

## Discussion Summary of Major Challenges & Possible Solutions Facing Chairs & Administrators

from "Coping Creatively with Limited Resources: A Discussion Forum for Chairs & Administrators," May 25, 2011

A total of 54 chairs, administrators, directors, and deans attended a forum co-hosted by ADVANCE and the Provost's 2y2d initiative in May 2011. The discussion centered on sharing current challenges and brainstorming possible solutions, summarized here.

### I. Funding

#### Funding Issues

1. **Lack of operational and discretionary funding** due to decreased state and federal funding and resulting impacts on everything from TA/RA funding, faculty recruitment and retention, staffing levels and workload, compliance, etc.
2. **Maintaining quality** with fewer resources.
3. **Developing new revenue streams.**
4. **Strategizing**, prioritizing, and making budget projections given uncertainties related to funding streams, budget cuts, and ABB.
5. **Lack of flexibility**, including difficulty with restrictions on "fund types," HR regulations with personnel and positions, etc.
6. **Communicating about the budget** and budget cuts with faculty, staff, and students.
7. **Cuts and reorganization** in UW central units (HR, GCA, etc.) impacts on units (more work to units, less clarity, etc.) as central services are pushed out.

#### Funding Solutions

- **Increase revenue** via student fees, fee-based programs, UW bonds, selling services to other units, licensing, patent activities.
- **Increase revenue via direct fundraising and other advancement activities** including sponsorships, endowments, donor stewardship, advisory board development, and matching programs.
- **Decrease costs by sharing** services, equipment across units.
- **Increase flexibility** to allow units more ability to maneuver within resource constraints. This includes freedom of constraints on non-state support, cost shifting to RCR budgets, voluntary staff furloughs, etc.
- **Increase efficiency** by examining current resources, analyzing functions, identifying priorities, conducting process improvement, eliminating or consolidating programs, etc.

### II. Culture and Change Management Issues

#### Culture and Change Management Issues

1. **Managing emotions** that surface in a time of rapid change. These include resistance to change, new processes, and changing roles; emotional responses such as fear, anxiety, and low morale; and decreased civility.
2. **Convincing faculty and staff that change is needed** and helping them "let go" of the roles they now have or programs that now exist in order to rebuild new roles.
3. **Ensuring good decisions are made** around how to change so that change is positive and accomplishes what is needed rather than simply changing for the sake of changing and then changing again to fix it.
4. **Communicating sufficiently** through all the changes, decisions, and uncertainties.
5. **Making decisions without complete information**, e.g. ABB or fulfilling pre-existing promises.

#### Culture and Change Management Solutions

- **Lead courageously** by moving to action in a steady persistent way, making tough decisions, addressing unproductive faculty, and responding proactively to pressure for increased accountability.
- **Build trust in the decision-making process.** Analyze options, gather and provide information about proposed changes, make explicit the decision-making processes, allow for informed representation, and communicate decisions in a planned, professional and anxiety-minimizing way.
- **Build a culture where civility is the norm.** Identify non-civil behavior and call it out.
- **Communicate.** Enough communication is never enough.
- **Provide more leadership development**, training and mentoring. This includes leadership training for new chairs and coaching for leaders at all levels to assist people through change and conflict.
- **Provide role models and mentors** at the local level.
- **Improve communication** between leaders and administrators and involve administrators in decisions.
- **Break the entitlement attitude** and redefine expectations.

### III. Facilities and Resources Issues

## Facilities and Resources Issues

1. **Quality and maintenance of facilities**, including deferred maintenance, decaying laboratories, minimal money for remodel, and sub-standard facilities due to lack of cleaning and maintenance.
2. **Limited space, availability of space, and suitability of space** impacting classes, scheduling, new hires and expanding departments. Increased need for larger lecture halls to accommodate more students in fewer classes.
3. **Computers and equipment**, especially updating equipment, technology overload with too many central web-based services to understand, and overpriced internet costs (of maintenance/alterations).

## Facilities and Resources Solutions

- **Share lab equipment and facilities.** An existing program for students, for example, is the STF Equipment Loan Program.
- **Define space policies and incentivize sharing** through ABB.

## IV. Morale Issues

### Morale Issues

1. **Maintaining faculty and staff motivation** and morale in the face of cuts, lack of raises, increased workloads, increased reliance on soft funding, and uncertainty.
2. **Developing diversity** and diversity programs without funding.
3. **Fear that the university will act like a corporation.**

### Morale Solutions

- **Organize morale-building activities** such as recognition events, team building events, celebrations of milestones, and appreciation activities.
- **Make strategic low-cost, high-return investments** such as providing complimentary IMA passes; supporting professional development; organizing staff and faculty lunches, dessert Fridays, a kickball team, coffee/tea/soda offerings; improving the physical environment with equipment upgrades, or setting aside "time-out" spaces in facilities.
- **Improve policies around issues that affect morale** such as discretionary leave, preemptive faculty retention, etc.

