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Wednesday, November 06, 2013

Organizational Excellence and Benchmarking Study of Administrative Services

Dear Colleagues:

We write to provide you with an update regarding the Organizational Excellence initiative currently underway at the University. As you know, this effort has emerged as a priority during the strategic planning process. It will enhance organizational capacity across academic and administrative service areas, enabling excellence in our core missions of education, research and scholarship. This effort will ensure that the University’s resources are brought to bear in the most effective and efficient way in support of institutional priorities, many of which are tied directly to the success of the strategic plan now nearing final draft stage and scheduled to be presented to the Board of Visitors in November.

The Organizational Excellence program is led by a Leadership Council – chaired by Dean Bob Pianta of the Curry School of Education – that has spent a considerable amount of time educating important stakeholders across Grounds about the goals of the initiative and contemplating ways to have meaningful impact. Success ultimately relies on the engagement and participation of the University community.

As one of its initial projects, the Leadership Council has endorsed a comprehensive benchmarking study of administrative services. As you know, many faculty and staff across Grounds are already at work on the study. We have partnered with The Hackett Group consultant firm in this effort, which will provide a thorough understanding of our current administrative support and areas for improvement. The service areas include Finance; Human Resources; Information Technology; Procurement; Research Administration; and Student Services. Data collection will be completed in December, and the study results are expected to be available in February 2014.

As data collection and analysis begins in earnest over the next several weeks, we ask your assistance in making sure the appropriate staff members within your school or unit are informed and engaged in this process. Questions about Organizational Excellence and the benchmarking study process may be directed to Sarah Collie, assistant vice president for organizational excellence, at slc6h@virginia.edu.

Everyone has an opportunity to contribute in their daily work to excellence by looking for ways to streamline processes, reduce duplication, eliminate non-value added activities, and simplify work. We are confident Organizational Excellence will give faculty and staff more time and resources to devote to core learning and research activities. To learn more about Organizational Excellence, visit: http://www.organizationalexcellence.virginia.edu/
Sincerely,

John D. Simon
Executive Vice President and Provost

Patrick D. Hogan
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Dear University Colleagues,

We write to share the accomplishment of a significant milestone in the University’s Benchmarking Study of Administrative Services - completion of data collection. We are grateful for the contributions of many individuals throughout the schools and units who helped collect information about activities in the functions of Finance, Procurement, Information Technology, Human Resources, Student Services, and Research Administration. This was a task of almost unprecedented scale and scope and your leadership, teamwork, and focus were instrumental in the substantial progress made across the institution. Thank you for your extraordinary efforts.

With the completion of data collection, we now commence data validation. During this phase we will review the data and address discrepancies to ensure high-quality data for subsequent analysis. With our consulting firm partner, The Hackett Group, we will then launch the data analysis phase of the study. The analysis will provide an assessment of our current performance, compare our performance to other higher education institutions and world-class organizations, and include key observations. We recognize this as a first step toward using data collected in the study to better inform our work.

We anticipate initial results from The Hackett Group in early February. The results will provide insights derived from both quantitative and qualitative analysis that will inform the University's strategic efforts as well as the work of administrative units. Over the coming weeks and months the Organizational Excellence Executive Sponsors and Leadership Council will spend time interpreting the results, evaluating recommendations, prioritizing next steps, and communicating with key stakeholder groups. We look forward to sharing the results and engaging with faculty and staff to evolve even higher-quality administrative services that best support core activities of teaching, research, and public service.

Sincerely,
Members of the Organizational Excellence Leadership Council

Bob Pianta, Curry School of Education (Chair of the Leadership Council)
Virginia Evans, Central Information Technology
Thomas Gorski, Audit Department
Hossein Haj-Hariri, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
Chris Holstege, Faculty Senate and School of Medicine
Erika James, Darden Graduate School of Business
Rich Kovatch, Business Operations
David Leblang, College of Arts and Science
Jim Matteo, Treasurer
Christina Morell, Student Affairs
Rick Myers, College of Arts and Science
Tamara Sole, University Human Resources
Libby Lyon, Undergraduate Student

Ex Officio:
Milton Adams, Provost’s Office
Nancy Rivers, President’s Office
Lee Baszczewski, Organizational Excellence
Sarah Collie, Organizational Excellence
March 5, 2014

Dear University Colleagues,

We are grateful for your contributions to the University’s Benchmarking Study of Administrative Services and write to provide an update. Recently, the Organizational Excellence Executive Sponsors and Leadership Council (OELC) reviewed the preliminary data findings across the six functions (finance, procurement, information technology, human resources, student services, and research administration) with The Hackett Group, our consulting firm partner. The Hackett Group has helped us gather valuable, comprehensive data, which we will now analyze and interpret so as to translate and apply these data at UVa.

The OELC is committed to a deliberate process of leveraging the benchmark data as one of several sources of information to advance the effectiveness and efficiency of services in support of the institutional mission and strategic goals. The Council will engage academic and administrative members of the University community, and many of you will be asked to participate in the next phase of analysis and refinement of preliminary findings and proposed recommendations for action. Ultimately, the OELC in partnership with academic and administrative units seeks to define, prioritize, coordinate, and sequence a portfolio of initiatives for enhanced support to be implemented over the next several years.

In the coming weeks, we will assemble several work groups to study the benchmark findings, conduct further analysis, integrate these data with other information, and consider best practices to inform the development of an institutional portfolio. As this work takes shape, we will disseminate information and progress more broadly to the University community. We appreciate your ongoing support and engagement as we focus on how best to align our resources with strategy – aligning processes, technology, and staff with the mission of the University.

Sincerely,

Members of the Organizational Excellence Leadership Council

Bob Pianta, Curry School of Education (Chair)
Virginia Evans, Central Information Technology
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