

# **THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE TASK FORCE REPORT**

**Presented to President Nancy Kleniewski**

**May 7, 2010**

**by**

**Members of the Organizational Structure Task Force (OSTF)**

Jerome Blechman, Professor, Earth Sciences

Deborah Farro-Lynd, Assistant Professor, Math, Computer Science, and Statistics

Todd Foreman, Associate Vice President for Administration and Technology

Cynthia Lassonde, Co-chair, Associate Professor, Elementary Education and Reading

Patrice Macaluso, Associate Professor, Theatre

Barry Warren, OSTF Co-chair, Associate Vice President for Development

Nancy Wolters, Associate Provost for Academic Support

Dear President Kleniewski:

In September of 2009, the Organizational Structure Task Force (OSTF) was created to work parallel to the Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC). The Task Force's charge was to engage the campus community in a series of forums, conversations, focus groups, and surveys to identify if there were any alternative structures that could result in improved performance and enhanced services in the College's operations. OSTF was charged with making informed recommendations based on collected data. The members of OSTF personally committed to the following principles:

- To demonstrate objectivity regarding new, innovative ideas and current structures and practices that may impact our personal or departmental agendas and interests.
- To take advantage of this opportunity to honor the goal of enhancing the learning and living experiences of our students.
- To operate openly and with due transparency.
- To respect the importance of verified facts and information in the development of our recommendations.

The OSTF members first sought out current literature on organizational structure and looked at structural charts of a wide range of colleges and universities across the nation. We sought to conceptualize our charge, define terms, and focus our vision.

Over the past eight months, the members of the Task Force have provided multiple opportunities for the campus community to voice their comments, concerns, and suggestions on the organizational structure of the College. We began by collecting responses to an online survey that was distributed to campus members. This survey asked broad questions to encourage participants to think openly about organizational structure.

After the Task Force's review of the survey responses, we decided we needed to "drill down" more deeply into the issues that were mentioned repeatedly. Also, we wanted to give more members of the campus community the chance to talk with us. We held three open forums during October. We collected more responses in November when Dave McFarland visited. During November we also visited meetings of the Council of Chairs, Finance and Administration, Student Development, College Advancement, and Academic Affairs to share our progress and listen to comments.

In our initial charge you asked us to consider the impact on customer service and efficiencies. We identified three additional issues that we thought needed to be addressed. We found communications, silos, and trust to be important considerations.

With these five recurring themes in mind, we facilitated focus groups with randomly selected members of the faculty, secretaries, trades areas, the Student Association, associate deans, associate vice-presidents, deans, directors, and the Council of Chairs. And, finally, after we felt confident we had reached the core issues that would be prioritized in our report, we conducted individual and small-group invited interviews with selected people across campus who could best inform us of the multiple perspectives connected to these particular issues.

As a result, seven prominent issues have risen as those we think are most urgent to address based on the need for and importance of gains to the College. The top two issues that the Task Force sees as most urgently needing attention are those concerning graduate studies and institutional research. The next four issues highlighted in this report—academic advisement, building-related issues, deans and the divisional structure, and diversity issues—appear in alphabetical order. They are important but not as urgent as the top two. Finally, the issue of communication is addressed as the

final report because it arose as an overriding theme throughout many of the other issues and discussions.

We have had to “screen out some of the personal/divisional agendas that inevitably arise when structural issues are raised” as you noted in your email to the Task Force dated February 26. We are proud of our work together and sincerely hope that it will result in improved efficiencies and communication across campus. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

The Members of the  
Organizational Structure Task Force

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## **PART I: REPORTS**

# REPORT ON GRADUATE STUDIES

## Introduction

Our College Comprehensive Plan [I-d] states: “Continue to support graduate studies and to enhance the quality of existing and proposed graduate programs consistent with the College’s overall goals for graduate education.”

In addition, the *Graduate Catalog* states: “The College is committed to promoting graduate education, research, and scholarly and creative activity of the highest quality. These activities nourish virtually all other major functions of the College, enhancing the quality of undergraduate education, the professional vitality of the faculty, and the College’s ability to provide special public service appropriate to changing regional, national, and international needs. No less important are the opportunities for self-enrichment and personal development that are provided by the existence of most graduate programs. Through our graduate education programs, we endeavor to provide instructional programs and services that enhance area development, to work with other area educational institutions, and to pursue cooperative opportunities beyond the immediate region.”

## Concerns

There is no organizational structure to support these statements. Nor is there a vision for graduate education.

Departments with graduate programs are told to increase the number of graduate students, but there is no strong leadership to carry this out. Responsibility for marketing, publicity, and recruitment has fallen to the faculty. While they are not opposed to participating in these activities, they feel the College should appoint a leader with strong skills and resources in marketing, publicity, and recruitment to manage all graduate programs.

There is a lack of a template for graduate student services. Undergraduate students have recruitment, admissions, financial aid, scholarships, academic advisement, housing, etc. It has been reported that some of these offices have clearly expressed that graduate students are not part of their mandate.

## Options

- 1. Formalize our operations so the mandates of all student service offices are revised to include equitable responsibility for graduate students. This is a critically important first step prior to considering any of the options that follow.**

### **Advantages:**

- Recruitment, retention, and management of graduate students would be greatly enhanced.
- It would posit responsibility on a number of offices to provide services for graduate students.

### **Disadvantages:**

- None.

**2. Create a Dean of Graduate Studies whose charge will be to coordinate graduate programs, synchronize requirements and assistantships, and advocate for graduate students and programs.**

**Advantages:**

- One person in charge of all graduate programs would develop policy and offer a unified vision, make global decisions, facilitate coordination between individual department programs, resolve disputes, approve curricula proposed by departments, chair the Graduate Committee, synchronize admission and degree requirements, issue waivers of requirements when necessary, and advocate for graduate students and programs.
- If the head of graduate programs were to be a dean, he or she would sit on the Council of Deans and could offer his or her perspective on College-wide decisions affecting graduate programs.
- Viable graduate programs have the potential to generate significant revenue and lift the academic reputation of the College.
- The dean could use the existing Graduate Records Office for clerical help and administrative assistance.

**Disadvantages:**

- The College would incur significant ongoing costs, including a dean's salary. Also, the dean would need a budget to fund requests pertaining to graduate students from departments as well as simply buying office equipment.
- There would be some loss of autonomy at the department level. Decisions made at that level would go through the additional step of being approved by the Dean and would require additional bureaucracy in the form of paperwork and time.
- We would need an additional professional staff member to handle marketing, publicity, webpage design and management; to update technology relating to graduate procedures, and to recruit.
- The Associate Deans of Education and Business are currently functioning much like deans. Decision-making may be confusing until the roles and responsibilities of the graduate dean, the academic deans, and the associate deans have been clarified.

**3. Create a Director of Graduate Studies. The charge would be similar to but scaled down from the one in Option 2, namely to coordinate graduate programs, synchronize requirements and assistantships, and advocate for graduate students and programs. In addition, the Director would have skills in marketing, web design, publicity, and recruitment. The Director could also use the existing Graduate Records Office for clerical help and administrative assistance.**

**Advantages:**

- Similar to Option 2, there would be one person in charge of all graduate programs. The Director's responsibilities would not include decision-making on a Cabinet level, but he or she could facilitate coordination between individual department programs, resolve disputes, and advocate for graduate students and programs.

- This person would be the “go-to” person for records questions, updating of web pages, marketing, and recruitment and would serve as an advocate for students dealing with other student service offices.
- There would be a clear channel of communication. Faculty and administrators would know to contact the Director of Graduate Studies with questions or problems regarding program publicity, marketing, web pages, admissions, and records. Information would flow from the Director’s office with one voice. Regular meetings with representatives of all departments that host graduate students could be held.
- Viable graduate programs have the potential to generate significant revenue and lift the academic reputation of the College.

**Disadvantages:**

- The Director would need an office budget.
- Decisions on policy, academic waivers, or curricula would still need to be made by the divisional deans or the provost.
- Not having a position at the dean level sends a message to the campus community that graduate programs may not be a priority of the institution.

**4. Put all of the departments with graduate programs under one of our two existing deans so graduate issues could be addressed in bi-weekly divisional meetings and decisions could be unilateral.**

**Advantages:**

- Cost effective in the present economic climate.
- One person is then responsible for graduate programs.

**Disadvantages:**

- Leads to an exacerbation of departmental reporting structures.
- Development of new graduate programs could increase the number of departments under one dean.
- Graduate issues would take time away from bi-weekly discussion of undergraduate issues.

**5. Create an Assistant Director of Admissions, housed in the Admissions Office, who is a specialist in graduate recruiting and admissions, web design, marketing, and publicity.**

**Advantages:**

- This position would provide direct support to individual graduate program directors and chairs.
- The Admissions Office would be the sole initial contact for all prospective students to pursue their education at SUNY Oneonta.
- Creation of another clerical support line may not be necessary.
- The Graduate Records Office would have one source to direct prospective students to obtain up-to-date graduate information.

**Disadvantages:**

- Does not address the current void in leadership.
- Relegates the Graduate Office and graduate support to a function of Admissions under Student Development rather than Academic Affairs.

- Would need an increase in the Admissions budget to handle increased costs associated with this function.
- This would not address the needs of the other student service needs of graduate students.

## **Data**

### **Survey Results**

Task Force Survey Question: What aspects of our existing organizational structure could be improved?

Responses related to graduate studies:

- We need a Dean of Graduate Studies – right now we are depending on departments to do recruitment – and we are not experts, don't have a budget for this, and can't seem to get approval for taking action.
- Lack of an identifiable voice for graduate education
- The absence of a graduate dean, or director, or office. I don't believe it's a coincidence that (a) no such office exists; and (b) Oneonta is at an all-time low in terms of number of graduate students. This puts us at real risk in a number of ways. First, as long as we have to compensate for lack of graduate students by bringing in more undergraduates, we can't be as selective as we would like and our selectivity will undoubtedly continue to slip as long as we ignore this). Second, having more graduate students (especially FT) would bring in more revenue, both in terms of tuition dollars and the BAP (assuming, of course, SUNY starts running the BAP again). Third, having strong graduate programs helps attract and retain good faculty, and could also attract high quality undergraduates, especially if we could develop 3+2 or 4+1 programs.
- Add a graduate dean to support graduate education
- Graduate Studies needs specific leadership
- Admissions office focuses upon undergraduate recruiting and balks at supporting graduate student recruiting. Lacking a comprehensive strategy with respect to graduate programs, the college is at a competitive advantage.
- Need leadership in the area of graduate study
- It would be good to see the return of a Graduate Dean
- Graduate Studies needs assistance with leadership
- Need leadership for graduate education and graduate student recruitment.

