All Task Force Comments Received on the Administrative Assessment and Benchmark Working Group Recommendations and Interim Report

November 2016

Recommendation 1: Establish an administrative assessment process that includes elements that promote institution-wide consistency in evaluating unit efficiency and effectiveness.

1. Yes
2. I agree with this recommendation.
3. Seems valid
4. OK.
5. I think this is a laudable goal but in reality will not happen unless the University allocates resources (staff time and money) to accomplish this
6. YES! There has to be a process of review established - at this point there is no way to know if the cost of a central unit is reasonable or "worth it."
7. I recuse myself !
8. Agree
9. I think this is a reasonable idea, but it also seems like it could require a significant amount of personnel time. Furthermore, those involved would need to become experts in a diverse array of university operations. I think this is easier said than done....and I don't think it sounds all too easy to begin with.

Recommendation 2: Create an assessment process that uses qualitative and quantitative measures to evaluate unit performance, including service quality, financial performance, organizational excellence and organizational sustainability.

1. Yes - a balanced scorecard like process
2. I agree with this recommendation.
3. Seems valid
4. OK.
5. Again, I believe this is a laudable goal, but this needs resources to give it teeth
6. YES! Make it worth the effort for central units to provide excellent service and be cost effective.
7. I recuse myself !
8. Might be too difficult to manage
9. Same response as recommendation 1. *[I think this is a reasonable idea, but it also seems like it could require a significant amount of personnel time. Furthermore, those involved would need to become experts in a diverse array of university operations. I think this is easier said than done....and I don't think it sounds all too easy to begin with.]*

Recommendation 3: Establish base service level agreements for revenue supporting/central support units.

1. Yes
2. I agree with this recommendation.
3. Seems valid
4. OK.
5. Yes!
6. Absolutely - units have to know what is expected of them in order to deliver and exceed.
7. I recuse myself !
8. Agree
9. I think this will invite all sorts of problems. Deans will presumably be looking for ways to reduce or opt out of their share of some central costs and this would greatly exacerbate that. Also, many central units aren't offering direct services to the schools, so it is hard to imagine how a service agreement might look in those cases. And, again, this seems like it would take a fair amount of effort to devise, implement, and maintain.

General Comments:
1. Implementation will be very tricky and require good conversations between service deliverer and stakeholders.
2. This may be outside of the group's charge, but we might want to have discussion regarding if revenue units can go outside of VCU for less-expensive administrative services. Maybe we need a policy group added to the TF to address these types of issues. Will schools be able to see how much of their revenue is being spent on individual services so they can determine the cost/benefits? (might need to be addressed by the central cost group)
3. This issue is of utmost importance when it comes to controlling central costs. How will new positions and initiatives be determined. Let's look at some recent ones: move from one VP for Finance and Admin to two positions; move from one Sr. Vice-Provost to two positions; creation of centralized advising that services units disproportionately.

   How will indirect human costs to units be factored into new initiatives? We have added some such as Center for Inter-professional Education and Recruitment Inclusive Champions. The success of these programs has been through school level support that requires additional personnel costs at that level.

   Central committee representation is another example. Having school representation is a greater burden on a school with 75 faculty than one with 300 or more.

   It is not a matter of agreeing or disagreeing with any of these decisions, but the process and the sensitivity to the differences in school resources.
4. This group met the significant challenges they faced head on, and did a great job with fact finding and reporting back.
5. Good work! Seems there will need to be an assessment of the true time and effort and ultimate benefit of such monitoring prior to moving forward.

   Curious to learn if there has been discussions on what items are being considered for tracking or monitoring to include in benchmarks or score cards? And to what degree, if any, would such score cards be tailored to specific MBU's or types of MBU's

6. In an intellectual sense, I am interested in the possibility of evaluating central services in the fashion suggested here (excepting recommendation #3). On the other hand, it feels like it we are inventing something akin to an accreditation process for our central services. Accreditation is a good thing, in and of itself, but it is a burdensome process that requires enormous effort. Where the analogy fails to fit this situation is that the accreditation process already has an established and generally agreed upon framework. In our case, we would need to devise that framework. This would certainly take a quite a bit of additional effort and there's no guarantee that the the end product would be capable of meeting the goals laid out in recommendations 1 and 2.