Students First Administrative Planning

Background

- This summer over 100 CSCU faculty and staff engaged in the design and planning of the Students First administrative strategy endorsed and approved by the Board of Regents.

- Each team was led by a system office or campus leader with teams made up of subject matter experts from across the system. In support of shared governance, members, either elected or nominated by their campus leadership representing the faculty, professional staff and other campus employees, were also engaged in the planning teams.

- Team reports outline strategies, reporting structures, and best practices that promote shared services and collaboration among all of our institutions. These strategies wherever possible included all 17 institutions and system office.

- The process to develop the proposals was extended over several months, not only for the thoughtful development of ideas, but also in respect to shared governance--where each stakeholder could participate and return to their agency and deliberate as the process unfolded.

- We fully intend to reach our original plans for targeted savings of $13 million though the timeline may take longer and alternate strategies may be necessary.

Guiding Principles

All recommendations were required to support or enhance our guiding principles:

- Ensure students are at the center of all decisions
- Prioritize teaching, learning, and high quality academic programming
- Preserve and enhance student support services
- Safeguard educational access and affordability
- Be conscientious stewards of the students' and state's investments in our institutions

Facilities Team Recommendations

Facilities Operations and Program Administration

- All day-to-day services and related facilities support staff will remain on campus and will report to a campus manager.
- Through attrition, five of the six Director of Facility positions will be vacated (position at Naugatuck will remain).
- SO office Facility Managers will be increased from three to four Facility Managers.
- SO Facility Managers will assist and advise the campus manager on day-to-day operating efforts as well as non-day-to-day operating and capital requirements.

Facilities Team Recommendations

Overtime Compensation

- Develop a system-wide protocol for colleges and universities limiting campus total overtime to 2.5% annually for day-to-day operations. The 2.5% does not include emergencies, continuity of operations, essential operations and weather events. [This recommendation could require Board policy]

- Develop a system-wide protocol for colleges and universities limiting individual staff overtime compensation to 5% annually, whenever possible. The 5% does not include emergencies, continuity of operations, essential operations and weather events. [This recommendation could require Board policy]

Financial Aid Team Recommendations

Centralized community college enrollment management and student communication

- Integrate the functions of community college Financial Aid, Registrar, Admissions, and Marketing under a single college structure, incorporating a chief enrollment management officer to oversee the enrollment management efforts. [This recommendation requires Board action]

- Centralize financial aid administrative efforts under a single community college structure, with a single administrative office and twelve campuses. Add staff centralized at a system level to handle administrative tasks and compliance issues. Campus staffing levels should remain constant in order to provide adequate local level support to students. [This recommendation requires Board action]

- Continue partnership between CT Distance Learning Consortium and the community colleges for call center services. Additionally provide the opportunity for expansion and participation from the universities and Charter Oak State College.

Financial Aid Team Recommendations

Verification Plan

- Engage a qualified vendor to assist institutions with the Verification process. While there is a monetary cost for this function, the opportunity cost for increased enrollments, increased revenues, decreased audit findings/risk, decreased processing/time to verify, decreased time to award, decreased in-office lines, and decreased student and staff frustration far outweigh the monetary cost of the project annually.

- Once a vendor is in place, redirect staff time previously used for Verification purposes into activities such as community outreach, FAFSA clinics, and other student-facing and enrollment related strategies.

Financial Aid Team Recommendations

Paying for Education

- Formalize policy across all campuses to require a mandatory drop date prior to census *[passed by BOR September 2017]*.

- Institute consistent installment plan procedures including plans that are flexible, student-friendly, and affordable.

- Leverage existing contracts and engage multiple avenues of communication to work with students in obtaining payment. This includes expanded use of CTDLC services, texting, personal email use, and postcards to reach students with active A/R balances.

- Build uniform procedures around the timing of fee assessment and billing, A/R due dates, stages of collection on accounts not current, and Return to Title IV.

Financial Aid Team Recommendations

Financial Literacy/Education

- Prioritize Financial Literacy efforts across the system, building on best practices from the Financial Literacy and Advising Office at SCSU. Coordinate efforts of on-campus staff to work with students directly by providing personal finance workshops on topics such as money management, paying for college, personal budgeting, loan repayment, etc. This must be done in conjunction with available technology.

- Engage a vendor to provide uniform Financial Literacy tools consistently across all CSCU institutions. Engage system and institution foundations, or local business partners, to encourage sponsorship of such a program. Conversely, leverage the purchasing power of CSCU to reach the same end, if needed.