### **Open Forum Sessions**

- Need to establish a Graduate School Office. Admissions could be done out of this office. This program would enhance the reputation of the College and generate additional revenue for the College. This could take some pressure off of undergraduate admissions goals
- Need a broad based graduate education program with offerings in a number of academic fields.
- Hire a Graduate Dean. No one seems to want to be in charge of the graduate programs. The interest is certainly there; however, phone queries come in and departments that have the programs don't want to talk with potential students. The current graduate office is really a graduate student registrar's office. None of the staff is trained to handle inquiries and we're embarrassed when transferred calls get referred back to us by the academic departments.

## Focus Groups: Graduate Committee, Associate Deans, and Associate Vice-Presidents

- Need a graduate office with a director/Recruitment/admissions specialist
- Current structure doesn't allow either dean to serve graduate education.
- Graduate Committee reports to the provost- should it report to the dean(s)?
- Biggest problem is in area of publicity and recruitment
- Need a strong vision and mission for graduate education
- A dean is "overkill"; not the best use of our money; director or coordinator; possibly part/time handled by faculty with reduced load
- Problems always in giving some authority to a person who is not at a dean level
- Coordinator for catalog, website, publicity, recruiting
- Waste of money to hire a dean; need someone dedicated to marketing; not a director – would need more money; someone strong in recruiting

## Interviews

- If we want to have strong graduate programs, we need a centralized support system that will coordinate brochures, advertise us, represent us at college fairs, keep track of admissions and drops and so on – we cannot just get a directive to "increase the number of graduate students" without the support to accomplish it.
- We should have a graduate director whose position is to coordinate graduate study, help new grad programs get started, have a small budget to help fund new courses or new programs, market current programs, organize a unified admissions process, etc., but not dictate new bureaucratic procedures and paperwork to graduate programs. The graduate director would be charged with supporting and coordinating collaborations. The person would handle administrative concerns rather than the types of academic concerns that the other deans address.
- It does not work to have graduate programs responsible to two deans (academic dean and graduate dean). Leads to conflicting instructions. One is not right and the other wrong. Structure is flawed; needs to be clear and straight forward.
- We do not need a "dean." We do need a one-stop person – has to have authority – academic issues would reside with current academic deans (new courses, extensions of program completion, appeals)
- Need a graduate studies coordinator to handle prospective student questions, publicity, marketing, scheduling. Need a budget for effective recruiting.
- We used to have a director. She wasn't given a performance program and didn't have any authority. Having someone without dean status does not work
- Why is it that the College Admissions Office doesn't take responsibility for Graduate recruitment?
- If we don't go online, we might as well shut down graduate studies.
- Create a Director of Graduate Studies – give that person responsibility AND AUTHORITY – take it entirely out of academic deans' hands or it will not work.
- Need support for graduate students if you want to increase enrollments (assistantships, residence hall section, off campus housing information; designated space). Why can't we get half-time assistantships?
- We need a definitive organizational structure to carry out a defined strategic mission. What do we want the role of graduate programs to be on this campus (other than easing the demands on undergraduate admissions)?

- Can't run graduate programs on an individual course enrollment basis – not good for the college – not good for the students. Biology and Earth Science masters programs will never prosper – get rid of them.
- Don't understand why our Admissions Office is not involved with graduate programs.
- If we set the office up with a coordinator – it will fail again.
- A director is more appropriate than a dean
- Graduate Studies and the grants office should be under one umbrella
- Faculty do not get compensated for teaching graduate courses. We need to address this before we decide on how to organize graduate studies and get an administrator to head it up.
- If we're going to recruit, we need a huge amount of support for assistantships.
- We're not equipped to meet needs of teachers in the field (on-line courses, evening and summer classes) no incentives to do this – only disincentives.
- Money to support graduate education is shameful – below average level – interest in building enrollments, but no support to do it.
- Coordinator of Graduate studies should report to a dean; bypassing the dean would be a very poor decision, administratively; the only positive for supporting a dean of graduate study – voice would be an equal at the table.
- It is sad that we are reduced to “banking” graduate students in order to receive compensation for teaching them.
- Need someone to head up graduate studies – call them an eggplant if you wish, but GIVE THEM AUTHORITY. The lower the title, the lower the respect (and amount of authority)
- Don't like the idea of graduate issues being layered in with academic deans.
- Someone needs to take charge of post-bacc programs.
- Graduate programs need more students; especially with the upcoming tuition differentials. We need leadership, support, and vision to grow our existing programs or we'll just watch them dwindle further. Faculty should not be recruiting; they are teaching graduate and undergraduates, doing research and publications. Although it is the most expensive route, we do need a dean whose responsibility is very clear and focused.
- We need to admit our own undergraduates into our graduate programs.
- We should look at recruiting internationally...e.g., Chinese are rich and don't have enough universities to meet educational needs. When graduate studies gets a strong leader, we need to brainstorm about how to grow our enrollments – there are many ideas out there but no one to develop and promote them.
- Our current Deans and the Associate Dean of Science and Social Science agreed with the concept of a single person to be at the helm, but had differing opinions on the level of that position.

### **SUNY 4-Yr Campus Graduate Office Structures**

#### **Brockport – 20 programs**

**Assistant to the Provost** (new position – replaced “Dean”)

**Associate Dean**

**Director** – supervises staff; does some traveling; handles international students (not a large number)

**Admissions Counselor** – marketing, recruiting (departments make actual decisions)

**Systems Analyst** – gathers data; developed online application

**2 ½ clerical** – 1 for Dean, 1 KB II, half-time clerk; inventory and stocking of applications

### **Cortland – 45 programs**

They are in the process of dissolving their Graduate Office. This will be the third time this has been done. The last two times, it took a couple of years for them to realize what a mistake that was and they reconstituted the office. Their admissions person is being absorbed into the Admissions Office. The others do not know where they will go or what they will do. They had an Interim Director, Assistant Director, Office Manager (for summer and winter terms), a secretary, a records clerk and a receptionist.

### **Fredonia- 14-15 programs- approximately 395 enrolled**

**Assistant Vice President** (also works for other offices besides Grad Office) ; advisement (for particular programs only); recruitment (some); Office is located in Grad Office so any student/faculty traffic that needs to see Assistant Vice President comes through Grad Office

**Graduate Assistant**- recruitment; application process; answers phone and questions; usually works afternoons as splits half-time with assistant to Secretary

**Secretary**- process's applications; inputs in system; recruitment

**Assistant to Secretary**- does whatever Secretary needs; usually only works in a.m. as splits time with Graduate Assistant

### **Geneseo- 12 programs – approximately 200 enrolled**

**Dean**- student issues; budget; runs office

**Secretary (2)**- one secretary does Graduate applications ; orientation; summer; phones

The other Secretary- works with the Dean with issues that undergraduate students may have with faculty/classes or whatever; paperwork involved with Dean issues; phones

**Departments**- make decisions on applications; advisement

**Graduate Assistant**- graduate paperwork; works 20 hrs week/stipend; current student

**Recruitment**- They do not do recruitment as they do not need the publicity. They get more applications than they can accept 100/25 ratio.

### **New Paltz- 9 degrees- various concentrations within degrees- approximately 1,200 enrolled**

**Dean of Graduate Studies (who is also Associate Provost)**- application decisions (spot checks when they come back from departments has final decision if she feels could be problematic); advisement (limited); deals with faculty issues; approves courses; Middle States and Accreditation; various other Associate Provost duties

**Director of Graduate Studies**- oversees grad admissions office; recruitment

**Staff Assistant**- processes reports; anything Dean needs them to do

**3 clerical staff**- goes over grad applications when they come in checking for low GPA's or unusual circumstances, alerts Dean of any possible problems; processes applications; enters information into the system; answers phone calls/questions

**Departments**- make application decisions; advisement (after student has been admitted)

**Pre-admission Advisor**- helps students make decisions as to which program they are interested in but unsure; recruitment

### **Oswego- 11 programs**

**Dean**- final decisions on applications; meets with students who have trouble with faculty or various problems; interviews for Fellowship scholarship; teaches courses; major contributor to Professional Science Masters (he developed, spends a lot of time on it)

**Associate Dean** (also Program Coordinator on Curriculum and Instruction) - reviews applications for Professional Science Masters program; meets with students about program

**Department-** makes application decisions; advisement

**Recruiter-** recruitment; web pages; keeps brochures or catalogs up to date; attends graduate fairs

**2 Secretaries-** process applications; coordinates graduation for graduate students; keeps track of student's GPA's; budget; phone; attends Graduate Fairs

**P/T Secretary-** paid out of Professional Science Masters grant; 2-3 days week; does anything secretarial; attends Graduate Fairs

**Graduate Assistant-** phones; filing; clerical; 20 hrs week

**2 work study-** filing; labels; clerical; answer phones; 8-10 hours per week each

**Director-** ORSP- some research foundation- also connected with Graduate Office

**Plattsburg- 18+ (counts Education broken down into each individual program i.e. they have**

**Literacy B-6 and Literacy 5-12- counted separately) - 350-400 enrolled**

**Director-** recruitment; makes sure information leaving the office is correct such as brochures, web pages etc...; office management

**Departments-** application decisions (Dean's sign off on application decisions so director does not do anything with the decision process); advisement

**Secretary-** KB II- process applications; supervise work study (1); phone calls

## REPORT ON INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

### **Introduction**

The last instance in which the College officially referred to an Office of Institutional Research (IR) was in the early 1970's. As a result of a retirement, data collection and reporting responsibilities were dispersed to various campus entities. Since that time, local, SUNY, accreditation reporting, and State and Federal reporting demands have increased significantly.

In 1993, Middle States specifically directed the College to create an IR office. In the 1998 five-year review, there were a number of references to a non-existent formal IR office. The review indicated that a staff member was supporting this function. In mid-2002, the College created the Institutional Research Council, which was intended to address both SUNY and Middle States concerns about the College having an IR capability. In preparation for the 2003 Middle States visit, the SUNY Oneonta Steering Committee noted that the College needed to better manage its data collection and management. In 2003, the Middle States team visited the campus and noted in their report that they were "not convinced that the College had taken steps to address its data needs." By early 2004, the Institutional Research Council was no longer meeting on a regular basis.

