Efficiency and Effectiveness Task Force
DRAFT Summarization of Ideas

Preamble

With intent to “to garner ideas about improving our business functions and to create better operational efficiencies” President Mazey convened the Efficiency and Effectiveness Task Force in January 2012. Subsequently, Task Force members met with and solicited suggestions from undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff organizations to improve efficiency on campus. This campus-wide collaborative effort was bolstered by an online web portal through which all BGSU community members could contribute thoughts, comments, and ideas. The Efficiency and Effectiveness Task Force then combined and vetted this data in committee which are reflected in the below listed 41 point summary of ideas. Currently the Task Force works to implement the resulting outcomes.

As a direct result of the comments and suggestions, two Kaizen activities have taken place at BGSU. One brought together faculty and administrators dedicated to improving the student advising process. This took place during the Fall 2012 semester. Likewise, a group of administrators responsible for administrative and classified staff hiring reviewed the hiring process in an intensive two-day session. These activities combined with collected data form the basis for this draft report of the committee’s progress to date.

Academic Advising

1. Improve/Standardize Advising
   o Multiple comments suggest the entire academic advising structure requires an overhaul. Currently students are not being advised in a standardized manner and suffer from improper or unfulfilling advising.
   o Improving this process would move students more quickly toward graduation, enhance opportunities at the university, and allow advisors to speak more about opportunities available instead of course requirements. A common practice at many institutions is to require a degree map for all students enrolled at the University. Additionally, standardized advising would help students transfer from one college to another.

2. System for tracking Coursework – Degree Audit (currently in progress)
   o According to multiple comments, the degree audit report is currently difficult for students to read. Comments suggest that this be changed to a check sheet format or fully automated.
   o This could reduce time to graduation as well as eliminate excess credit hours. It would also allow for more "value added" services being performed by the academic advisors.

3. Early Alerts – (currently in progress – SuccessNet)
   o The current early alert and midterm alert progress reporting system disempowers students and is not understood by all faculty. Some faculty do not report because reporting for all students requires too much time.
   o Changing the system, as is in progress with SuccessNet, allows faculty to better assist students in need while praising students who are doing well. Using this system should also allow students to be more engaged with their progress and eliminate the question of where this information ‘goes’.

4. Advisors in Residence Halls
   o Comments suggest considering placing academic advisors in residence halls and/or cross-train resident hall staff to address basic academic advising issues.
5. **Technology enhanced Advising**
   - Comments suggested an app students could use for online advising.
   - This would be more effective for students than meeting with an academic advisor reducing time toward graduation. Like improving the DAR, this would allow advisors to speak to students about other opportunities. Using algorithms for assigning courses could eliminate ‘human error’ in course scheduling.

6. **Graduate Advising**
   - Graduate advising requires an overhaul similar to undergraduate advising. Currently there is no standard system for advising graduate students. Students are not knowledgeable of course requirements and do not always complete degrees in a timely fashion.
   - Improving graduate advising would eliminate unnecessary coursework for graduate students who are generally non-fee paying. Likewise, advisors should be discussing career plans and placement opportunities with graduates.

7. **Job Placement for undergraduate and graduate students**
   - The current competitive market requires better job placement for undergraduate and graduate students. Proactively recruiting prospective employers to campus is critical for undergraduate students. Faculty should network on behalf of their graduate students at conferences and with colleagues and encourage/consider more nonacademic career paths.
   - Improving the job placement rate for undergraduate and graduate students will enhance the reputation of academic programs and increase enrollment. This would increase the effectiveness of student success as it would motivate students to graduate in a more timely fashion.

**Automation of Processes – Academic**

8. **Hiring Process - Faculty hiring**
   - Comments reflected the faculty hiring process taking too long.
   - Automating the process would reduce time spent collecting signatures, be more effective for individual departments, create standardization, and better track diversity statistics.

9. **Hiring Process – GA assignments (currently in progress)**
   - Comments reflected the need for an expedited GA assignment process, specifically the contract issuance portion of the assignment process. The current system is not standard across colleges and often takes considerable time.
   - Expediting and automating this process would allow chairs and directors more time to focus on other issues and increase graduate enrollment and expedite the contract procedure.

10. **Curriculum Review – Blue/Green Sheeting (currently in progress)**
    - Multiple comments reflected the antiquated and confusing nomenclature and paper format of the Blue/Green Sheet Process.
    - Automating this process would increase efficiency through cost savings in time and paper and allow faculty to more effectively alter the curriculum.
11. Drop/Add
   - Comments reflected cumbersome paper process of drop/add.
   - Automating would increase efficiency through cost savings in time and paper and would increase efficiency for degree completion, especially for online courses.

12. Faculty evaluations/Promotion and Tenure (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments suggested that the faculty evaluation and promotion and tenure process utilizes too much paper waste and may not be in line with best practices. Comments also suggested that there is a need for a central repository for faculty to log work relevant to evaluation/promotion/tenure.
   - Centralizing an automated system for faculty to record teaching/research/service endeavors would allow faculty to spend more time in the classroom. Additionally electronic copies would produce more efficient uses of university resources. Additional comments suggest that this is underway.

