



## Strategic Resource Allocation Project

### Administration Response to Recommendations of the Support Task Force

November 2014

#### INTRODUCTION

Given the volume of support functions reviewed by the Support Task Force (STF) and the many recommendations, suggestions and comments included in the Final Report of the Support Task Force (SRA), this response will not directly address each item. As the report itself acknowledges, there are common issues among multiple functions. These cross cutting issues are addressed in a unified fashion similar to the “Trends” section of the SRA Report while some of the more specific suggestions and recommendations in Quintiles 1, 2 and 5 receive a direct response. Those responses and recommendations are in the document entitled *Quintiles 1, 2 and 5 Recommendations and Responses*. Examples of actions already taken as a result of or in support of the SRA report (SRA) also are provided. Many of these actions have enabled the University to reallocate resources to meet budget reduction needs which are the result of lower than anticipated revenues. While reallocating resources for budget reduction was not the project’s goal, the reports of the Task Forces played a role in many of the decisions made. While some recommendations may be addressed with internal reallocation of funds, financial constraints will limit the University’s ability to implement others.

Regarding the reallocation of funds, one of the expectations at the outset on the part of the Administration was that recommendations would be made identifying those functions that were not necessarily critical to the University’s mission and might be considered for reduction or even elimination. The internal resources that might be freed up could be used to enhance functions the STF placed in the top quintiles. This expectation was not communicated by University Administration as clearly as necessary. As a result, there are many functions that need assessment and resources but very few recommendations that offer the possibility of a source for reallocated funds. This limits the potential to take immediate, concrete steps in most functional areas. The upside is that a tremendous amount of valuable and useful information is provided in this report. It will be an important tool in the development of a new University Strategic Plan.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS**

### Administrative Overhead

In the recent round of budget reductions, non-academic and administrative functions were primary targets, sparing the instructional area what otherwise would have been \$600,000 in additional cuts. Changes in administrative staffing have impacted all cabinet divisions including the President's Office. Several of the positions affected were management level which required concentrated efforts at reorganizing people, supervisory responsibilities and duties. This effort to identify efficiencies and consolidate administrative functions is ongoing. Examples of consolidation efforts and prioritization of limited staff resources can be found in Business Services, the Center for Economic Development, Information Technology and Advancement to name a few. Even within Academic Affairs, many cuts reduced administrative overhead, including elimination of several vacant classified and wage staff positions in offices reporting to the Provost. Recently, Ellucian, the firm that licenses Banner, came to campus, interviewed a wide range of administrative, academic and student programming staff and offered recommendations for improving business processes which could improve efficiencies and reduce administrative costs. Some of those recommendations are currently being acted upon while others which may need further investment will be delayed and prioritized.

### Assessment

The need to institutionalize assessment across the university was something the STF strongly recommended. Supporting the process by seeking continuous "customer" feedback was seen as critical. The University Administration strongly agrees that a change with regard to the culture of assessment is necessary. A plan for how to do that will be developed in part by building upon examples of customer feedback currently in place. The following areas are examples of customer feedback presently in operation: Procurement (after each formal solicitation), the IT Help Desk (after each "ticket" is closed), the Student Services Center (yellow feedback cards), and Dining Services to name a few. Other forms of assessment may need to be developed, as appropriate to the particular responsibilities of the area. Ultimately, the STF expressed concern – repeatedly – that useful assessment data was either not provided or collected. It will be critical to transform the culture of assessment, so that we ensure the highest level of customer service and student/client satisfaction and to help make critical decisions about resource allocation and prioritization going forward. A timeline for development and completion will be shared with the University community when completed.

### Equipment Replacement

Plans to replace obsolete equipment are in place in some areas but not in others. In most cases, needs have been identified and prioritized and this analysis has guided decision making. The issue is the limited resources the University has at its disposal. A campus-wide survey does not seem necessary at this time as there is an accurate fixed assets system in place and an up to date

inventory of IT equipment on campus. Leveraging HEETP (State Equipment Trust Fund) and the University's limited resources is critical. While the long term goal is to fund budget to support equipment replacement, for the time being we will need to continue to identify such resources on an as-needed and as-available basis.

### Event Management

Event equipment needs face the same constraints as cited above. When something breaks, it is replaced and another project that those funds might have supported is delayed.

Over the past two years, more and more event management functions have been centralized to one office. However, there still remain related functions that are decentralized and spread across areas such as Facilities Services, the Registrar, Athletics, the Museums and student programming. A one stop shop remains the University's ultimate goal. A committee recently selected a university wide scheduling tool that will greatly enhance planning however recent financial constraints have delayed its purchase. On a positive note, a committee is beginning plans to host a large conference in 2016. The process itself will emphasize weaknesses, point to improvements and develop a better capacity for hosting events on campus.

### Growth of UMW Footprint

Recent years have seen unprecedented growth in the University's lands and buildings. However, this growth has come without the additional resources needed to maintain and operate these facilities. Efforts to direct more resources to protecting the University's physical assets while assessing and prioritizing needs will continue. UMW will also continue to make budget requests for operating and maintenance funding from the State. In the past year, faculty from the UMW Historic Preservation Department completed a survey of the Fredericksburg Campus, identifying those facilities and features that need protection. The University has a Six Year Capital Outlay Plan that addresses some of the problems and maintains a list of smaller projects needing attention. Facilities Services is increasing the number of generalists on staff who will coordinate work with contracted vendors to assist in meeting the growing need. Identifying opportunities for optimum use of staff resources is a priority.