The lack of an IR Office at SUNY Oneonta is something of an aberration when compared to the other 12 SUNY comprehensive colleges. A 2009 study conducted by SUNY Oneonta's Associate Provost for Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness revealed that SUNY Oneonta is the only comprehensive college that lacks a formal IR Office. In terms of staffing, only one college, Old Westbury, had one full-time staff member, while New Paltz had the most with 4. The average was 2.78 full-time employees.

### **Concerns**

An IR office can provide a wide variety of information essential to the recruitment, assessment, planning, and marketing functions of the College. Currently this information is stored in a number of offices across campus, and it is a significant challenge to collect and confirm the validity of this information. A centralized office that focuses exclusively on IR responsibilities would enhance information transparency and provide decision makers with easily accessible information.

One valuable consequence of establishing an IR Office would be to create a centralized repository for data. Currently, data is collected, stored, and disseminated by a wide variety of entities. In addition, these data are stored in a static or "flat-file" condition, as opposed to a "real-time" condition. The only "real-time" data available on campus are in special customized programs managed by the Computer Center for the Registrar's Office. An IR office could centralize data collection, storage, and accessibility – working toward a "real-time" data retrieval environment. With centralization of data could come a generally agreed upon definition of data categories. For example, the definition of "first-year student" is a regular subject of disagreement. Resolving the definition of such data categories would be a great advantage to users.

Because SUNY Oneonta has lacked a formal IR Office, data collection, storage, and reporting functions have been dispersed among many college offices. In fact, not all data collections on campus are well known. However, an IR office could be used to catalog data collections and integrate data-management functions. Thus, a number of important functions could be incorporated into an IR office, including compliance reports, Peterson survey data, and IPED dataset reporting, to cite just a few. Also, the IR office could assume responsibility for additional IR functions such as assessment (e.g. student learning, academic evaluation, and the Student Opinion Survey), accreditation, institutional planning, data collection, and validation. Given such integration of

functions, it might be possible for the IR office to provide trend analysis of information to support decision making.

In addition, since Middle States finds it a common practice for colleges to have an IR office and because they have recommended the campus create such an office, there may be some future accreditation advantages for doing so.

Finally, there is concern on campus that the College does not have a data-driven decision-making culture. With data and information located in many diverse locations, decision-makers often lack access to trend data, multiple data sources, and analysis. The creation of an IR function could alter the institutional culture and improve the decision-making process of department chairs and administrative staff.

## **Options**

### **1. Create an Institutional Research and Assessment Office (IRAO) that reports directly to the President.**

#### **Advantages:**

- It will be clear that this is a campus priority
- Create a culture of data-driven decision making
- Enhance consistency and accuracy in reporting
- Would greatly facilitate transparency, since information would not be owned, managed, and selectively distributed by various campus offices and departments
- An office as opposed to an individual will serve all campus offices and departments

#### **Disadvantages:**

- An IRAO office would require the transfer or hiring of staff and the allocation of additional office space
- If the IR function reports to a vice president, it is possible that other vice presidents will not seek its services or regularly interact with the IR director
- Some resistance can be expected from offices and departments that currently “own” and manage college data
- There will be concerns about anticipated lack of control over data, its interpretation, and use

### **2. Create an Institutional Research and Assessment Office (IRAO) in the Division of Academic Affairs Division, encompassing the current Institutional and Assessment and Effectiveness function.**

#### **Advantages:**

- All the advantages listed above plus...
- An associate provost position already exists to direct an IRAO and a professional staffer currently working in the institutional research area reports to this person
- Savings by not creating another director-level position

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Staffing level would have to be increased with the formal establishment of an IRAO
- May create another silo

### **3. Create an Institutional Research Council (IRC).**

#### **Advantage:**

- Liaison to all divisions as a means of ensuring ready access and acquisition of information from all administrative and academic units

#### **Disadvantage:**

- None.

### **Data**

#### **Survey Results**

Task Force Survey Question: What aspects of our existing organizational structure could be improved?

There were very few comments regarding an IR function in the survey. This is likely due to the fact that the survey question primarily elicited comments about “aspects of our existing organizational structure.” As a result, respondents were inclined to comment on only currently existing offices within and the present organizational structure.

Comments:

“There is no formal institutional research office, which makes Oneonta the only SUNY comprehensive college without such an office (and, one of the few four-year SUNY’s without such an office). Reflecting this, the College has not invested appropriately in the coordination and utilization of institutional data. As a result, the status of information at the College is in great disarray and it is very difficult and time-consuming to locate reliable and real-time information that should be right at hand in this day and age. This is very troubling and, in my view, puts us at risk given the emphasis today on assessment, accreditation, and accountability (not to mention the importance of good information to good decision-making.)

“There should be an office which deals with professional development and institutional research.”

#### **Focus Groups and Open Forums**

“Institutional Research Office (IRO) should assist faculty, not become a huge infrastructure; IRO could help with accreditation process (i.e. collect standards, identify changes, provide enrollment figures, etc.); IRO could take the assessment burden off of Deans; IRO could help with the assessment of learning, SPI data and grants; and an interdisciplinary Working Group could consult with the IRO.” Source: Faculty Focus Group, December 7)

“Faculty development and Institutional Research could be developed as a single office.” Source: Faculty Focus Group, December 7)

“Need to establish an Institutional Research Office. This Office would promote campus communication and help support the College’s accreditation efforts with Middle States.” Source: Open Forum Session, November 10)

## REPORT ON ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

### Introduction

The mission of the College at Oneonta is to foster the individual student's intellectual, personal, and civic development. The College is dedicated to excellence in teaching, advisement, and scholarly activities; and the cultivation of a campus environment rich in opportunities for participation, personal challenge, and service. The mission statement clearly reflects the importance of advisement and the value that our institution has placed on it.

Simply stated, academic advisement is a meeting between a student and an advisor to discuss career plans, program of study or class selections prior to registration. Models for delivering advisement may be categorized as one of three organizational structures:

- Centralized: where professional and faculty advisors are housed in one academic or administrative unit;
- Decentralized: where professional or faculty advisors are located in their respective academic departments;
- Shared: where some advisors meet with students in a central administrative unit (i.e., an advising center) while others advise students in the academic department of their major discipline. Oneonta's is a shared model.

According to the Sixth National Survey on Academic Advising conducted in 2003 by ACT (Habley, 2004), more institutions use a shared model of delivering advising services (55%) than use centralized (32%) or decentralized (14%) structures. A conclusion of the Fifth National Survey suggests a growing trend toward shared responsibility for academic advising. This would indicate that both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs have a stake in advising programs since counselors and staff advisors frequently report within Student Affairs divisions. Perhaps as the editors of the ACT Survey suggest, there may be an "acceptance of a broader understanding that campus approaches to advising must be systematic and collaborative" (p.62).

The Academic Advisement Center (AAC) supports the advisement process by providing academic direction to all matriculated undergraduate students at orientation and through individual and group meetings; providing support and resource information to faculty advisors; maintaining the computer database of undergraduate degree requirements; updating transfer course-by-course articulations; processing course substitutions and waivers; processing all curriculum and advisor changes; overseeing the Prior Approval process for post-matriculation course work; implementing preset scheduling for all new freshmen; hiring, training, and supervising the summer cadre of faculty advisors; and acting as a liaison between students and faculty or other student support offices.

AAC, in conjunction with Residence Life, selects, trains, and supervises the 15 Academic Team Members (ATMs). These students provide academic support within the residence halls via programming, information sharing, and office hours. AAC, in conjunction with Financial Aid and Student Accounts, administers certification for VA benefits.

The Academic Advisement Center is staffed by two professional advisors, a secretary, and a part-time data entry person. The Director reports to the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management who in turn reports to the Vice President for Student Development.

Data from the 2009 Student Opinion Survey (SOS) suggest that students are very satisfied with academic advisement. Oneonta ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 24 State-operated campuses in the areas of "Centralized Academic Advisement Services" and "Academic Advising is Available When Needed."

The function of academic advisement existed for many years as a professional position reporting to Academic Affairs. In the early 1990's the person in that position was promoted to acting Dean of Applied and Behavioral Science and the academic advisement role was left vacant. Shortly thereafter, the academic advisement center was reconstituted and began reporting to Student Development.

## **Concerns**

A small number of the total OSTF survey respondents (6 or 5.8%) voiced concerns about the reporting structure for the Academic Advisement Center. Subsequent open forums and focus groups validated the need to investigate this topic further based on the frequency of the issue being raised. However, none of these venues identified a solid argument for why change was necessary.

In subsequent interviews with key stakeholders more information came to light to suggest there are some challenges that can and should be addressed. There are some misconceptions about the role of Academic Advisement. For example, there is a perception that Academic Advisement sets academic policy. This is a result of Academic Advisement often being in the position of having to enforce a policy and sometimes having to interpret a policy that was previously unknown to the faculty member. Some felt that Academic Advisement may be overstepping its bounds in some of its interpretations.

Recent issues with the placement exams are an example of how poor communications can generate confusion and further frustrations.

Faculty members generally respect the competency of AAC staff and appreciate the role that the office plays. It was noted that the Academic Advisement Office lacks adequate staff to deal with current workload and to take on additional tasks that would benefit students (e.g. advising and tracking minors).

There is also concern that some functions of Academic Advisement do not belong in that office. For example, certification of VA benefits may best be handled by Financial Aid. Entering degree requirements and or course substitutions seems to be the purview of the Registrar.

Another concern has to do with the definition of academic advising. Some faculty expressed concern that the Academic Advisement Center (AAC) should limit itself to "schedule building" and leave the "non-schedule building" advising (e.g., "career mentoring, course appropriateness, etc.) to the faculty. Generally speaking, all interviewees agreed with that distinction. However, it seems that faculty members' perceptions are that the AAC oversteps its bounds.

Questions were raised about the adequacy of staffing in the AAC and distribution of workload. The OSTF was not charged with assessing the effectiveness of an office but these concerns need to be addressed at some level.

There is definitely a level of friction that exists between Student Development and Academic Affairs. Each side believes it has the best interests of the students in mind and the other side does not effectively communicate.

