

Transforming the University

**Report of the Academic Task Force on College Design:
Small Colleges**

Submitted on behalf of the Task Force by:

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Executive Summary

Mission of the SCTF

The mission of the Small College Task Force is to create a new model for sharing administrative functions across smaller colleges and across departments within larger colleges that increases cost effectiveness (i.e., better service for the same cost), cost efficiency (i.e., the same service at a lower cost), or both.

Task Force Deliverables

The task force was charged with delivering the following items:

- Recommendations regarding a statement of principles to guide sharing of administrative services across colleges and units.
- Recommendations for a checklist of services that might be examined for increased effectiveness and/or efficiency at the college and department level.
- Recommendations regarding opportunities for the Humphrey Institute, Law School, and Carlson School of Management to share administrative functions.
- Recommendations for other similarly situated units, such as the School of Nursing and the College of Pharmacy, and nearby schools, as well as some of the coordinate campuses that also should be encouraged to explore whether sharing or centralizing selected administrative functions can enhance effectiveness, create efficiencies, or both.

Committee Members

Suzanne Bardouche, Co-chair, College of Pharmacy

John Bryson, Co-chair, Humphrey Institute

John Anderson, Operations & Management Science, Carlson School of Management

Ed Clark, IT Office, CLA

Jaki Cottingham-Zierdt, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

Ann Jones, School of Nursing

John Koepke, Landscape Architecture Department, CALA

Robert McMaster, Geography, CLA

Jill Merriam, Budget & Finance, Office of Sr. VP & Provost

Nena Street, Graduate student, Law School

Cathy Heltemes (Staff), Law School

Broader Themes Outside the Scope of the Inquiry

The focus of the task force charge is on administrative services in support of the University's teaching, research, and service missions. Teaching, research, and service *per se* are thus not included in the charge. In addition, the charge focuses primarily on small colleges. We believe, however, that the task force findings are broadly applicable to administrative services within and across colleges, departments, and units at the University as a whole.

The task force also was not charged with exploring the implications of sharing administrative services for facilitating interdisciplinary work and better integration of the University's teaching, research, and service missions. Our deliberations lead us to believe, however, that shared administrative services may well be necessary supports for such endeavors.

The task force was not charged explicitly with considering the implications of sharing administrative services for improving the alignment of colleges, departments, and units with the University as an enterprise and its evolving priorities. Again, however, our deliberations lead us to believe that shared administrative services in many cases will be important contributors to better alignment. We have also concluded that there are a number of actions central administration could take that would dramatically increase the speed, extent, and quality of administrative service sharing across colleges, departments, and units. These actions are outlined in the report.

Finally, the task force was not charged explicitly with considering the implications of sharing administrative services for fostering a culture of service and community at the University. We believe, however, that an enhanced culture of service and community is a likely consequence of sharing services, as long as the goal for shared administrative services and the principles outlined in this report are pursued.

Recommendations for Future Areas of Effort.

We recommend the University, colleges and departments adopt and diligently pursue the proposed goal for shared administrative services – which is to aggressively enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative processes utilized by colleges or departments to pursue their missions and to support achievement of the University’s strategic goal.

We also recommend that the following principles be used to guide sharing of administrative services across colleges, departments, and units:

- Focus on the mission
- Invest in human capital
- Treat the “U” as a single enterprise
- Use resources wisely, including emphasizing the use of best practices
- Promote aggressive process improvements
- Deepen sharing for each service to the appropriate level
- Follow a deliberate and rigorous process to determine where, when, how, and why to share administrative services

Critical Role of Leadership

We recognize the critical role of leadership at all levels — by central administration, by the deans, and by the directors of functional service areas. Leadership, ownership, and engagement at all levels are necessary conditions for efforts to improve administrative services to be fully successful.