Automation of Processes – Administrative

13. Hiring Process – administrative (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments suggest an overhaul and automation of the administrative hiring process. Currently this system requires multiple hard copy documents, signatures, and steps.
   - Automating the process would reduce time spent collecting signatures, be more effective for individual departments, create standardization, and better track diversity statistics. The number of steps required for this process has been dramatically reduced based upon a review conducted this past summer using various lean approaches.

14. E-Signatures (currently in progress)
   - The use of e-signatures would affect multiple items in multiple comments.
   - This would increase effectiveness by decreasing time spent acquiring physical signatures on a variety of documents.

15. Travel Requests & Reimbursements (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments highlighted the confusing paper format of travel requests and reimbursements. Multiple copies of different forms keep faculty and staff from knowing which form is the correct form.
   - Automating this process would increase efficiency by decreasing waste and increase effectiveness by redistributing time spent completing forms.

16. Scholarship Process
   - Currently the student scholarship disbursement process is mostly a paper process.
   - Automating this process would increase efficiency by decreasing waste and increase effectiveness by notifying student of scholarships sooner.

Records Execution & Management

17. Centralize retention of student records (currently in progress)
   - Comments indicate a need for a central repository for student records.
   - Centralizing this would be part of the overall academic advising re-visioning which would allow advisors to better serve student needs and expedite the process toward graduation.

18. Centralize Policies and Procedures (currently in progress)
   - Comments suggested a central repository for all university policies and procedures.
This would increase efficiency and effectiveness by consolidating unnecessary policies and allow students/faculty/staff to easily familiarize themselves with current policies and procedures.

19. Review payment approvals process
   - Comments suggest the need for a review of the payment approvals process because it requires too many signatures.
   - Consolidating and centralizing this process could increase effectiveness and efficiency through a more secure management of funds. However, additional comments suggest that some signatures would still be necessary for monitoring expenditures.

20. Reduce Print Publications
   - Multiple comments suggested reducing printed publications and documents for various campus constituencies.
   - Moving to electronic communications would increase efficiency by decreasing print costs. Additional comments suggest this is under consideration and should include a consideration of each constituency’s desired form of communication.

Website

21. Outdated, terrible search engine (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments suggested the website is outdated and needs a general overhaul including a more effective search engine.
   - This would allow for more effective use of the website by both internal and external constituents. Additional comments reflect that an overhaul is being discussed.

22. Mobile technology to communicate (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments suggested that the University better use mobile technology to communicate with external constituents.
   - Increasing our presence on social networking sites and through mobile technologies could increase our student application, registration, and retention rates. A new mobile app already exists and could be expanded upon to create push notifications to users.

23. Department/Office Websites (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments suggested that departmental and office websites are inconsistent and ineffective.
   - Standardizing these websites would increase effectiveness by allowing current and prospective students as well as faculty and staff to find information easier.

24. Calendar system (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments pointed to the need for a university wide calendar system.
   - A new calendar is already in place and needs to be marketed widely. Proper utilization of this existing system could reduce waste from paper mailings/flyers from individual departments.

Operations

25. Upgrade/Regulate Mechanical systems (HVAC/Hot Water) in buildings
   - Multiple comments suggested that the overall temperature and hot water in buildings be regulated.
   - Replacing HVAC systems would increase efficiency by providing more economical heating/cooling and increase effectiveness of on the job time. Decreasing the heat of the water in taps would be a more efficient use of energy resources; however, this could require a major costly overhaul of the hot water system.

26. Improve campus mail
Comments suggested creating/improving the campus mail system. Currently offices hire student workers to serve as couriers between offices because campus mail takes too long.

Improving the current campus mail system would provide cost savings for individual departments by eliminating the need for student workers in this capacity. It would also increase effectiveness of the university by expediting the transportation of currently used paper forms (hiring, travel requests, etc.).

27. Lighting – more outside and fewer inside when not in use (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments suggested lighting on campus is misused. Suggestions were to increase outside lighting and reduce lighting inside buildings when not in use.
   - Reducing lighting inside buildings would increase efficiency by decreasing energy costs. Steps are in place to replace some office lighting with motion sensor lighting.

28. Rental Cars
   - Comments suggested having the university rent cars when employees drive for University business rather than offering a reimbursement.
   - This could produce a cost savings from high state reimbursement fees. The actual cost effectiveness of this strategy requires further investigation.

29. Recycling (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments suggested the university’s need to increase recycling options by adding glass recycling and offering more options for plastic recycling.
   - Increasing recycling programs would decrease landfill waste on campus and could provide revenue for the university; although, additional comments suggested a limited glass market that would not result in an overall gain.