## **Options**

### **1. Create a Working Group.**

#### **Advantages:**

- Enhance collaboration, communication, planning, sharing of data, and execution
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities
- Better identify and address issues

- Develop program to better prepare/train faculty to advise

**Disadvantages:**

- Workload for the committee members
- Does not address staffing issues

**2. Do not change organizational structure.**

**Advantages:**

- Student satisfaction is high, and this reflects well on the current structure

**Disadvantages:**

- Leaves some faculty feeling that their voices were not heard or that the “administration” is unwilling to make changes
- Without the creation of a Working Group or overt change, the concerns will persist
- Does not address staffing issues

**3. Academic Advisement reports to Academic Affairs.**

**Advantages:**

- Appeases faculty
- Eliminates cross divisional issues
- Allows provost to set priorities

**Disadvantages:**

- Contributes to “silo” mentality
- Academic Advisement is closely tied to Orientation; we could be solving one problem and creating another one
- Does not address staffing issues

**4. Redistribute “out-of-place” functions to other departments.**

**Advantage:**

- Transfers functions to more appropriate areas.

**Disadvantage:**

- Transfers workload to another area without necessarily transferring resources.

**Data**

**Survey Results**

Task Force Survey Question: What aspects of our existing organizational structure could be improved?

Responses related to Academic Advisement:

- “Academic Advisement should be under the Division of Academic Affairs.”
- “Academic advisement belongs in Academic Affairs.”
- “Academic Advisement should be moved to Academic Affairs.”
- “I think the Academic Advisement office should be aligned under the Academic Affairs structure.....it makes more sense to me.”
- “I am not sure about the placement of certain offices within the structure. For instance, Academic Advisement is not an academic function. This seems odd.”
- “Some of the functions of Student Development should be moved to Academic Affairs, namely Academic Advisement.”

### **Open Forum Session**

None related to academic advisement.

### **Focus Group with Selected Faculty**

- Quality information comes from the Academic Advisement Office.
- Academic Advisement needs to get information to Departments (i.e. requirement changes).
- The Academic Advisement Office needs additional staffing.
- More credit should be given to faculty for advising.
- We need to make it easier to schedule group advisement sessions.
- Some colleges require advisors to sign-off or provide an advisee pin number prior to registration.

### **Focus Group with Council of Chairs**

Participants generally favored moving Academic Advisement from Student Development to Academic Affairs to improve service to both students and faculty. Problems associated with the current Academic Advisement function include the following:

- Personnel in the Academic Advisement Office seem to be constrained or restricted in terms of understanding the academic departments’ needs and perspectives. One chair said the staff is not ‘vested’ in working with departments on advisement issues.
- Academic Advisement Office lacks adequate staff to deal with current workload and to take on additional tasks that would benefit students (e.g., advising and tracking minors)
- Recent problems with the writing test were cited as serious and demonstrated that the Academic Advisement Office did not solicit input from academic departments on vital issues. Apparently there was a marked lack of collaboration.
- The placement of Academic Advisement outside of Academic Affairs makes coordination of some things difficult. For example, the functions of CADE (an Academic Affairs office) and Academic Advisement (a Student Development office) might be easier to coordinate if they were both under Academic Affairs. Some felt that the academic departments would have more collaboration with Advisement if they were under the authority of the Deans/Provost of Academic Affairs.

It was noted that the development of the Academic Advisement Office under Student Affairs was an accident of history and not necessarily a deliberate choice. Academic Advisement developed under Student Affairs to insure that student perceptions of the College would be positive. Some feel that this is still their major objective in managing this responsibility.

**2009 Student Opinion Survey Results Specific to Academic Advisement**

	2009 Mean	Sector Rank	State-Op Rank
Centralized Academic Advisement Services	3.89	2 of 13	2 of 24
Academic Advising in your major	3.90	3 of 13	4 of 24
Academic Advising is Available When Needed	4.06	2 of 13	2 of 24

## REPORT ON BUILDING-RELATED ISSUES

### **Introduction**

One of the areas of concern that was cited in our general meetings and focus groups was a cluster of issues involving buildings and building management. Four discrete issues were identified: the space allocation process at the divisional and departmental levels, the rehab/renovation process for academic buildings, the role of the building administrator/emergency coordinator in each building, and the custodial chain of command.

There are two levels of space allocation: the amount and location of spaces allotted to each division of the College, and the management of academic spaces at the departmental/program level.

### **Issue 1: Space Allocation at the Divisional Level**

The higher-level decision-making process in recent years has been one in which the various VPs negotiate among themselves for specific spaces as their divisional needs and priorities change. This is often done in private negotiations, with the others often learning about a space 'trade' or reallocation after the fact.

#### **Concerns:**

All of the parties we interviewed agreed that this is not the most efficient way to do this, and they all say they would prefer a system with more transparency. The present system does not allow for fully informed shared decision-making.

There was a general agreement among the VPs and Associate VPS we interviewed that the present system is not the best way to make these types of decisions. They seem to desire and welcome a change, although no one had a specific model in mind to replace it.

#### **Options:**

Several people we interviewed pointed out that the upcoming development of a new Campus Master Plan combined with the imminent rehab of Fizzle Hall provides an excellent opportunity to reassess the current divisional space allocations and devise a new process for determining how space should be utilized. Several VPs expressed a desire to move towards a more data-driven comprehensive process that ensures that space allocation decisions are made as a group and are made within the broader context of the College's overall mission and priorities.

#### **Advantage:**

- We would have a more transparent and data-driven process of allocating space for the various functions of the College.

#### **Disadvantage:**

- No one has offered any negative outcomes of a new process except the risk that their division might lose some of their existing spaces in the new process. However, all seemed willing to take that risk if the process was rational, transparent and based on clear data and College-wide goals.

## **Issue 2: Space Allocation at the Departmental/Program Level**

At the departmental level there are considerable turf issues involving classrooms, conference and seminar rooms that are ‘owned’ by specific departments. The Registrar’s Office has scheduling access to most rooms through Banner, but control over many rooms is still retained by individual departments. And, despite the general office shortage, some departments still allow retired faculty to retain the use of their offices and labs after retirement.

### **Concerns:**

Academic space is expected to become an acute issue in the near future as Fitzelle Hall goes offline for several semesters, during which period there will be a shortage of offices, classrooms and seminar rooms on the main campus. Some relief can be obtained by scheduling classes more evenly across the week, but this will not fully offset the temporary loss of a considerable amount of classroom and office space.

Several people closest to course scheduling and classroom utilization expressed strong concerns about the impact of the Fitzelle project on future scheduling and classroom availability. Again, several cited the opportunity provided by the development of a new Campus Master Plan to revisit the actual use patterns of every space to determine if there are underutilized spaces on campus.

### **Option:**

#### **Conduct a space utilization study.**

Some respondents pointed out that now may be a good time to do a utilization analysis of all ‘off-limits’ classrooms, seminar rooms and conference rooms to see where there may be underutilized space. The Facilities Office has detailed hours-of-use records for every room on campus, and this data is readily available.

### **Advantage:**

- A better understanding of how effectively all academic spaces are being used, and the possible identification of rooms that could be used more frequently by a broader spectrum of faculty and students during the Fitzelle rebuild process.

### **Disadvantages:**

- Chairs can be expected to defend their current practices and resist ‘encroachment’ from other departments. Deans have historically been reluctant to force Chairs to share ‘their’ spaces if they resist.
- Legitimate security and maintenance issues may arise with a wider user base of some of the more specialized rooms.

## **Issue 3: The Rehab/Renovation Process for Academic Buildings**

In our surveys the College’s Facilities and MOC were almost universally cited for excellence in maintaining the buildings and grounds of this campus. We note that people from all sectors of the College take great pride in this College’s facilities.

### **Concerns:**

Despite the high level of satisfaction with the Facilities Department and MOC on the condition of existing buildings, the process of rehabbing and renovating academic buildings was frequently cited as needing attention. Several Academic Department Chairs in particular expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction with their experiences in the redesign and execution of the classrooms and offices for their areas.

In general, the Chairs and faculty were aware at the outset that there would be difficulties, but all were surprised at the kinds of problems they had experienced. The problems seemed to arise most frequently in the middle of the process, after the program statement was developed and the preliminary plans were reviewed with the Chair and/or faculty. Many Chairs felt that after the preliminary plans were discussed with them they were more or less cut out of the loop, and that many crucial decisions were made by Facilities personnel or the project architects without informing or consulting them.

The Trades staff echoed the concerns of the Chairs. The plumbers and electricians felt that they should also have more opportunities to review the plans and make comments before they went out to bid, as they would be the ones responsible for maintaining the finished building. Again, they reported that they were often shown the general preliminary plans but not the detailed final version that ultimately went out to bid.

Both groups felt that many projects moved rapidly from incomplete preliminary plans to a completed bid package without adequate review from the concerned parties. As a result, they feel that there were many avoidable mistakes and oversights that had to be fixed by the College's Trades departments for months after the contractors left.

Facilities personnel reported that there is very little time for campus review between the preliminary and the final designs. Furthermore, once the project is bid out and contracted it becomes a matter of execution. This requires less local consultation in the interest of keeping the project on track in terms of time and budget. Some felt that, given more opportunities for review, Chairs and other parties will keep asking to make changes to the plans, which runs up costs and delays the project.

Several Chairs and some faculty feel quite strongly about this issue. They are generally pleased with the final results of their renovations but feel that their concerns were not taken seriously during the process. They also reported many months of 'fixes' that had to be done to their building after the project was finished.

The Facilities Department personnel maintain that this sense of discontent is inherent in the process and that eventually everything works out in the end to the general satisfaction of all parties. This seems to be borne out by the fact that the faculty and Chairs in renovated buildings more than a year past their completion reported a high level of satisfaction with their academic spaces.

Despite the eventual resolution of their issues, many Chairs, faculty and tradesmen feel that the communications process between Facilities and the rest of the local parties during renovations could bear considerable improvement.

### **Options:**

1. **Ask Facilities to examine the architectural design review process and see if there is a midpoint at which the Chairs and Trades staff can review the detailed plans after the first preliminary markup and before the bid package is complete. Build that review into the project timetable.**

#### **Advantage:**

- Better understanding of the project by all parties during the renovation process.

#### **Disadvantage:**

- Possible delay caused by changes requested in the second markup of the plans.

