



# Process and Innovation

## Task Force Report

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### Overview

### Charge

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**This task force will explore issues related to improving our processes and developing innovative ways to advance the mission of the University.**

**Examples of areas to explore could include, but are not limited to: strategic partnerships to advance efficiencies, governance issues, policies and procedures, and workflow analysis.**

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### Membership

- Fogle, Cheryl ..... Chair, Staff
- Anastasiou, Maria ..... Staff
- Brannen, Sharon ..... Staff
- Campbell, Sara ..... Faculty
- Dennis, Allen ..... Faculty
- Edwards, Crystal ..... Student
- Kinloch, Briana ..... Student
- Morgan, Karen ..... Staff
- Patton, Chuck ..... Staff
- Scraper, Joel ..... Faculty
- Priest, Jeff ..... Ex-Officio
- Sobieralski, Joe ..... Ex-Officio

## Meeting Schedule

### January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The task force was established. A chair was chosen, and goals were set. Task force members were asked to review university policies and procedures and current organizational structure.

### January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013

The task force discussed initial impressions of policies and procedures and decided to individually and informally poll various employees across campus to document issues that cause frustration and inefficiency. We discussed ideas for how the current online policy and procedure manual can be improved.

### February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The task force reviewed feedback received through informal polling and discussed resulting ideas, strategies and recommendations. The task force was asked to begin thinking about strategic partnerships.

### March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The task force discussed strategic partnerships and reviewed additional feedback that the task force continued to receive from various areas across campus regarding inefficiencies.

### March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The task force reviewed and expanded upon the ideas that were collected up to that point.

### April 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The task force reviewed and discussed the report draft and was asked to provide feedback.

## Relevant Factors

### Organizational Restructuring

The task force was provided with a summary of the results from the Restructuring Survey (Appendix A) conducted from Dec 10, 2012 until Jan 18, 2013. Though there existed similarities

among some responses, there were also many participants from whom opposing views were collected. Therefore, we concluded that the results from this survey were inconclusive, and more research and discussion are needed.

The task force also compared our organizational charts with those of our peer and aspirant institutions and found that our organizational structure is unlike others on many levels. Ultimately, our review concluded with more questions than answers. Issues needing further discussion that “rose to the top” for academic areas included: Provost vs. EVCAA, Faculty Senate vs. Faculty Assembly, and decreasing the number of Academic Council members vs. staying with the current structure. Prominent issues for non-academic areas include potentially relocating offices to other divisions to help streamline business processes.

### **Examining Policy and Procedure Frustrations**

The task force performed a high level review of our *Policy and Procedures Manual* as published online at <http://web.usca.edu/policy/policy-index/index.dot>. We concluded that the policies do not maintain a consistent format, even though the *Policies and Procedures Manual* states that a standard policy format is used. Policies are not organized in a user-friendly fashion, are difficult to navigate, and often do not distinguish between policy and procedure.

In addition to individually reviewing our *Policy and Procedures Manual*, each member of the task force informally polled various areas around campus to identify sources of frustration with regards to policies and procedures.

Several staff members who were polled expressed frustration with employees either not being familiar with, or refusing to follow, procedures and processes that are designed to increase efficiency. Employees not using the [Physical Plant Work Request](#), and not updating the campus calendar were given as examples. General lack of familiarity with Purchasing and Finance policies and procedures, the lack of proactive communications regarding those processes, and the lack of documented procedures provided to new employees were also noted as sources of frustration. The task force noted that many new employees learn the correct procedure only after completing it incorrectly several times, particularly with regards to procedures related to Business and Finance. Additionally, the use of or lack of training for certain software products used for maintaining departmental websites (dotCMS) and for Program Review and Assessment (TracDat) were mentioned as areas that generally create angst across campus.

### Software Training and Data Flow Inefficiencies

Many employees feel they lack either the proper software or the proper training on software already available to them to most effectively manage their data needs. Many do not participate in training opportunities to strengthen their technology skills because they are not strongly encouraged to do so by their supervisors, and there are other tasks that take priority. As a result, they do not realizing that such training could help them improve processes that could then result in time saved.

### Recommendations

#### Review Governance Structure via Campus Forums

In an effort to *grow the university, expand awareness and reputation, improve the current budget situation, respond to a broader range of students, and enhance organizational efficiency and innovation*, we recognize that, as an institution, it may be necessary to make changes to our organizational structure. The Task Force recommends that the Chancellor consider/explore further the following:

- Converting the EVCAA position to a Provost position.
- Reorganize Faculty Assembly using a Faculty Senate model.
- Reorganize the academic structure to a two or three college system (College of Professional Schools, College of Arts and Sciences or College of Professional Schools, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and College of Sciences).
- Relocation of non-academic departments to another division for optimal placement in the organizational structure (Career Services, International Programs, Campus Police, Wellness Center, Convocation Center, Continuing Education).
- Relocate Institutional Effectiveness as a stand-alone unit.