Financial Aid Team Recommendations

Common Policy and Procedure Manual

- Create a single Policy and Procedure manual, implemented across a single community college. [This recommendation requires Board policy.]

- Convene the universities to assess the feasibility of a single PPM. At minimum, align core policies and procedures to draw alignment in operations. [This recommendation requires Board policy.]

Fiscal Affairs Team Recommendations

Centralized Purchasing and Payroll as shared services

- Centralize purchasing for the colleges and universities to take advantage of the CSCU volume.
- Incorporate eProcurement software to allow systems to function as if a single system by integrating with diverse Banner instances.
- Incorporate standard metrics and analysis.
- Develop master files to share with institutions and facilitate easy, rapid, and approved/budgeted purchasing.
- Coordinate payroll processing at the system level.
- Fully utilize CORE-CT self-service features.
- Hire 2 new positions (Head of Purchasing and Head of Payroll) to be process owners for new shared services.

Fiscal Affairs Team Recommendations

Budgeting and Planning

- Implement Banner position control, budget, faculty load and compensation, and grant modules to replace highly manual process.

- Under the new single community college, assign one budget employee to each region, reporting dually to the regional president and the College CFO.

- Streamline encumbrance process to populate current year requirements, but within current year appropriations.

Fiscal Affairs Team Recommendations

General Accounting

- Build structure under Community College CFO to account for transactions across the twelve campuses.
- Create a centralized grant office to support the College in grant accounting; to coordinate with the System Office of Sponsored Programs.
- Develop user-friendly online forms to facilitate central accounting with remote input.
- Standardize student activity fund accounting and management processes.
- Move 7 employees currently under the SO Controller to the College CFO.

Fiscal Affairs Team Recommendations

Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable

- Create a shared service organization to support all CSCU institutions to manage cash inflows and outflows.
- Create standard templates and reporting for expense report management.
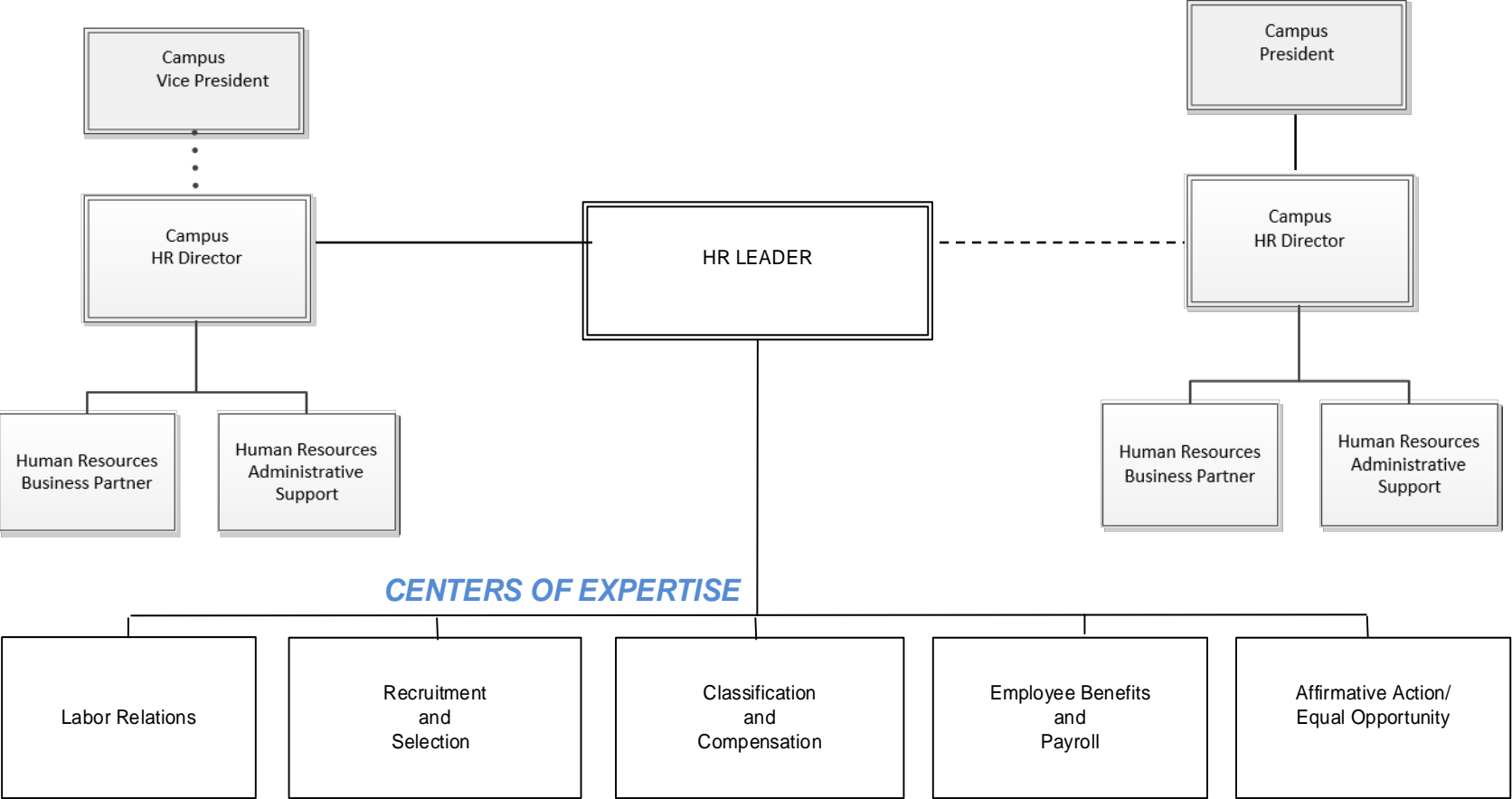- Control and account for PCard usage.