## V. Faculty Recruitment & Retention Issues

### Faculty Recruitment & Retention Issues

1. **Recruitment funding** for start-ups.
2. **Retention** given salary, teaching loads, competition, absence of endowed chairs, prevalence of outside offers.
3. **Faculty salary inversion** and cross-department salary inequities.
4. **Implications of impending retirements** due to faculty demographics.

### Faculty Recruitment & Retention Solutions

- **Provide alternative compensation** such as gift money for scholar awards.
- **Create a mechanism to measure and manage workload** and increased faculty burden.
- **Share the cost of recruitment** by hiring joint faculty with another department.

## VI. Administrative/Staffing Issues

### Administrative/Staffing Issues

1. **Managing equal or increased workload with equal or fewer staff** and resulting challenges meeting department-specific program needs, covering vacation leave, providing grant writing/administrative support for junior faculty, responding to new developments or initiatives, and meeting student advising/service needs.
2. **Meeting increased compliance requirements** and unfunded state or campus mandates with fewer staff resources.
3. **Motivating staff after years of doing more with less**, with staff feeling reduced to integers, salary inversion caused by years without raises, top heavy age distribution due to no retirements, "legacy" thinking, and feelings of entitlement.
4. **Managing expectations** of administrative support from faculty and students
5. **Resistance to sharing personnel** across units due to the feeling that once you lose a position, you never get it back.
6. **Dealing with central systems and central data**, including systems that don't talk to each other and an imperfect data ecosystem.

### Administrative/Staffing Solutions

- **Evaluate and redistribute workloads**, identify bottlenecks, establish a hierarchy of tasks website, change from more siloed program management to a task-based one to allow cross-training, opportunities for advancement and a smaller staff.
- **Consolidate resources** at the college level, across units, and within the unit to create economies of scale. Centralize some services such as travel- training grant- IRB, purchasing and consider departmental mergers (depending on timing and the chair retiring).
- **Cooperate and share best practices** to avoid reinventing the wheel, find out what is working in other units and share what worked or didn't in yours, create a social space for peer networking (e.g., brown bag seminars for administrators).
- **Develop metrics and streamline** administrative functions.
- **Share staffing** by looking at tasks (e.g., travel or procard duties) rather than position titles.
- **Provide training** for staff to update skills to match current needs (e.g. technology, communication).
- **Provide efficiency tools** such as website templates, online e-mail ticketing system for requesting administrative services from support staff that allows staff to concentrate and specialize more.
- **Engage staff in finding solutions and improve cohesion/community-focus.** Encourage positive talk and try to motivate staff to think creatively about how to save money/resources and improve processes.
- **Make use of temporary project help.**

## VII. Research and Teaching Issues

### Research and Teaching Issues

1. **Maintaining or improving the student experience** with fewer resources, including number/frequency/variety of offerings, experiential learning opportunities, class size, access, keeping abreast of developments in high schools we support, etc.
2. **Reduced TA support** impact on writing and hands-on lab experiences, increased grant support of PhD students.
3. **Increasing teaching demands** due to increasing enrollment, faculty retirements, time bought out by research grants, and reduced funding for part-time lecturers.
4. **Increasing enrollment** in intro-level courses, increasing class size, inability to offer courses at the same frequency.
5. **Competition for the best students** due to uncompetitive grad student stipends and revoked in-state tuition conversion.
6. **Concern with quality of education/pedagogy**, especially given so little lead time for budget changes and opaque UW-wide student database that makes tracking student progress too difficult.
7. **Policy challenges** related to ABB disincentives to interdisciplinary teaching, joint appointments/cross-unit faculty hiring/promotion/RCR, lack of endowment to support translational projects, punitive policy on finding health care for fellowship-supported postdocs, restriction in state policy/code limit balancing ability.

### Research and Teaching Solutions

- **Cope with reduced TA support** by reallocating % TA assigned to course; redesign programs to reduce required TAs; hire peer TAs; shift to more reader/graders and reserve TA positions for face-to-face; trade the cost of a TA for dedicated seats for students from another unit who need the course; online grading; regularize expectations for class size; reassess duties.
- **Cope with increase teaching loads** by hiring more (career track?) lecturers, teaching postdocs (50% teaching/50% on grant) both within units and shared across units, and floater RAs. Move to distance learning to avoid salaried positions, course release (smaller # preps), and be cautious about enrollment numbers in graduate programs.
- **Balance, manage, streamline, or revise curricula** to better fit existing resources, workloads, faculty and staffing levels; reduce time to degree including for students discouraged by a shrinking job market.