The financial and organizational implications of these ideas need extensive discussion and analysis; however, we feel the potential for positive impacts on our students and stakeholders are well worth the time and effort that would be involved in the exploration. To that end, the Process and Innovation Task Force also recommends holding several campus forums to provide a venue for healthy discussion and debate about our current governance and organizational structure.

### Further Existing Strategic Partnerships by Expanding the Mission of Continuing Education

The Process and Innovation Task Force recommends enhancing existing partnerships with the Small Business Development Center and the Economic Development Partnership by offering workshops, seminars and classes to their constituents through further development of a variety of Professional Development Programs. We recommend the following strategy:

- Consider separating the Office of Conferences and Continuing Education and relocating the Office of Continuing Education
- Expand upon the existing Professional Development Program which currently consists of a Project Management Professional Certification Test Prep Course offered jointly with the Savannah River Chapter of the Project Management Institute. Develop similarly formatted programs that address areas such as:
  - Communications (Intercultural Communications, Writing for the Workplace, Conflict Management)
  - Leadership (Citizen Leadership, Team Building, Emotional Intelligence), and
  - Technology (MS Excel Certification, MS Access Certification, Website Design).
  - Interdisciplinary Opportunities (Engineering Management)
- Use our own faculty whenever possible to teach and facilitate these learning opportunities.

We view the relocation of Continuing Education and the programs it offers, such as Kids in College, and the enhancement of the Professional Development Program as recruitment opportunities that can *grow the university* by attracting potential new students and the parents of potential new students to campus. Additionally, this strategy can create additional partnerships with local businesses and thereby *expand the reputation and awareness of USCA*. We believe that by targeting non-traditional students, parents of local high schools students, and K-12 students, and engaging them as community members of the campus, and providing them with a positive USC Aiken experience, they will be apt to consider USC Aiken for more of their educational needs.

While addressing most every Forward Together Theme (*Grow the University, Improve the Current Budget Situation, Increase Program Offerings, Respond to a Broader Range of Students, Expand Reputation and Awareness of USCA, and Expand and Enhance Community Relationships/Partnerships*), this strategy is expected to generate revenue directly from profits

earned by the programs, and indirectly by recruiting more students to academic programs. Costs associated with this change will result from hiring staff to manage new offices and new programs.

### **Review and Reorganize University Policies and Procedures**

The Process and Innovation Task Force recommends either (a) establishing an ad hoc committee consisting of representatives from each department on campus to perform a review of our university policies or (b) hiring a consulting firm that can help streamline and document our processes. We recommend the following objectives:

- Standardize policy format using the University Policy Template included as Appendix 2 of the USC System Policy on Policies (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/univ100.pdf>).
- Differentiate Policy and Procedure.
- Add cross referencing to ease navigation. Cross references could include links to corresponding system policies, corresponding resources, corresponding organizational charts, corresponding office websites that contain more information, corresponding procedures, etc.
- Highlight policies that apply to the majority of employees to make them easier to find. Create a FAQ page.

Though the task force was unable to determine the costs associated with each of these options, we believe this task is necessary in order to decrease frustration and increase familiarity with our policies while *enhancing our organizational efficiency and innovation*. Employees who are more familiar with university policies and procedures in general can then *be more responsive to a broader range of students* by answering questions directly rather than sending them from office to office for their needs to be served.

### **Create an Administrative Assistant Collaboration Team**

To *enhance organizational efficiency and innovation*, the Process and Innovation Task Force recommends creating an Administrative Assistant Collaboration Team consisting of all administrative assistants on campus. The purpose of this team would be to:

- Identify common procedures that need to be further documented and/or improved

- Create and maintain a “Standard Operating Procedure” manual for procedures that involve two or more areas around the institution and include processes involving purchasing, travel procedures, and reimbursement
- Provide an opportunity for training and the sharing of skills and ideas.

Examples of areas that could benefit from such collaboration include:

- Processes related to Business and Finance policies and procedures
- Improved data flow processes across campus
- The Adjunct hiring process
- Facility and event scheduling

These meetings can serve as venues to communicate process changes, discuss databases and data flow issues, and brainstorm ways in which they can make their jobs easier. The task force recommends that this group meet three times a year and that the group has the support and encouragement of each member’s supervisor.