Human Resources Recommendations

- Prepare a full-fledged strategic plan that envisions the design and implementation of a SHRM for delivering HR service.

- Establish in policy a primary reporting relationship between HR services at the 12 community colleges and Charter Oak State College and the CSCU VP for HR office and a secondary reporting relationship between the 4 universities and the CSCU VP for HR office.

- Establish Centers of Expertise that pool HR expertise from the 17 campuses in areas of operations including labor relations, searches and hiring, benefits and retirement counseling.

- Implement a SHRM at the system level.

CSCU Human Resources
Leadership Model

Information Technology Team Recommendations

Computer applications

- The committee recommends that duplicate non-academic applications be sent to the IT Steering Committee for further study with the ultimate objective to eliminate all non-standard or duplicate applications.   If a campus needs to maintain a non-standard application, they would appear before the IT Steering Committee to explain the additional cost. The Steering Committee would make a recommendation to the CSCU President who can agree, request the campus pay for the unique application or require the campus to move to the standardized approach.

Use of mobile devices

- The committee recommends the extensive use of cellular phones and other mobile devices within the system undergo a full audit to determine the operational requirements by functional area.

Institutional Research Team Recommendations

Community College Structure

- All IR professionals would be part of the same staff, and have a reporting line to the CSCU Office of Research & System Effectiveness, and maintain a strong dotted-line with their respective campus leadership.

- IR professionals would have assignments in one or more functional/excellence teams such as analytic report writers and survey experts. These teams would have the appropriate access to BANNER and IRDB, and do the cyclical/routine tasks heretofore done by 12 offices.

- It is envisioned that some ad-hoc campus-specific requests, such as labor market data or alumni marketing lists, could be directed to the appropriate functional/excellence team; thus freeing up IR professionals on campus to provide for other tasks unique to local needs.

Institutional Research Team Recommendations

University Structure

- University IR staff will be required to participate in a new stronger dotted-line relationship with the CSCU Office of Research & System Effectiveness.
- University staff will participate in separate functional/excellence teams that can convene with their community college counterparts as is necessary.

CSCU Institutional Research
Leadership Model

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

STATE UNIVERSITIES
(including Charter Oak State College)

Campus Leadership		Campus Leadership

Campus IR Professionals	CSCU IR Leader	Campus IR Professionals

Examples of Functional/Excellence Teams

Data Governance	Predictive Analytics/ Advanced Statistical Services	Survey Experts	Data & Analytic Report Writers	Policy Analysis & Evaluation/ P20 WIN

Institutional Research Team Recommendations

Technology and Training

- Community college IR staff will need access to Banner and the IRDB beyond their campus. This means IT will need to work with ORSE to implement new access privileges.

- In both colleges and universities, a state of the art data warehouse will be necessary, and is currently in development but is likely to take a number of years and additional resources to complete. In the interim, the IRDB (institutional research database for community colleges) and the IR repository (system office IR database for the CSUs) will need enhancements.

- Concentrated training with Tableau, Web-Focus, Argos, and Taskstream/TK-20.

Next Steps

Administrative planning teams are seeking public comment on their recommendations through an online survey found at the following address: www.ct.edu/studentsfirst

Comments are welcome through November 20th.

Planning teams will meet in early December to review comments and adjust recommendations if needed before final submission to the Students First Steering Committee and the Board of Regents.

Thank you!