2. **Hold a multi-party ‘post-mortem’ discussion a year after the completion of a project to identify potential problem points for future projects. The delay would allow people to settle into the building and provide a longer period for reflection about what was the normal ‘noise’ around a project and what constituted an avoidable or correctable problem.**

#### **Advantage:**

- Would provide an opportunity to determine at what stage in the generic process the most significant and chronic problems arise. ‘Post-mortems’ also promote a better understanding of the process for all concerned.

#### **Disadvantage:**

- None.

### **Issue 4: The Role of the Building Administrator/Emergency Coordinator**

A number of years ago the College implemented a policy of appointing a Building Administrator for each building on campus to help streamline and coordinate routine building issues, including work done by the Trades in each building. There was some political pushback on this policy, so it was weakened to the point that the BA’s main responsibility was reduced to authorizing Key Requests for the building.

When the College recently developed a comprehensive Emergency Plan the BA position was renamed Emergency Coordinator, with no responsibilities beyond coordinating emergency protocols within the building.

#### **Concerns:**

There is general confusion about the functions and responsibilities of the Building Administrators. Some BAs have quite a lot of authority and other BAs’ main functions seem to be signing Key Requests and authorizing individual student access to the building during breaks. The BA also receives notifications from UPD about security issues such as propped doors or windows that are left open in his/her building.

Many Building Administrators reported that nothing is expected of them beyond signing Key Requests. No one knows what to do about the UPD notices. Most feel that responsibility for securing the building should be assigned to the custodial night staff (for instance checking and locking all doors and windows) but many also report that they lack the authority to assign such tasks to custodians. Probing of this issue revealed a related problem with custodians in general. (See Custodial issue below.)

Some of the Trades and Clerical Staff members felt that the Building Administrators should be more proactive in finding solutions to issues that can be solved by the custodians and occupants of the building before they send out Work Requests.

The relatively new role of the Emergency Coordinator is also unclear. Upon appointment the Coordinators were briefed by UPD on how to use their assigned walkie-talkies, but as yet there has been very little training or detailed discussion about the Emergency Plan and how it should be implemented in their buildings.

### **Options:**

- 1. Clarify the responsibilities and authority of the Building Administrator, and inform the other occupants of the building of the BA's functions. Representatives from Facilities, Trades and UPD should be included in the discussion of the role of this person in each building.**

#### **Advantage:**

- Better management of issues involving the maintenance, safety and security of each building.

#### **Disadvantage:**

- Some Chairs felt that an expansion of the BA role would add another layer of bureaucracy to the management of buildings and diminish the power of Department Chairs. However, those involved in Maintenance feel that there would be real benefits to be gained by designating one 'go-to' person for each building to facilitate Maintenance, Trades and UPD/Safety activities.

- 2. Train the Emergency Coordinators on how to implement the College's Emergency Plan in their building. Make sure the plan is readily available to the occupants of the building and that the plan has been rehearsed by the key players in each building.**

#### **Advantage:**

- Better security for students and staff.

#### **Disadvantage:**

- None.

## **Issue 5: The Custodial Chain of Command**

The relationship of the custodial staff to the occupants of the building is not always clear. Custodians usually directly report to a custodial supervisor who is not in their building on a daily basis. Many Building Administrators, Department Chairs and Secretaries reported that they do not know who their building's custodial supervisor is or how to resolve chronic issues with their building's custodians.

A number of Chairs and Secretaries reported that their spaces weren't adequately cleaned because one shift worker claimed it was the other shift's responsibility, and they don't know whom to ask about the actual duties and schedule of each shift. They also wondered how a custodian's performance review could be conducted without ever consulting any of the people who actually work in the building he/she maintains.

The UPD security breach notices (2:35 am: SE door unlocked, etc) were cited as a case in point. Chairs, Secretaries, Building Administrators and even Trades people reported getting these notices and not knowing what to do with them. They all felt that the night custodians were the logical people to tell to check and lock doors and windows, but none of them felt they had the authority to tell them to do so.

This appears to be a communication issue. There is a clear chain of command for the custodial staff, but there is currently no channel of communication open between the custodial supervisors and the Building Administrators and other occupants of the buildings.

The Chairs, Building Administrators and Secretarial Staff all feel that this is an important issue. They point out that the buildings and grounds are beautiful, but any laxity in custodial services detracts from the overall beauty and efficiency of the campus as a whole.

The Facilities Department as overseer of Custodial Services was surprised to learn that this was perceived to be a widespread problem. They readily acknowledged that this is a legitimate issue that can be easily rectified through existing channels.

### **Options:**

- 1. Have the Custodial Supervisors meet regularly with the Building Administrators and other key personnel in each building to clarify the duties and schedules of the custodial staff and maintain open lines of communication among the parties.**

#### **Advantages:**

- Better understanding and communication about day-to-day maintenance issues in all buildings.
- More effective cleaning and maintenance routines for campus buildings.

#### **Disadvantage:**

- None.

**2. Include consultation with the Building Administrators as part of the performance review process for custodial staff.**

**Advantages:**

- Custodial supervisors would gain a better understanding of the day-to-day performance of the custodial staff they supervise.
- Creates the opportunity for a periodic review of the duties and schedules of the day and night custodians in each building to align them with the needs of the building's occupants.

**Disadvantage:**

- None.

## REPORT ON DEANS AND THE DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE

### Introduction

The departments of teaching faculty are currently organized into two academic divisions: the Division of Behavioral and Applied Sciences (BAS) and the Division of Science and Social Science (SSS). However, in 1991, there were two existing divisions, called Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. The Provost, Walter vom Saal asked the Council of Chairs to recommend a new structure and subsequently, three divisions were created: Behavioral and Applied Science, Humanities and Fine Arts, and Science and Social Science. When the Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts retired, departments in that division were reallocated to BAS and SSS. Thus, the resulting departmental alignments did not correspond precisely to the old ones in Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. For example, BAS is the division of traditional liberal arts departments Art, Music, and Sociology. Anthropology, arguably an applied science, went to SSS as did Physical Education, History, Philosophy, and Geography, which can hardly be defined as science.

So the names and groupings of the two academic divisions do not appear to be based on any logical scheme. This has had ramifications on how faculty members see themselves and how they function within the College structure.

### Concerns

The College has two academic divisions, the Science and Social Science Division (SSS) and the Behavioral and Applied Science Division (BAS). Both have Deans at their head. There is some concern about the apparent lack of logic in assigning departments to BAS and SSS. Historically, these alignments were made using some non-academic considerations. In some cases, comments were made that academic collaboration is more difficult if your colleague is in the other division. A summary of relevant survey and public forum comments can be found at the end of this report.

In an informal Web survey of other 4-year SUNY colleges, it was found that the average number of Deans (i.e., academic divisions) was 3.55 and that 10 of the 11 colleges included had three or more divisions. Only one college (Geneseo) had fewer. The additional divisions allowed most colleges to group departments in logical arrays. This information is summarized in the table at the end of this report.

### Options

- 1. Do nothing. While some claims were made that we need more divisions or better organization, there were other comments that the system currently works and shouldn't be changed just for the sake of change itself.**

#### **Advantages:**

- No additional funds would be needed.
- People are familiar with the current system and how to work within it.
- While sporadic comments about the divisional organization are negative, there is NO obvious groundswell of support for adding a Dean or third division. The stand-pat solution would avoid that.

**Disadvantages:**

- If the system can be improved but we do nothing, we would be missing an opportunity.
- When a new strategic plan is developed, the current divisional organization may not be optimal for implementing it.

**2. Reorganize the existing divisions, maintaining the current two-divisional structure but reassigning departments strictly along academic lines. For convenience, we might call them the Division of Humanities and Science and the Division of Applied Studies. The organization would be similar to the alignment used up to the mid-1980s.**

**Advantages:**

- No additional Deans would be necessary if the two-divisional structure is continued.
- Departments with similar interests and collaborations such as Anthropology and Sociology, Psychology and Biology would be in the same division.

**Disadvantages:**

- Reorganizing the departments in each division could affect existing synergies, although improvements shouldn't be ruled out.
- The Applied Studies division would logically include Education, Human Ecology, Physical Education, and Business/Economics. Thus, it would have four historically large departments in terms of students and FTEs.
- The Humanities and Science division would have even more breadth than SSS does currently, thus taxing its Dean even more. It would also have many more faculty members than the Applied Studies division.
- Minimal gain would have been achieved for the considerable effort required to reorganize.

**3. Reorganize the existing divisions, creating a third division along academic and logical lines. This could allow a Division of Arts and Humanities, a Division of Natural and Social Sciences, and a Division of Professional Studies. Alternately, there could be Divisions of Education, Arts, Sciences & Humanities, and Professional Studies.**

**Advantages:**

- Departments with similar interests and collaborations such as Anthropology and Sociology, or Art and Music would be in the same division.
- The three-divisional configuration moderates the one-on-one adversarial relationship which, in the past, developed between Deans of very different divisions. No single division could accrue a majority of the academic resources available. Cooperation for the general good would be encouraged as it would also benefit the division (everybody would need to share).
- The Deans' responsibilities would be spread out more, so each individual Dean would have a smaller and more focused workload. They could become more efficient.
- When asked in the 1980's, Departmental Chairs recommended a three-divisional arrangement for its academic benefits. So there is historical justification.
- Expanding to three divisions puts SUNY-Oneonta more in line with practices at the other SUNY four-year colleges.

**Disadvantages:**

- Assuming the current Associate Dean positions in Education and in Business are retained, the College would incur a significant ongoing cost of an additional Dean's salary. Also, the Dean would need a budget to fund requests from departments as well as simply buying office equipment.
- One additional office space would need to be found.
- The Deans of divisions such as Professional Studies or Education would have a smaller number of departments but they would be very large. Professional Studies would be diverse, possibly including Human Ecology with Business and Economics for example. Each of those divisions would have areas whose policies and curricula are strictly regulated by accreditation agencies such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education or the American Dietetic Association so they could become more isolated from the rest of the College.
- Reorganization always involves considerable effort and anxiety among departments and faculty. Some physical relocation may be involved so one or two departments don't find themselves isolated.
- If a Dean of Graduate Studies position is also created, there will be four Deans. There will be some dissatisfaction among faculty with the proliferation of administrators if we add one (or two) Dean(s).

