise, they can be coordinated by the vice presidents for instruction and the vice chancellor for academic and student success.
- Continuing education staff have expressed a need for a district level position to help coordinate a common catalog and marketing programs. A coordinator position, rather than a fourth director, may be what is necessary at the district office.

- If the district role for corporate and customized training is to continue, create a firm timeline for when it should be self-support. The department should be closed if it cannot operate on a self-support basis that does not simply pay itself out of the programs implemented at the campuses.

FOUNDATION

Observations

There are four positions in this department including the associate vice chancellor. This area appears over-built, with lots of directors and high level positions, but no lower level positions being managed.

The Foundation office at the district office has grown considerably in a short amount of time. For many years, it was a single person office. Compared to the campus foundations, the district foundation does not raise very much money. Since “giving” to our colleges is largely neighborhood-based, and fundraising in a hyper-local level can tie local giving to our functions at a campus level, it seems most appropriate for the district foundation to focus on large, 6-figure donors for districtwide efforts.

The Chancellor's office has implemented a plan for integrating the foundation departments across the district.

No Questions

Recommendations

- Clearly communicate a path and message of where the district is heading. Be attentive to cultural changes in this area.
- Reduce district foundation office to one state-funded position, and grow in personnel and complexity as procurement and growth require via self-funded revenue. Replicate campus approach to funding positions: one state-funded leader, and self-supported functions that grow with the pace of portfolio growth.
- Hire a districtwide grants writer.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Observations

Many years back, a former chancellor directed the Seattle Colleges to provide a single centralized phone system that could be managed and maintained by a district office team of two individuals. That telecommunications team would be responsible for the planning, design, and direction of all telecommunications related services for the Seattle Colleges, as well as all maintenance, support, and training for more than 2,000 users. Telecom management and support requires a very specialized skill set, and is still supported by two positions working out of the district office.

No Questions

Recommendations

- Continue to maintain existing level of service. There may be future opportunities to cross train a few IT technicians at the campuses to help support the telecommunications team during extremely busy times, but for now, this department model and staffing level is working well.

Information Technology

Observations

In all the organizational charts reviewed, Information Technology is unique in envisioning itself as an enterprise-wide function, incorporating a single vision and strategy and a common platform across the organization. This enterprise-wide approach allows the organization to function more smoothly, be nimbler when technology changes are implemented, and realize economies of scale when purchasing equipment.

There are issues of capacity and prioritization in the Web Services Team. The current practice is that for desired improvements or developments (for example, Advisor Dashboard, etc.) that a campus or the district office must pay Web Services for the support, and are only able to do so if there are additional resources. If the office is to support the needs of the campuses in a functional way, then it needs to be adequately staffed and not just perform the improvements that come with special funding.

No Questions

Recommendations

This area needs to be more centralized from a leadership and strategic perspective. Several years ago, an outside consultant group (PTI) provided a report about integrating IT services around the district. In the PTI report there is a recommended structure for an integrated technology unit districtwide. This infrastructure should be updated to 2017 standards and implemented.

- Create a districtwide chief information officer(CIO). The CIO would also be responsible for IT security measures. This would replace the district IT director position. There would then be a separate chief financial officer (CFO) and CIO.
- IT specialists and technicians are still needed on the campuses to support labs and employees. Continue collaboration between district and campus IT specialists toward the goal of more consolidation and shared resources.
- Develop continuity across the colleges on the network structure, how documents and files are stored, firewall, purchasing, and applications.
- Continue to work toward a more integrated approach. Build on what is currently common and incorporate common practices with all new IT initiatives. Utilize the vast technology talent across the district by sharing campus expertise.
- Identify IT staff to work with instruction to implement technologies to improve student success processes.
- Continually monitor the status of the ctLink project to assess the value and specific needs of the district.
- Continue the work that the Library Technical Services department provides to the district.
- Explore integrating any campus-based web services into districtwide web services, especially around website and district applications.

- Clarify the various web services areas between IT and Marketing and Communications. Production of web services in IT continues to develop back-end applications, but all content development functions should be moved to the Communications and Marketing department for consistency.

FINANCE

Observations

The district accounting staff currently does the accounting work for the district's college campuses. In reviewing the multi-campus organizational charts for Spokane, Dallas, San Diego and Pierce, accounting is also an enterprise-wide function, and separate standalone accounting departments are not located on each college campus. It seems that it would cost more money to set up separate accounting departments at each campus rather than keep the structure as it is.

Some of the work, however, appears redundant and/or inefficient. The shared functions are necessary for operations of both the district office and the campuses. There is a need for stronger delineation of roles-- centralized accounting at the district and a definition and monitoring of accounting and budgeting activities at the campuses.

There is currently no expert on financial aid at the district. In an interview with two district financial aid directors, there was significant concern over the role and level of support provided by the district office accounting regarding timely drawdowns and support for campus compliance reporting. The functions related to the financial aid support at the district office are appropriately held at the district, but because they are dispersed widely throughout many staff members, the big picture understanding of the process and the impact is lost. As well, it appears that the lack of government fund accounting experience at the district level is impacting service.

With ctcLink, many of these processes might be more efficient and streamlined.

No Questions

Recommendations

- Good procurement and purchasing support is essential at the district level. Ensure more consolidation and collaboration between district procurement and local campus level purchasing.
- Match the proper level of experience of staff members (government fund accounting) to all related finance functions.
- Compare the size of Seattle Colleges' accounting department with other multi-campus districts of similar size, to get a sense of whether our organization is under or over resourced.
- Initiate thorough workflow mapping/LEAN processing that brings to the table district finance staff *and* financial aid staff from all campuses to review with very fine detail; who touches what piece of the process, and recommend a more effective and efficient workflow. Provide supervisory training as needed in director-level positions.
- Continue to improve the service levels and response times between accounting and the college campuses, but keep the structure as is.