### **Actively and Continually Address Institutional Inefficiencies.**

To *enhance organizational efficiency and innovation*, the Process and Innovation Task Force recommends instituting a continual review process of institutional inefficiencies. By either creating a campus committee or tasking an individual or office with the responsibility, objectives should include:

- Identify and collaboratively resolve inefficiency issues across campus
- Streamline business processes
- Improve data flow
- Foster innovation across campus
- Ensure adequate training is provided to employees

This inefficiency review process should begin with the following strategies:

- Establish an electronic means by which university constituents can voice innovative ideas that address inefficiency problems and be directed to appropriate people.
- Identify data needs and training needs, and help develop a plan and timeline for how these needs can be addressed.

- Review all forms on campus to insure minimal redundancy, minimal paper waste, and appropriate instructions.
- Implement a reward and recognition system for those who actively strive to improve data flow processes, strengthen their technology skills, and assist others in doing so.

The Task Force recognizes that the Office of Institutional Effectiveness should play a prominent role in helping identify and assess the effectiveness of strategies that are designed to increase institutional efficiency.

### **Address Website Issues**

To *enhance organizational efficiency and innovation* and *expand the reputation and awareness of USCA*, the Process and Innovation Task Force recommends we either (a) contract with a professional organization to maintain our institutional website or (b) reorganize the existing Web Associate group by appointing “gurus” in each division to act as point persons for questions and to offer suggestions and recommendations for content/design. All gurus would need to be trained in basic visual communication principles and receive additional training on the CMS system. This would allow for decreased frustrations, more timely updates to the website, and an overall better look to each webpage.

### **Redesign Employee Orientation and Training**

To *enhance organizational efficiency and innovation*, the Process and Innovation Task Force recommends using a stratified approach over time to provide additional training for faculty and staff starting when initially hired and continuing through year two and three of employment. In addition to the training and orientation already provided, employees should receive training on various software programs they will be using as well as policies and procedures with which they will need to be familiar. A webpage should be created that lists online resources that are available to new employees and answers to frequently asked questions. This would allow new employees to “get up to speed” more quickly and help them to feel more secure and confident in their new positions.



# Appendix A

## Restructuring Survey Results

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### *Summary*

**Overview – Sixty (60) people responded to the survey. Below is a summary of the results. In many instances, similar suggestions were made and are noted below. Additionally, there were many statements made that were opposing views. These are also noted.**

1. Restructure Current Academic Structure: There were many individuals who suggested that the current academic structure of three schools and two colleges with coordinators be modified. Specifically mentioned numerous times was moving to an Academic Council that consisted of all deans and headed by the EVCAA or making the EVCAA position a Provost position.

There were many different restructuring suggestions:

1. Two College System – College of Arts and Sciences and College of Professional Schools each headed by a Dean.
2. Four Unit System – College of Arts and Sciences and Three Professional Schools each headed by a Dean.
3. Five Unit System – College of Sciences, College of Humanities, Three Professional Schools – Each headed by a Dean
4. Five Unit System – College of Sciences, College of Humanities, College of Health Sciences (Nursing and Exercise/Sports Science), School of Business, School of Education – Each headed by a Dean.

There were also a number of respondents who stated they were satisfied with the current structure.

2. Restructure Non-Academic Units:

Several suggestions were made to restructure or modify non-academic units.

1. Move Campus Police from Student Life to either operations or report directly to the EVCAA/Provost or Chancellor
2. Restructure Student Life to include an Office of Recreation and Wellness. The Wellness Center would report to this new office. Create an Office of Housing/Residential Life. Move the business operations side of housing to the Office of Business and Finance. Move Campus Police out of Student Life.
3. Restructure Student Life to include Wellness Center, International Programs, and Career Services.
4. Move Athletics to report directly to the Chancellor.
5. Move web master and web help desk to CSD.

3. Miscellaneous Restructuring Suggestions

1. Create a Faculty Senate

An equal number of respondents said to leave the current faculty assembly structure in place.

2. Restructure Academic Success Center to have learning labs report directly to departments (Math lab report to Mathematics, Writing Lab report to English, etc.)
3. Move Continuing Education to Academic Affairs
4. Restructure Monday Group
5. Restructure Administration (Reduce number of Vice Chancellors)
6. Make the EVCAA position a Provost position

4. Miscellaneous Suggestions

1. Use athletes and athletics to recruit students
2. Restructure General Education Requirements (5 course core requirement)