**SACL Matrix Working Group**

**Initial Recommendations**

April 28, 2015

**Introduction**

Two sub-teams... Financial Operations and Human Resources... have completed an initial review of related current policies and practices across the division. These reviews informed several primary findings and, in turn, initial recommendations for (re)structuring SACL resources to meet related needs effectively and efficiently.

Understanding the scope and scale of the division’s work in these two critical areas has been time consuming and required that Matrix team members put aside (as much as possible) their respective histories with this work and take an objective look into these functions going forward. Their efforts have been informed by relevant data and insights gained from interviews with colleagues currently engaged in these functions, and by challenging themselves to consider the question... *How would we support these functions if we were starting from scratch?*

What follows is a set of initial recommendations that are built upon the review work of the sub-teams. Details of and for implementing these recommendations await confirmation of direction from SALT.

It is important to note that the landscape informing Matrix efforts to date have been fluid. To this point...

- We have recognized the dual reporting structure of CCPH/CHP to both SACL and to UHS. This construct will be folded into the SACL Matrix as appropriate, and at the same time be cognizant of the dual reporting requirement.
- UMPD’s financial operations and human resources functions do not come to SACL until July 1. It is a complicated unit that will require further study to determine how it can best be incorporated into the SACL matrix.

**Methods**

Several means were used to gather relevant information regarding the scope and scale of work being performed by SACL units. Report data helped define the scope and scale dimensions. In addition, the two sub-teams collected information and insights about what colleagues considered successes and challenges in their ability to be successful in their work.

- Between them, the two sub-teams conducted over 80 interviews and discussions with current staff members engaged in, overseeing, and/or impacted by this work.

Each sub-team spent significant time and discussion on a weekly basis over several months developing a shared understanding of the division’s ability to perform its financial operations and
human resources functions. It is from these shared understandings that primary findings and initial recommendations have been identified.

**Primary Findings**

1. Colleagues are committed and do their best to keep up with the work load.
   - All areas have challenges from time to time keeping up with the work load; a function of volume and timing, regardless of staffing support available.
   - Periods of peak volume are similar in many cases, but this is not true for all processes.
   - Many feel that management does not seek to find assistance/relief during the heaviest time.

2. The same type of work is performed in a number of different ways across the division.
   - Some processes follow University procedure to the letter, while others are adapted across units to better conform to operating needs/preferences.
   - There are many cases of different procedures in place for the same process. For example, there are (at least) six procedures for reporting and recording time worked, from self-reporting on-line to hand-filled-in and signed weekly time cards.
   - In many cases, the reasons for this variance are attributed to historical practice or not knowing it could be different.

3. Staffing resources allocated to financial and human resources functions vary significantly across the division, and include “specialists” and “generalists.”
   - Staffing levels generally reflect the size, scope and complexities of related budgets and unit staffing plans.
   - Larger units, like residential Life, have financial and human resources staffs that respond to department needs, while smaller units (like the Dean of Students office) often have one person who does a bit of everything in order to keep processes moving.
   - Regardless of the resources allocable to these efforts within a unit, there are times when the need exceeds the available support.
   - There does not currently exist a way to redirect staffing resources to support units that become overwhelmed. When this “external” support does happen, it is usually provided as a favor requested by one colleague/unit head to another.

4. There is insufficient cross-training/back-up to support needs in the absence of colleagues having primary responsibility for these functions, causing inconsistent timeliness of task completion.
   - This was a virtually universal observation, and frustration; many colleagues report having *needed to figure it out on my own*.
   - This is consistent with previous division findings regarding a lack of intentional training models for administrative professionals and related positions.

5. There has been a long history of “silo thinking” regarding the performance of these functions; units have largely been left to fend for themselves.
   - This finding was often coupled with a perception among colleagues that division units can be divided into two groups... the Have’s and the Have Not’s.
• Among the “Have Not’s” there was an undercurrent of feeling that they lack advocacy for their relative lack of support.

6. Training is generally inadequate and there is insufficient documentation for related processes.
   • This finding ties directly with Finding 4, above, but warrants specific note.

7. Many colleagues know how to perform a task/function but lack contextual understanding.
   • There is a concern that while we have many excellent “practitioners” of policy, procedure and practice, too many do not (yet) have an overall understanding of how what they do fits in to the bigger picture of why we do it.

8. Communication up/down/across the division is inconsistent.
   • As a general rule, colleagues performing these administrative supports do not feel connected to financial/human resources decisions being made, nor do they feel aware of current division priorities, planning goals, successes, or challenges. In some cases, this concern is true for intra-department variables, too.