**4. Reorganize the existing divisions, creating four divisions along academic and logical lines. This could allow a Division of Arts and Humanities, a Division of Natural and Social Sciences, a Division of Education, and a Division of Business and Economics.**

**Advantages:**

- Departments with similar interests and collaborations such as Anthropology and Sociology, or Art and Music would be in the same division. Business/Economics would have its own division as would Education.
- The four-divisional configuration would effectively spread power more evenly than the current two divisions or the three-division structure described above. No single division could accrue a majority of the academic resources available. Cooperation for the general good would be encouraged as it would also benefit the division (everybody would need to share).
- The Deans' responsibilities would be spread out more, so each individual Dean would have a smaller and more focused workload. They could become more efficient.

**Disadvantages:**

- The College would incur increased ongoing costs. Each Dean would need a budget to fund requests from within their divisions as well as simply buying office equipment.
- Two more office spaces would need to be found.
- The Deans of the Education and Business/Economics divisions would have a smaller number of departments (perhaps just one), but they would be large and much more focused, with accreditation agencies dictating their policies so they could possibly become isolated from the rest of the College.
- Reorganization always involves considerable effort and anxiety among departments and faculty. Some physical relocation may be involved so one or two departments don't find themselves isolated.

- If a Dean of Graduate Studies position is also created, there will be five Deans. There will be some dissatisfaction among faculty with the proliferation of administrators if we add two or more Deans.

## **Data**

### **Summary of 4-year SUNY Colleges other than SUNY-Oneonta** (Empire State is a distributed college and was not included)

<u>College</u>	<u>Number of Divisions with Academic Deans</u>
Brockport	4 (Arts & Performance, Letters & Science, Professions, Undergraduate Education)
Buffalo	4 (Arts & Humanities, Education, Natural & Social Science, Professions)
Cortland	3 (Education, Arts & Sciences, Professional Studies)
Fredonia	4 (Business, Arts & Humanities, Education, Natural & Social Sci)
Geneseo	1 (They just have a Dean of the College, no divisions)
New Paltz	5 (Liberal Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, Fine & Performing Arts, Science & Engineering)
Old Westbury	3 (Business, Education, Arts & Sciences)
Oswego	5 (Liberal Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, Communication, Media & Arts, Graduate Studies & Research)
Plattsburgh	3 (Education, Health and Human Services, Business & Economics, Arts & Science)
Potsdam	3 (Arts & Sciences, Music, Education & Professional Studies & Graduate Studies)
Purchase	4 (Arts, Humanities, Liberal Arts & Sciences, Natural and Social Sciences)

### **Summary of Open Forum Session**

- Create a School of Business
- Consider establishing a Dean of Research
- Need to examine the Dean structure and all administrative issues associated with changes in this structure. Focus should be on the pluses and minuses of the outcomes any changes would generate.
- Need to explore ways to create more spontaneous intellectual interaction between faculty.

## **Summary of Open Forum Session**

- Review organizational structure, i.e., reorganize divisions with departments going into more logical places.
- Athletics and Physical Education should operate under the same divisional auspices

## **Summary of Survey Responses**

**(some of these have been abridged to include only those comments relevant to this topic)**

Task Force Survey Question: What aspects of our existing organizational structure could be improved?

Responses related to deans and the divisional structure:

The relationship of deans to their respective departments. It seems they are spread too thin and in some cases have little familiarity with what the department focus is. A dean of the Humanities is badly needed.

The structure is fine, but I would like to participate in more inter-departmental occasions. I know almost nothing about goals other divisions are pursuing.

Perhaps a realignment of the departments to better reflect natural groupings, particularly the humanities and social sciences. This would be at the Dean's level.

Some things seem to take forever to be addressed, especially items that cross into other divisions. There also seems to be different sets of rules depending on which side of the house you're in - Academic or Administrative. This makes it extremely difficult for departments such as ours that contains people from both sides.

By making Physical education a report to the Student development, it could save a department chair or 50% of a position back to instruction. It could marry the fitness centers, intramurals and recreation into one unit and save personnel costs. It could resolve major scheduling and dysfunction in the entire operation.

Current separation of the social sciences between two divisions should be eliminated.

Having Associate Deans for some departments/divisions seems awkward- why not Schools of Business/Education/ etc with their own Deans?

We should go back to the 3 Dean structure in Academic Affairs with a new Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts. All social science departments should report to the Dean of Science and Social Science.

Our current organizational structure poorly provides for this opportunity. Again, from a perspective of lost opportunities, there are too often obstacles created in the path of the pursuit of potentially good ideas.

... we have the ongoing balancing of liberal arts and professional studies that creates internal stresses. Right now, in the structure we currently have these needs are mixed in Divisions which can lead to the perception that we are losing our liberal arts focus.

The current structure of Academic Affairs into two divisions (Science and Social Science; Behavioral and Applied Sciences) isn't really that accurate due to the (a) splitting of the humanities across divisions (Are English and foreign languages still in one division and art and music in the other?), and (b) problems in distinguishing between 'social' and 'behavioral' sciences. The current structure never makes sense to anyone coming to this campus. I understand it in historical perspective, as they are the surviving two of three original divisions (the third was humanities and fine arts, but it got dissolved when the former Dean retired). I suggest going back to a split between two divisions: Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. Most departments would align easily in one or the other, and a few (such as music) could decide where they would like to be based on their current program objectives. A three-division structure could also work, but given the extra cost and the perpetual problem of perceived administrative bloat, I'd pass on that option for the time being.

There are too many academic departments under the Dean of Science and Social Sciences. Science and Social Sciences ought to be split into two separate groups with a dean for each.

Simplify our organization structure as we had it over 20 years ago.

It's very unwieldy and difficult to use across disciplines, particularly when they are under different deans--it's just VERY difficult to work on grants, collaborative teaching efforts, etc.... Also, it seems that the structure just doesn't make sense. Psy in one and Soc/Human Ecology in the other. On the other hand, I have concerns w/ the appearances that one is better (hard sciences) than the other!!

To be strategically competitive, the college should convert the Division of Economics and Business to the School of Economics and Business. The Division of Education should likewise be converted to the School of Education. The existing arrangement is cumbersome and confers disadvantages upon the college in terms of recruiting students and faculty, fund raising (How do you get a donor to name a school that doesn't exist?), and competitive position with the rest of SUNY as well as with private colleges.

A better alignment of academic departments in the divisions of academic affairs is needed. three deans, with fewer assistants would make more sense.

As our consultant mentioned, the Divisions need to be reorganized (Humanities, SS, NS).

## **REPORT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS, OFFICES, AND CENTERS**

### **Introduction**

The College's Diversity Statement states, "The College at Oneonta is an academic community that values diversity. Diversity at the College is an inclusive value that encompasses race and ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity and gender expression, age, ability, socio-economic status, and other aspects of identity... We are committed to recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, staff, and students, and to fostering a learning environment which draws strength from, celebrates, and honors diversity."

Currently the Strategic Planning and Resource Council is drafting a goal for diversity. Within it, one of the initiatives is to "enhance coordination of initiatives, offices, and programs charged with diversity and inclusion-related work." Although the College supports and seeks progress in equity, diversity, and inclusion endeavors, the many offices and programs seem to be disjointed rather than collaborative in their efforts.

### **Concerns**

This report represents an accumulation and synthesis of concerns. The concerns largely center on improving services, creating efficiencies, and clarifying roles and responsibilities among offices and positions. There seem to be two camps of perspectives across campus: Those who favor bringing the programs together under one umbrella, and those who favor dispersing the offices across divisions. However, each of these options has its advantages and disadvantages, supporters and non-supporters, determined by to which camp one belongs. This report, therefore, addresses these concerns.

It seems from talking with people from the various offices and divisions, there are few opportunities for them to share and learn from each other across campus. This seems to have caused miscommunication, misunderstanding, and mistrust among the offices. When the OSTF called the January meeting for the purpose of gathering information and hearing all sides, we were surprised that participants had not previously come together to discuss the issues about which they were most concerned. Therefore, the first step has to be that there are structures in place that allow and maintain communication and foster trust among the groups. Without trust and communication, progress can be protracted. One of the first items on the agenda of the Advisory Group (see Option 2) should be to review the roles of the various programs and positions as described below.

### **Options**

#### **1. Assign the Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion the responsibility of coordinating initiatives, offices, and programs charged with diversity and inclusion-related work.**

Advantages:

- Will improve communication across programs and offices
- Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion can act as a consultant and resource to the entire campus
- Establishes institutional cohesiveness for all programs

Disadvantage:

- The Director will lack full authority

## **2. Create an Advisory Group on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.**

Advantages:

- Will improve communication across programs and offices
- Facilitates thorough review of the roles of the various positions and programs on campus and to come to a consensus about each person's, each office's, and each program's responsibilities

Disadvantage:

- None

## **Data**

### **Summary of January 2010 Focus Group**

Prior to the January meeting, survey results were emailed to the various programs, offices, and centers that work with diversity, equity, and inclusion to gather the necessary background information needed to construct this informed report. Individual face-to-face and phone interviews and email exchanges were conducted with representatives from Student Disability Services, the President's Council on Diversity, Student Life, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, Multicultural Student Affairs, the Center for Multicultural Experiences, the Office of International Education, the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, the Educational Opportunity Program, the College Assistance Migrant Program, and the Multicultural Admissions Recruiter. Individual interviews came at the request of those contacted by the Task Force. They felt strongly about voicing their suggestions and concerns but for various reasons were uncomfortable speaking in front of others. It took some time to convince them that their input would be highly valued and confidential.

A group meeting was held in January 2010. Members from each of the previously listed offices and programs attended. A commitment was made to those who attended the meeting in exchange for their trust. The commitment was that their stated proposals, advantages, and disadvantages would be presented to the President as they had written them. They felt strongly about being heard. Before this commitment was made, attendees were very reluctant to speak and reveal their concerns and solutions. The following proposals were vetted through this meeting and follow-up email confirmation. Although responses are lengthy and in some cases contradictory depending on which office or from which camp the person spoke, all members of the group were satisfied that their positions have been represented in this following report to the President. The Task Force has provided this list of comments to demonstrate the intricacies of the campus situation. The comments speak for themselves.

The Task Force is not commenting and or taking a position on any of the proposals below other than to say that proposals “c” and “g” below appear to have support from most parties. The proposals are presented in no particular order.

