

Appendix F

Shared Administrative Services

For the past two decades the Connecticut community colleges have utilized a shared services model for many administrative services—a model in which the key decisions are reserved to campus leaders while back office operations are centralized at the System office. As technological advances organically transform the enterprise into a shared services model, the staffing structure has become mismatched with shared services fulfillment. The misalignment of technical staff not needed to provide services has resulted in an organizational structure with underutilized capacity. The Students First plan provides the mechanism to correct this misalignment.

This year the focus has been on the development of shared services in the areas of:

- information technology
- human resources
- fiscal affairs
- facilities

These service arrangements will be formalized through service level agreements with the system office and campus Presidents/CEOs that specify expected levels of service and associated costs. Through this mechanism the campus presidents can retain their decision authority and control in ways that meet NECHE standards. This centralization of key, redundant functions, will allow for more efficient, consistent, and higher quality administrative services. When CSCC becomes operational, these agreements will be negotiated with the college President and their implementation overseen by the CSCC's Vice President of Finance and Administration (CFO), the Chief Information Officer, or the Director of Human Resources as appropriate.

Presently, these consolidations are underway with planning activities that engage staff from both the system office and colleges to help inform the implementation. Under the shared services model, all staff will work within the CSCU system office or be deployed to the campuses under service level agreements negotiated with campus leaders. This centralization will not require all staff to be in one location but rather combine both centralized and campus-based services. These agreements will be constructed to ensure they do not negatively impact the existing accreditation of the colleges or the accreditation of CSCC in the future. By using a shared services agreement, the expectations are clear and if the promised services are not adequately delivered and there are built in sanctions so that the Campus CEO/CSCC President has recourse.

By implementing a single, standard set of procedures for administrative and back office functions it will eliminate procedures unique to each campus; these are costly to support and produce uneven results across the system. As the system standardizes processes the overall operating cost will diminish.

Information Technology

The community colleges have operated under a shared services model to consolidate enterprise level technology services since the early 2000s. Under the Students First plan, the technology governance process will build on this success by realigning technical staff with the operational service demands of academic programs and administrative processes.

In January 2020, the next phase began by reassigning all IT staff at the 12 community colleges to the CSCU Chief Information Officer (CIO) through an Interim Deputy CIO for CSCC. Working with the system's collective bargaining experts, a skills inventory collection process is underway to account for all skills among the IT employee population. The final organizational structure will align enterprise shared services, such as campus networks, Wi-Fi, Banner, etc. with qualified, skilled campus-based technical staff to ensure expedited service fulfillment of all technical needs of a campus. A key component of this model will be the provisioning of dedicated skilled technical staff at each campus to support the technology requirements of academic programs and administrative processes.

Human Resources

Through the centralization of Human Resources, CSCU is creating Centers of Excellence (COEs) to improve the overall quality of services provided to the campus leadership and employees as well as improving compliance with federal and state policies and regulations. These COEs (Affirmative Action, Talent and Recruiting, Labor Relations, and Compensation and Benefits) will collect skill sets on one team, streamline functions and expertise, and provide assistance and recommendations to support the decision making of the current college leaders and the future CSCC President. We emphasize that CEOs will retain all the decision authority they currently have and that is required by NECHE standards.

The merger will improve focus, quality, speed, and compliance. For instance, the Labor Relations COE will ensure the consistent application of union bargaining agreements and policies and improve investigations with greater objectivity by investigators and clearer recommendations for campus decision makers. Additionally, there will be a Human Resources Director for the CT State Community College as well as Human Resources staff responsible for regional and campus level support. These direct service HR staff will facilitate use of the COEs by both the college, regional, and campus leaders, and by employees.

Fiscal Affairs

Through centralization of day to day financial operations (e.g. accounting and financial reporting), CSCU will streamline redundant functions that now occur on the 12 campuses. Many of these functions are already being conducted by staff at the System Office including the annual audit function. Other enhancements, such as fixed asset tracking, are still in the development stage. Centralization improves these routine processes and brings together the staff expertise to serve all the colleges at levels not affordable at each of them. In all instances, fiscal decision authority resides with the college Presidents/CEOs; centralized services provide the support necessary to carry out those decisions.

Payroll

We are also centralizing payroll as a shared service. By taking advantage of the state's self-service payroll functionality, and by assigning the support work associated with payroll to dedicated staff, we can reduce the number of individuals required, improve compliance with our policies and with state and federal law, and provide more consistent services to our employees.

Purchasing

The purchasing function is moving from a fully decentralized model to a single shared service. By streamlining campus procurement of goods and services, it will achieve greater economies of scale and will produce greater savings and free up staff resources that can be reinvested into student facing activities.

Facilities

The centralization of facilities management is already underway with all college capital projects being overseen by CSCU system office staff who work directly with the state agencies of cognizance to secure resources, manage projects, and oversee construction activities, etc. Day-to-day maintenance and custodial functions will be maintained on each campus under the leadership of the Associate Dean of Campus Operations.

Budget Development and Management

The CT State Community College budgeting function will not be a shared service but rather will be overseen directly by the CSCC CFO. This allows for the autonomous control of the college resources by the institution per the NECHE standards. Regional Fiscal Officers have been hired this spring to assist in understanding the fiscal needs and opportunities of regions and working with the Campus CEOs/Presidents and the Regional Presidents to make budget proposals to the system office CFO. Until CSCC becomes fully operational, campus CEOs will have responsibility and authority over budget development and management.