**Initial Recommendations**

The Matrix Working Group (MWG) makes the following five recommendations in order to provide a structure for overcoming existing deficits and better position colleagues to effectively and efficiently perform all financial and human resources functions across the division.

1. **Implement a business center model with corresponding staffing resources allocated to meet the need.**

   *Four options were considered for achieving this outcome.*

   **Option One**
   Retain the status quo.

   **Advantages**
   • It is what colleagues know and have made work (with greater or lesser degrees of effectiveness and efficiency).
   • For some colleagues, there is a sense of ownership in existing processes because they created them (even when they are frustrated by prevailing circumstances).

   **Disadvantages**
   • It will do nothing to correct existing challenges and frustrations.
**Option Two**  
Create one centralized SACL business center that performs all Financial Operations and Human Resources functions.

See functional organization chart, Appendix A.

**Advantages**
- Creates a true one-stop shopping response to needs.
- Provides environment in which it is easiest to identify trends and align resources with needs.
- Provides greatest opportunity for universal cross training across the Matrix staff.

**Disadvantages**
- Physical centralization will reduce interaction with “customers” that is oftentimes best done in person. Many transactions are more complex and require deeper understanding in order to execute the transaction correctly.
- Option requiring the greatest stretch in organizational thinking, with a significant lack of enthusiasm by division practitioners for moving in this direction.

**Option Three**  
As a variation of Option Two, establish two business centers, each, for Financial Operations and for Human Resources, each reporting to the Executive Financial and Administrative Officer (“EFAO”) and each performing all related functions for their assigned SACL units.

See functional organization chart, Appendix B.

**Advantages**
- Retains closer connections with units (physically and perceptually) than Option Two.
- Achieves objectives of Option Two, but requires more coordination between the business centers.

**Disadvantages**
- Being all things for all needs sounds good, especially in the context of routine transaction activities. It is not as efficient as it sounds when considering needs that apply division-wide.

**Option Four**  
As a variation of Option Three, establish three business centers, with the two unit-specific centers handling recurring/routine planning and processing, and a third center responsible for functions that support the entire division (e.g., division budget development, overall budget forecasting, employment search staffing, position classification, new employee orientation, training and professional development, and related compliance requirements).

In this model, the “division-wide” functions would report to the EFAO. The two unit-specific centers could report either (a) directly to the EFAO with “dotted line” relationships to division cluster leaders; or, (b) the inverse reporting line. This question turns, at least in part, on
desirability of division-wide perspective v. perceived autonomy for cluster leadership. Both outcomes are important and will require close working relationships among SACL leaders.

See functional organization chart, Appendix C.

**Advantages**

- Takes advantage of benefits accruing to a one-stop service model for routine transactional activity and acknowledges the advantages of centralizing over-arching functions that impact the entire division.
- Centers accountability and necessary resources within an infrastructure that focuses specifically on these functions.
- Ensures division leadership having information they need to make decisions, with the added advantage of a division perspective.
- Provides support for division-level management of related strategic needs (i.e., functions and responsibilities of the Vice Chancellor’s Office).

**Disadvantages**

- Could be perceived as reducing division leadership for managing financial and human resources functions in their respective areas.

**MWG’s recommendation is to adopt Option Four** (three-center structure), especially as a first step, with a commitment to periodically revisit the model to ensure it is working well (and/or determine how it could function even better).

2. **Undertake a rigorous effort to standardize all related policies procedures to the extent reasonably possible/practical.** *(This will be undertaken by several work teams.)*

3. **Ensure orientation, training and related development efforts for all related staff positions that adequately prepare colleagues to do their work.** *(This will include development of an integrated SACL plan.)*

4. **Adopt a flexible staffing model that ensures availability of resources across the adopted model to best ensure functions will be performed in the absence of other colleagues.** *(This will require some testing.)*

5. **Implement a process for routinely monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the SACL matrix.** *(This will be led by the EFAO.)*
Action Requested

MWG seeks SALT endorsement of these recommendations and support for moving them to implementation.

Attachments
A: Centralized SACL Business Center (Option Two; functional org chart)
B: Two Business Centers Model (Option Three; functional org chart)
C: Three Business Centers Model (Option Four; functional org chart)

Enclosures
• Preliminary Report: Financial Operations Sub-Team
• Preliminary Report: Human Resources Sub-Team

SACL/mwg/ech
April 2015