- a) Create a new division that will have, under its umbrella, the offices, programs, and centers doing diversity work. The division would be headed by a Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This person would be appointed by the President. The Vice President would be part of the President’s Cabinet.**

**Advantages:**

- Would promote cross-program collaboration and a communications culture through strong leadership with transparency
- Reporting to supervisors trained in and sensitive to diversity would provide valued leadership and accountability around diversity
- Allows for multiple points of access—a number of places where students can go to respond to their issues; options
- Can provide funding through collaboration/combined programs’ resources
- Would provide institutional cohesiveness; coordination of thinking processes based on common understandings and stability
- Ease coordination of actions, activities, programming, resources, and professional development (nourished and nurtured staff); cut down on duplications
- Clarification of roles and charges of the different entities
- Would send a message to all that diversity is important to this campus (high profile)
- Empowers and provides more support for individuals and diversity in general (less marginalization and isolation)
- Push for diversity of academics and campus-centered work (vs. student centered) or adds to it; may assist in attracting diversity among faculty and staff
- Provides a broad view of diversity (it is the work of all programs)
- Would move institution forward as groups serve campus community holistically

**Disadvantages:**

- May offend some people, thereby risking alienation among some offices
- Would suggest supervisors outside of this division need not be trained in and sensitive to diversity
- Risks diversity being “their problem” vs. everyone’s responsibility; possible “ghetto-ization”
- One umbrella division would create another silo
- Have offices within multiple divisions provide funding through collaboration by combining programs’ resources
- Adds to already “top-heavy” administration
- By law, EOP counselors must be supervised by EOP; SUNY Administrative Best Practices places EOP in Student Affairs Division
- May shift focus away from students and Student Development
- Could marginalize entire group of programs
- Would jeopardize current effectiveness and efficiency

- Doesn't allow for multiple points of access; compartmentalizes diversity to a single division
- Diversity and inclusion need to be everyone's business and should be infused throughout all areas.
- The current Office of Equity and Inclusion is busy enough without adding additional supervisory responsibilities. That office is well placed to provide the needed leadership for Academic Affairs and other divisions that don't have the large number of diversity areas that are in Student Development.
- Several programs, such as Student Disability Services are service oriented. The scope of this office is to provide students what they need to succeed and assist in ensuring the office is in compliance with Federal and State Laws. So, while Individuals with Disabilities is a protected group and under the scope of diversity, the charge of the office is such that being housed under Student Development makes sense.

**b) Bring all groups already within Student Development under one person who is trained in and sensitive to diversity, equity, and inclusion.**

**Advantages:**

- Same as the list of advantages under Option 1, plus...
- One person would be aware of the issues faced by individual programs under Student Development and that issues are being experienced as a group

**Disadvantages:**

- Same as the list of disadvantages under Option 1, plus...
- Student Development has created positions for people who can serve as consultants to the whole division. Expertise and sensitivity need to be the job of all supervisors.
- While Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is important to Student Disabilities Services, having someone trained in Counseling or Clinical Psychology, and familiar with Federal and State Legislation specific to Disability Law is more important. The issues that arise with this direct service provision office tend not to be Diversity related, rather related to faculty and staff either not following the law or misinterpreting the law.

**c) Leave the organizational structure alone and add more innovative ideas and structured opportunities for open communication among the groups and across divisional lines on a regular basis.**

**Advantages:**

- Empowers and provides support for all groups
- Would strengthen diversity across campus
- If all groups communicate, structural change may not be necessary
- Supports best practice of multiple points of access and shared responsibility for diversity across campus
- Reduces marginalization to a degree.
- Each office is unique in its approach. This is primarily a direct service oriented office, while other offices under the umbrella of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion may be much less so.

- Having open communication across divisions is critical, and reorganizing the structure of offices that are already performing high -quality work does not seem to be necessary.

**Disadvantages:**

- Not enough. This has been tried before and failed. It still leaves people isolated because they aren't as aware of what other areas are involved in on a daily basis.
- The present fragmentation feeds into a culture of silos within the College. If the College's culture changes, the present organizational structure won't work.
- Doesn't show as strong and visible a commitment to diversity as Proposals 1 & 2.
- Considerations: Communication across campus as a whole is a challenge but can be worked on. May need to create team meetings, councils, etc., to work across divisional and departmental lines (monthly team meetings of all diversity staff). Other campuses are doing this with councils, commissions, etc.
- For greater transparency, publications could be revised to focus on students' needs and responsibilities rather than advertising offices. For example, the Crisis File is organized that way.
- A high-profile campaign would be helpful to inform the campus of multiple access points for students, faculty, and staff.

**d) Split the Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion's roles as facilitator of the values of inclusion and the Affirmative Action Officer (enforcer of policies and procedures). The Affirmative Action Officer position should be located within another division at the College.**

**Advantages:**

- Would make it safer for people to report incidents
- Would free Office of Equity and Inclusion for other things

**Disadvantages:**

- Funding
- Recommendations and Considerations: Affirmative Action should not be part of Human Resources because it is charged with monitoring human resource practices regarding recruitment and hiring (i.e., an accountant cannot audit his own financial institution). Affirmative Action Officer needs to be trained on best practices for handling complaints. Could create a separate ombudsperson.

**e) Investigate the possibilities for relocating some offices so they are more centrally located, in proximity to related services, handicap accessible, and, when appropriate, visible to students and staff across campus. Have EOP all in one location.**

**Advantages:**

- Promotes a high-energy atmosphere, collaboration among offices
- Having EOP all in one location would be more convenient for students and
- more efficient for staff

- Moving some (i.e., multicultural programs like CME and GRSC) offices to CME would give students one stop, allies, more support, and would increase opportunities for staff to collaborate
- Would increase utilization of some spaces

**Disadvantages:**

- May not be realistic due to availability of space and money
- Sometimes is viewed as a segregation or marginalization approach
- Depending on the office, this may hurt the population being served. SDS, for example, is housed adjacent to the learning center, an office used by many of our students. To move us to a location to be centralized to areas focused on diversity would not make sense. Many SDS students need the direct support of CADE, and the close proximity allows a positive, structured environment for our students.
- Recommendations and Considerations: CME's Great Room is a very desirable and useful space. It is in high demand and CME would not want to lose access to this space on a regular basis. Quality of space should reflect value of programs and not be compromised (need light, airy spaces); confidentiality is vital to some offices. EOP should not sacrifice quality of space for the sake of consolidation. The program is successful and has been under the split configuration for over 40 years. Could allocate more of the space (i.e., storage space) in Lee Hall to CME and student organizations. Areas need to be handicap accessible. There is a plan for renovation of Lee Hall to provide CME with spaces all on the first level. This will allow disability access and provide more programming space and office space.

**f) Reconsider the structure of the Office of International Education.**

Explanation: We need to make it easier for programs to operate with international students (recruiting them and processing them). We need to change the paradigm by viewing our international office as a one-stop shop for in- and outbound international students (i.e., course registration and services) rather than dividing in- and out-bound students across campus. Exchange students now go to OIE for admission then go to continuing education for course registration. This is costly for students, and problems that develop risk the partnerships we have overseas.

**Advantages:**

- OIE knows the international complexities and nuances that affect students and should be complementing Student Accounts, Residential Life, and Academic Advisement vs. worrying about "turf." Would help focus to gravitate away from "turf wars" and focus on issues.
- Would enhance our operational resources to meet the fast-paced demands of international programming.

**Disadvantages:**

- Funding
- Expertise is needed in managing all of the necessary tasks. Having all tasks in OIE would bypass the people in the other offices who have the most expertise.

- Consideration: At this time no other programs recruiting and retaining diverse student populations works regularly with OIE.

**g) Examine and redefine roles and responsibilities of various groups and positions by a thorough analysis of job descriptions, committee charges, budget analysis, etc., to refine and clarify roles and responsibilities. Follow up this analysis by widely publicizing all roles and responsibilities.**

**Advantages:**

- Diversity is a value of the entire campus community. This proposal would reflect the wholeness of this value through multiple lenses serving all students and employees.
- Considerations: The current process has not engendered much trust. Some effort may be needed to repair the effects.

**Additional Proposals and Comments:**

- Develop an infrastructure that is serious about serving students (people, places, and things) not just giving diversity “lip service.”
- Incorporate visible and active diversity, inclusion, equity programs or activities into all divisions, especially Academic Affairs where there is no senior administrative role that clearly, visibly addresses diversity-related concerns and ideas. We don’t need to add a position, just add a specific charge and include communication and visibility directives.
- Make all part time diversity positions full time and director level (at least within Student Development).
- Create a Vice Provost for Diversity in Academic Affairs.
- Provide housing options for international education students and others during holidays and breaks.
- OIE ought to be a stand-alone office within Academic Affairs.

## REPORT ON INTERNAL INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION

Written and verbal feedback from the OSTF survey, open forums, and focus groups identified the following internal information/communication problems on our campus.

**Issue 1:** Personnel do not possess adequate information regarding the roles, responsibilities, services, and current undertakings of personnel in the four divisions: Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, Student Development, and College Advancement.

**Option 1:** Create a web directory whereby one clicks on a title/position to view a name, telephone number, email address, and brief description of roles, responsibilities, and services associated with that person, department, or office.

**Option 2:** A cadre of personnel representing each of the divisions will attend meetings outside of their division as non-voting representatives.

**Issue 2:** There is a lack of information-sharing between divisions. As a result, one division's actions may have consequences for another division.

**Option 1:** A divisional decision that has consequences for another division must be preceded by consultation with that division, as evidenced by the signature of its vice president, prior to approval and implementation.

**Option 2:** The vice presidents will report divisional changes in personnel, procedures, and policy to both the president and the Senate.

**Issue 3:** Personnel don't possess adequate information regarding the roles and responsibilities of College committees and advisory groups.

**Option:** Create a web directory of College committees and advisory groups whereby one clicks on the name of a committee/advisory group to view a contact name, telephone number, email address, along with the designated mission/charge.

**Issue 4:** College committees with restricted membership (appointed or determined by title/position) have little or no input from constituent voices outside the membership. The decisions/actions of these committees are often viewed with suspicion and mistrust.

**Option:** Devote a portion of the College website to campus committees, similar to what we do for college offices. Build in features that allow each committee to post its mission/charge, meeting dates, non-confidential agenda items, etc. Campus personnel can gain access through their Oneonta email username and password. They can post questions, concerns, comments to specific committees.

### **Advantages:**

- These solutions support the flow of information.
- These solutions provide opportunities for conversation, discussion, and cooperation within and between divisions.