The question of restraining new growth, raised by the STF, is a legitimate one. While there are needs for new building such as the Jepson Science Center addition and the aging arts facilities, the Strategic Planning group will need to address this issue.

### Information Technology

The University will be assessing the effectiveness of the new IT structure that includes a lead IT faculty member in the Provost's Office. It is anticipated that this reorganization in conjunction with the opening of the ITCC and continued involvement of the President's Technology Advisory Committee (PTAC) will improve the University's "IT Vision" across all functions.

Several departments have begun considering or implementing new technology to help with their operations. These include a Document Management System for Admissions, Registration, Financial Aid, Enrollment Management and Advising. Alumni Relations has implemented iModules that dramatically improves alumni engagement through enhanced email, e-publishing, and social media communications. Payroll is implementing an automated compensation, benefits and leave tracking tool (KRONOS/MY TIME).

### Marketing and Advertising

As recommended by STF, the University Administration will continue to assess and evaluate current efforts and specifically consider reallocating resources to those areas cited in the report.

### Mentoring

The University Administration is in agreement that there may be ways to better coordinate these programs. To date, the Student Transition Program has begun working closely with Academic and Career Services programs to best serve students and alleviate any duplication of services. STP has now consolidated efforts with the Rappahannock Scholars Program through shared resources and programming.

### Purchasing

The procurement process can be frustrating and burdensome. The STF is correct that many of the challenges associated with procurement have their roots in state regulations (travel restrictions, SWAM requirements). Finding ways to assist end users will continue to be paramount. Recent improvements have included a Customer Service Specialist (a position filled in place of a vacant Buyer position) and a streamlined process for standardized office and equipment purchases. Current initiatives include:

- the full use of a Client Relations Management tool for improved communication and support for end users (including real time feedback);
- further leveraging of the University's Tier II status which will permit more efficient small purchase procedures, access to VASCUPP contracts and reduced oversight from State procurement and IT agencies;
- a new contract management system to be fully introduced to assist Contract Administrator;
- additional training opportunities.

### Staffing and Campus-Wide Staffing Assessments

The STF offered many recommendations to assess staffing needs and levels across most support functions they reviewed. In a similar vein, to date several large functional areas have or are undergoing a staffing reassessment. The areas of Admissions, Academic and Career Services, Enrollment Management, Registrar and Financial Aid have been or will soon be examined for appropriate and sufficient staffing patterns. There have already been wide-ranging changes made in these functions and a new tactical plan for addressing performance has been developed. In addition, the Center for International Education has reorganized tasks and duties resulting in more capacity to meet increased demand. All of these changes have been made through internal reallocation of existing resources.

The office of Advancement has realized savings of \$105,000 through the reorganization of positions and duties. The Institutional Research office, specifically mentioned in the SRA report, has eliminated one position. Staffing in the Administrative and Finance division was also examined this summer. The result was that Finance, Payroll, Accounts Payable and Accounting were spared staff reductions (in line with STF recommendations) while other departments reduced staff by a total of five FTE. Finally, the Student Affairs Division reduced staff by two FTE after a review. As mentioned earlier, these savings were reallocated to the budget reductions the University recently made.

The budget reduction exercise forced managers to assess staffing levels and patterns. Salaries, wages and benefits make up the vast majority of expenditures in most departments. As a result, a sizable portion of the UMW employment force has been reviewed to one degree or another. An initiative to do a more thorough and comprehensive review may require outside consultants who could bring external benchmarks and best practices to bear on their analysis. There are no plans to conduct such an analysis at this time, though the University Administration will continue to look for further efficiencies as required.

### Training

Currently, UMW offers professional development and training opportunities that are developed and administered by several different departments and functional areas. The result is a lack of consistency in quality, documentation and the identification of emerging training needs. The SRA cited training needs in seventeen different comments. In response, the University's Human Resources Office has begun work on a centralized Professional Development Plan that will coordinate training efforts and resources, improve the user experience, provide accurate documentation which will be available to employees and supervisors and improve the identification and implementation of emerging training needs. This Plan is intended to address most if not all of the STF's specific recommendations. A Spring/Summer 2015 roll-out is expected. In addition, the Finance Department has reallocated resources internally to establish a new fulltime position dedicated to training and support for end users of financial systems

(Banner, eVA, SPCC, etc.). Finally, as mentioned earlier, the Procurement Office has established a Customer Service Specialist position through reorganization and vacancies.

### New Sources of Revenue

The University will continue to explore ways to generate additional revenue streams through traditional and new opportunities. The STF identified several areas with potential to generate revenue including Dodd Auditorium, Athletics, Belmont, Events Management (conferences, meetings, camps) and larger summer school populations. Of course, enrollment management is also focused on building enrollment in multiple programs – traditional undergraduate, adult undergraduate and graduate – as a means of generating additional revenue.