30. Buses to Vans
   - Comments suggest changing the bus system to a fifteen passenger van system to take students throughout town and across campus because the buses are not always filled to capacity.
   - This could potentially be more efficient as a fleet of fifteen passenger vans is less costly than a fleet of buses; however, the buses are already in place and there are additional safety concerns with vans.

31. Reduce waste (currently in progress)
   - Multiple comments suggested the university produces a great amount of waste. Comments specifically pointed to food and paper towel use.
   - Over time, changing to hand dryer systems would save money in paper towel purchase and reduce waste. Food waste programs are currently in place in the dining facilities. Opportunities to sell food waste could be investigated.

Systemic

32. One Stop Shop
   - The One Stop Shop model increases effectiveness by allowing offices to speak to one another easily and reduces overlap. It increases efficiency by decreasing student confusion and frustration with university offices and keeps students from unnecessarily leaving the institution. This model requires significant restructuring in office space, (re)training of employees, and communication.

33. Outsource Campus Services
Comments suggest outsourcing campus operations services which could be covered by various constituencies (residence halls, garbage pickup, and police).

Outsourcing could provide cost benefit to the university through overhead savings. However, this requires serious consideration unique to each department/area.

34. Scheduling Systems/Classroom and meeting room reservations

While the University has software to optimize the utilization of classroom and meeting space, multiple comments suggested that this process could be dramatically improved. There are a large number of classrooms/meeting rooms that are “off the grid.” Most units/buildings manage these spaces requiring time spent calling multiple locations for a reservation.

Improving and automating this system would increase effectiveness by more fully utilizing space as well as lessening time spent waiting on reservation confirmations. Likewise, a standardized system for reserving and scheduling space would decrease confusion.

35. Block Scheduling

Currently, specific courses and time for the courses are decided by the chair/director in consultation with the faculty member. This does not necessarily lead to the courses that are needed by students to graduate in a timely basis. It is recommended that an analysis be conducted to ensure that courses are scheduled that will facilitate a pathway for the majority of students as they move towards graduation. Additionally, it is recommended that block scheduling be instituted for all freshmen students to ensure that they have a complete schedule, are provided the necessary foundational coursework, and become better connected with students within an academic environment. This will also ensure that the number of courses for freshmen is appropriate and properly managed to ensure strong fill rates (enrollment vs. course capacity).

36. Required and Elective Courses offerings

The University has a large number and variety of courses that are offered each year. For example, there are a large number of general education courses currently approved by the University. Based upon a review conducted by the Provost Office, general education courses were identified that are currently not being offered and/or do not meet the University Learning Objectives. It is recommended that these courses be eliminated in consultation with the appropriate academic unit. Additionally, it is recommended that a review be conducted of programs with the number of required credits to complete the program greater than 120 semester credits. If possible, the program should consider reducing the number of credits to an appropriate level to enable full time students to complete the program in four years.

37. Class enrollment sizes

There is a large variability in the class size for courses across the University. It is recommended that an analysis be conducted in each College to ensure that an appropriate enrollment capacity is set for each course. This analysis should be conducted with the understanding that each academic program will need to have various enrollment sizes (small, medium and large) to ensure that they are achieving the appropriate level of student credit hour productivity. For example, under-enrolled sections should be consolidated and low-enrollment courses may need to be offered in alternating years. A more robust advising system which requires all students to have a degree map could also help inform the appropriate offerings of courses to best match student demand.
38. Teaching loads
   o Faculty teaching loads are currently set at the College level and thus there is little
     standardization across the University. Many of the processes that are used to monitor
     teaching loads are manual processes and thus difficult to monitor across the University.
     It is recommended that an automated process be instituted to allow faculty to more
     easily report their activities as well as be able to ensure that appropriate teaching loads
     are consistent for all faculty. Additionally, reasons for course releases currently being
     provided to faculty should be standardized across the University. Consideration should
     be given to measuring teaching load by student credit hours rather than course load.

39. Administrative levels/Organizational structures
   o There is a large disparity between and within the various Divisions regarding
     administrative overhead. For example, within Academic Affairs some collegiate units
     use schools, some use departments, some use both schools and departments. The
     number of faculty within these various organizational structures varies greatly between
     units. It is recommended that a benchmark analysis be conducted to consider these
     differences and work to flatten the organization in terms of administrative structure.

40. Administrative support for Faculty and Staff
   o There is a large variation between the workload of classified staff across the University.
     It is recommended that a benchmark analysis be conducted to consider these
     differences and work to ensure all faculty and staff are appropriately supported to
     ensure that they are as efficient as possible in conducting their work.

41. Availability of data for effective management – (in progress)
   o Currently, there is a lack of data available for the proper management of the University.
     Within the PeopleSoft system there is limited linkage between the financial system, the
     human resource system and student system. This requires a great deal of time creating
     massive spreadsheets to manually link this data so that it could be used to holistically
     manage the University. It is strongly recommended that a data warehouse be created
     as soon as possible so that informed data-driven decision might be able to be made in a
     more efficient manner.

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