- College personnel can gain understanding about the operation and dynamics of the campus by learning about the roles, responsibilities, services, and mission of people, departments, offices, committees, and advisory groups.
- Required reporting procedures ensure some degree of accountability with regard to disseminating and sharing information.
- Cross-divisional committee representation allows constituent voices to permeate barriers which may be intentionally or unknowingly constructed to withhold information.
- Decisions are more readily accepted when stakeholders are given opportunities to contribute to the decision-making process, rather than simply implement the decisions of others. Stakeholders can provide valuable insight, perspective, experience, campus history, etc. so that decisions are viewed as trusted and informed decisions, rather than misguided and imposed decisions.
- Some or all of these solutions can be implemented at any time with little financial impact to the College.

**Disadvantage:**

- It will take time commitments from personnel to create/maintain web pages and directories and to serve on additional committees.

**Data**

**Survey Results**

Task Force Survey Question: What aspects of our existing organizational structure could be improved?

Responses related to internal information/communication:

- We need more communication across divisions of the college.
- The structure of the college is fine, but I would like to participate in more inter-departmental occasions. I know almost nothing about goals other divisions are pursuing.
- Although it is clear in my own area how things work, how decisions are made, and information flows, it is less clear for areas I don't deal with daily. Therefore, it would be helpful to provide a clear, concise document outlining how the place works. That's not a place where it could be improved, I guess, but it is a suggestion.
- There is still some confusion, both within the department and on the part of our users, as to who to contact for a particular task. I have no suggestions.
- Somehow break down the barriers between divisions – more collaboration between divisions; find ways to eliminate silo mentality.
- It is very unclear to professors and more so students what the various Vice Presidents and Associate Provosts do.
- Opportunities for casual conversations across the departments and discipline levels ... time and space needed for formal and informal conversations
- I would say the upper level administration. I feel that there is little bottom-up communication and that the right hand may not know what the left hand is doing between various upper level offices. I do not think hiring more administrators is the solution to this problem.
- Communication from the President via email directly to each employee helps to make each person feel informed and included.

- For the most part, the lines of communication from the top (administration) down works well.
- Communication from administration to faculty seems good.
- In general Chairs work well to keep faculty informed of college wide developments and to provide mentoring and advice.
- Generally, I believe the College functions well as far as organizational structure. I feel that within the divisions, office work in a cooperative manner.
- The “vertical” aspect of our current structure seems to work well—ie. communication, coordination, connections from top to bottom & vice versa within a division seem to work well
- The “horizontal” aspect of our current structure could be improved- particularly across divisions
- Interactions between departments and deans seem to work quite well.
- Communications from the President and senior administrators is timely, relevant, and positive.
- Information from all areas of the campus being shared with everyone whether, faculty, administration and staff.
- For the most part, our vice presidents work well as a team, the associate VPs are highly effective, interactive and supportive as well.
- It does not work well, as the links between different parts of the college are obscure, against the national trend, we have increased hierarchies and levels of bureaucracy. Efficient parts are made inefficient if the cooperation is insufficient.
- Another issue that I have seen is that there seems to be not enough coordination between the nonacademic parts of the college and the academic ones.
- Communication within departments
- We have a very cooperative and collaborative environment on Campus. It’s also a very friendly Campus. This makes it easy (for the most part) for us to work together toward common goals and maintain open communication lines. This is truly a great place to work.
- I like that some divisional committees allow people outside the division to serve on the committee. This helps with information sharing.
- The flow of information seems to work well. I feel that the campus and all groups are told what’s happening around the campus.
- Communication during the planning phases of renovations. The faculty/staff using the spaces to be renovated should be involved in each step of planning so that the end result fits those involved in the use of the spaces.
- COMMUNICATION – Between departments, between nonteaching and teaching staff, between college-wide committees and departments.
- In addition, there is a lack of understanding and communication between the college-wide committee on promotion and tenure and department committees.
- Community relations should encompass Campus & Community Relations- promoting dialogue and information sharing among campus divisions, as well as with the community at-large.
- When I make an attempt to collaborate across campus, it is typically well accepted and constructive. You sometimes have to reach out yourself and not expect others to set things up to facilitate that contact.
- Some aspects that could be improved in this structure are the communication between the college and the students.
- Respect between the academic and non-academic sides of the College.
- In general, the College has a culture of silos that supports the existing structure.

### **Focus Group – Associate VPs and Associate Provosts**

- Organizational structure is not a problem now – those in this room don't have problems working with each other, nor do folks at the lower levels; no problems collaborating; the problem is that communication stops at the top
- We should create a reward system for collaboration between divisions; the challenge is to find ways of rewarding good communication/collaboration
- Need more information sharing from Cabinet
- Disaggregate authority; cabinet should have more representatives; make decisions on a wider basis
- Nothing is being communicated by the academic leadership
- Information not communicated or not "heard"
- If communication were in place, we wouldn't be here discussing organizational structure
- Calendar committee – decisions impact everyone, yet membership consists of senate committee chairs/faculty

### **Focus Group – Deans and Associate Deans**

- Suspicious of "lack of communication" being the problem. There are different cultures within each division and different perceptions of the goals of each.
- Academic Affairs thinks their role is to challenge students and the role of Student Development is to nurture students. We don't have the respect we should have for each other's goals and primary missions. We need to better articulate these to each other.
- Forum for doing this? The Faculty leadership program is very effective in informing faculty of responsibilities of administrators across all divisions; unfortunately only two faculty per year do this.
- Perhaps Administrative Forum would be a good venue to do this – need to fix the agenda. It was a mistake to reduce the number of forums held – we should use these to communicate who does what.

### **Focus Group – Council of Chairs**

- Communications between custodial staff and departments need to be addressed in some buildings.
- Internally, communication is a problem between academic departments and Facilities as it pertains to renovations and rehabilitation projects.

### **Focus Group – Clerical**

- Not enough openness; decisions made on the third floor and information not being passed on
- People are not aware of the impact of their processes (or not doing them correctly) on offices outside of their division. People need to understand what other offices are responsible for.
- Poor communication from Facilities.

### **Focus Group – Trades Supervisors**

- Need for better communications with occupants of the buildings re conservation efforts and work being done in the buildings

- Lack of coordination/communication before and during construction/rehab process between planners & contractors and the tradesmen responsible for maintaining the rehabbed space

#### **Focus Group – Directors**

- There needs to be greater communication/consultation between facility personnel and impacted constituents. Guidelines and priorities need to be clarified. There should be a cross-divisional Working Group which consults with facility personnel.
- A visual photo directory could be helpful to faculty/staff.
- The College has both internal and external communication issues. Utilize available technology.
- Communicate and consult prior to decision-making.

#### **Focus Group – Faculty**

- Academic Advisement needs to get information to Departments (i.e., requirement changes).

#### **Meeting – Student Development Managers**

- Review our lines of communication. How do we disperse information and report changes in policy? How can we serve our communication needs electronically?
- Review the top-down process which often guides decision-making. This erodes trust. Stakeholders need to be part of the conversation and the process.

## **PART II: FINAL RENDERINGS**

As a result of our extended communications and conversations with representatives from virtually, we believe, all walks of life on campus, we have come to the conclusion that most people are very content with the way things are organized. However, the issues exposed in this report do seem to be hot buttons that cause a stir when people start to talk about them. We end this report with the following statements regarding the urgency of attention and possible change concerning the issues explored herein.

### **Graduate Studies**

It is clear from the responses to the survey, open forums, focus groups, and individual interviews that there is urgency in addressing the lack of an infrastructure to support graduate students and the perceived lack of institutional importance of graduate programs. First, addressing Option #1 (ensuring there is a template of support for current graduate students in admission, financial aid, student accounts, residential life, etc.) is primary. Second, establishing a leadership position to coordinate all graduate activities not currently handled by the existing academic deans would express the importance of graduate programs through focused marketing and recruiting. Providing administrative support to academic deans and departments with graduate department chairs would most likely yield increased graduate enrollments.

### **The Creation of an Office of Institutional Research**

The creation of an Office of Institutional Research has been a subject of discussion for many years. As the reporting and assessment demands on our College have increased over the years, arguments in support of creating an IR office have increased. In focus groups, there was a consensus that the College requires an IR function. Also, since information and data are closely associated with communication, the creation of an unbiased, professionally staffed IR function would lend credibility and validity to the use of data for decision making.

### **Academic Advisement**

There is no crisis that warrants an immediate change, but there is certainly reason to believe that further review and discussion could identify changes that may enhance services and improve efficiencies. Faculty support for change is evident.

### **Building-Related Issues**

There is consensus from many sectors of the campus on the issue of poor communications with Facilities personnel throughout the rehab and renovation process for academic buildings. Many people feel that there could be a better process developed to ensure that we don't spend unnecessary time and local campus funds fixing problems that could have been identified and reconciled at the planning stage before the projects were released for bid.

Regarding space allocation, many people involved in scheduling and classroom utilization expressed strong concerns about the impact of the Fitzelle rehab project on future scheduling and classroom availability. The upcoming development of a new Campus Master Plan provides an ideal opportunity for us to re-evaluate all of the current space allocations across the campus and to revise our protocols for determining the assignment and use of spaces at the divisional and departmental levels.

The role of the Building Administrator/Emergency Coordinator should be strengthened and clarified. Custodial supervisors should consult regularly with Building Administrators about the duties and performance of the custodians in each building.

### **Deans and Divisional Structure**

When answering the OSTF survey, and in comments made directly to Task Force members at open forums, a number of people expressed the opinion that our Dean and Divisional structure needed change (see summaries of Open Forums). There were various opinions as to what kind of changes to make. Significantly, the topic was never the first and most urgent one brought to the table and some comments indicated that the current structure worked. If the structure were to be changed, this could be an opportunity for greater efficiency and better working relationships for faculty among themselves and with their colleagues at other colleges and universities.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs, Offices, and Centers**

There does seem to be urgency for change within this issue. People are expressing feelings of disempowerment and confusion that hold them back from fully moving forward in the decisions they make and in the confidence and levels of trust they develop among their colleagues. This does not appear to be a healthy working atmosphere.

### **Communication**

Members of the campus community have consistently voiced concerns about the lack of communication and information-sharing on this campus. Knowledge should empower all, rather than a few. Solutions that build trust/insight and minimize the collateral damage of decision-making should be considered for immediate implementation.