- Improve coordination between campus Business Offices and Financial Aid Offices to ensure campus accounting needs are being met.

SUSTAINABILITY

No Observations

No Questions

Recommendations

- Continue to work toward full consolidation of Sustainability at the district office.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Observations

The work of the communications and marketing department is complex and the value of having an efficient department is more vital in this age of diverse media delivery systems.

There may be more of a focus on development of the district's web presence, but that responsibility also partially falls to the district's director of web services.

There is a great need for strong and cohesive graphic design in marketing and branding.

Updated job descriptions are needed to better reflect the work being done at the district office.

It is noted that this office has grown significantly in recent years from a two-person team to a team of five. While there is a good argument to make for strengthening communications, it is concerning to see such rapid growth in the current fiscal environment.

With the advent of social media, the responsibilities of the executive director have expanded over the years.

The Customer Relations Management (CRM) administrator is a relatively new function and data analysis and training will help define and support strategic recruitment planning and initiatives.

The communication specialist 4 plans and promotes publications and events on behalf of the chancellor, and performs duties outside of those of the executive director or director. As this position focuses on chancellor and district driven initiatives, this position performs a unique function, and doesn't duplicate work being done at the colleges campuses.

Questions

What are the differences between the job responsibilities of the executive director and the director?

What web services are delivered through the district web services department and what web related work is the director of communications responsible for? There is confusion about responsibility between these two teams.

What is the history of the CRM administrator? How long has the CRM been in use?

What is the districtwide vision for marketing and communications? Who are the “Opinion Leaders and Decision Makers” for developing this vision?

Recommendations

Districtwide Communications and Marketing leadership is essential, to set the broader brand of the Seattle Colleges.

- Clarify the role between campus Communication and PIO Offices and the district Communications and Marketing Office. Integration of the four offices across the district makes sense if there is one chief administrator and more staff to do the work that needs to be done. If it is determined that the current Communications and Marketing Office is serving the needs of the district as a whole and benefitting the campuses the current structure should be maintained.
- Consider the creation of a districtwide web content team, to manage the content for clarity for the whole district.
- The communication specialist 4 is relevant and should remain as is.
- Clarify and delineate roles more clearly between Technology and Marketing and Communication offices with regard to the web.
- Districtwide communications and marketing leadership sets the broader brand of the Seattle Colleges. It should remain at the District Office.
- If the intent is to leverage Seattle’s name recognition and strength of size and program diversity across the institution, a districtwide communications and marketing presence is essential.
- The districtwide Communications and Marketing Office should lead major initiatives like Customer Relations Management (CRM), which is already having a positive impact across all colleges.
- The districtwide Communications and Marketing Office can support campus marketing efforts.
- Hold off on the “web development taskforce recommendation” to expand the web team and move it to the Communications and Marketing Office until the ASI review is complete.

EMPLOYEE SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Observations

Payroll and Benefits for the Seattle Colleges is all processed and completed at the district office.

Many other HR functions have been heavily decentralized to individual offices on campuses.

Compliance work is essential, and the compliance officer does unique work across the district.

Questions

Can the duties of the talent acquisition/HR consultant and the talent development manager be combined?

Are the talent development manager's functions duplicative of the college's professional development activities?

Is there an onboarding gap between the colleges and the district?

Does it make sense to have onboarding centralized at the district to have consistency?

Recommendations

Currently, while 50% of each HRD salary is paid with district funds, only Central's HRD reports to the chief human resources officer (CHRO). HRDs at South and North report to their presidents. This leads to inconsistencies throughout the district organization structure.

- The executive assistant to the CHRO, the compliance officer, and the current Payroll and Benefits structure are relevant and should remain as is.
- Initiate LEAN processing to determine what district HR functions should be.
- Centralize the onboarding process at the District so it's consistent across all colleges
- Define the college HR director role in relationship to the CHRO in more detail.

VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE – EDUCATION, PLANNING AND RESEARCH

Observations

The role of this office has evolved over the course of time. In addition to providing leadership for instruction and student service initiatives, this position oversees the first districtwide instruction program- nursing, supervises the faculty development coordinator, the director of research and strategic planning, database specialist and executive assistant.

Director of research and strategic planning needs to continue to provide leadership and coordination of district research requests for data and research design activities.

Questions

Should all district workforce development positions report to this revised position?

What other areas should report to this position?

Recommendations

- Clarify the functions of the vice chancellor of academic and student success in relation to workforce development, student services, instruction and all related instructional IT functions.
- Review reporting structure for dean of nursing to meet accreditation standards.

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

Observations

There were questions about why there are two executive assistants in the office, rather than one.

Over the past few years there has been greater demand on the Senior Executive Assistant position to support the Board of Trustees, leaving much of the day to day responsibilities to others to complete.

There is occasional overlap between the executive assistant and the senior executive assistant, but the executive assistant also acts as the first face of Seattle Colleges.

The committee observes that the director of government relations position is a valuable position for the colleges.

No Questions

Recommendations

- There are enough essential functions to justify the current positions in the Chancellor's department. More coordination, communication, and collaboration with the campuses may be needed to fine-tune the department to ensure that district-level leadership, facilities, resources, and strategic planning are being provided.

REPORT SUMMARY

This dedicated team of nine members took this charge seriously and participated fully in the review, bringing their areas of expertise to the meeting discussions. Given the time constraints and access to information, the findings and recommendations presented above represent the best thinking and reflection of a diverse group of college and district employees. It is important to note that not each recommendation had unanimous support. Some members stated that they did not have adequate information to support a recommendation.