January XX, 2013

Robert Newcomer, PhD  
Chair, UCSF Academic Senate  
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Re: Operational Excellence at UCSF

Dear Chair Newcomer:

The Academic Senate’s Committee on Academic Planning and Budget (APB) has met with stakeholders involved with the design and implementation of Operational Excellence (OE) at UCSF. Although this process remains preliminary, APB already has defined issues of importance to both faculty and OE administration.

Below, we briefly itemize areas where enhanced interactions among faculty, OE administration, and departmental administration would be mutually beneficial. We propose a mechanism for these interactions that involves the creation of an OE Advisory Committee at the level of the Chancellor’s office involved in the implementation, evaluation and monitoring of all OE activities and initiatives. Our goal, like yours, is to improve service while reducing costs.

**Background: Areas of Mutual Interest to Faculty and OE Administrators**

- Faculty input is desired by OE administration. However, faculty involvement to date has been suboptimal.
- Because OE initiatives have tended to be developed before they have been presented to the faculty, faculty have not had adequate time to provide feedback during planning and implementation. Mechanisms that improve faculty participation at all stages will ensure that OE products and services better meet the needs of faculty, who are most often the end users.
- Faculty input during planning and implementation will increase the likelihood that OE initiatives may result in improvements over prior practices.
- The faculty views OE as a single, centrally coordinated enterprise. However, OE currently exists as at least three distinct initiatives in separate administrative units. Negative perceptions towards one OE unit, or even towards other campus-wide administrative initiatives not formally a part of OE, become perceived as a failure of the entire OE enterprise.
- Most faculty believe that the purpose of OE is to provide the mechanisms to realize optimal service delivery and cut administrative costs. Whereas the initial phases of OE were focused on personnel reductions and improved training, the major savings will be realized through the elimination of administrative redundancies.
- As OE moves forward, future efficiencies can be gained by coordinating tasks and implementing systems that cross the boundaries of the three existing OE administrative units. Currently, these advisory committees tend to work in individual silos; greater coordination is needed.
- There is concern that many cost-savings realized within separate OE units are being realized by shifting the burden to the departments, the faculty and their staff.
- OE initiative evaluation has not been coordinated; robust data are not available for planning future strategies. A coordinated, systematized evaluation strategy is needed.
As the end users of most OE initiatives, faculty can help define and prioritize administrative improvements both within and across OE administrative units. There are other stakeholders including the administrative units themselves, the schools and departments and the professional managers of the departments whose voices are central to ensuring the definition and improved delivery of essential OE services.

**Proposed Solution: OE Advisory Committee**

- An OE Advisory Committee should be established consisting of all stakeholders who implement and consume OE products and services (see below for proposed membership).
- The Advisory Committee will help define areas where efficiencies can be gained.
- The Advisory Committee will help define goals for implementation that include:
  - Gathering information about anticipated and actual cost savings and improved services.
  - Mechanisms to obtain broader faculty input to improve the final products to be launched.
  - Best practices for monitoring the post-launch progress regarding cost-savings and services targets.
- The Advisory Committee will review reports from OE leaders on the progress of OE initiatives and their impact on consumers, cost-savings, and service goals.
- We propose that the Committee consists of members from
  - the three OE units
  - the faculty
  - the Deans and Chancellors Offices
  - MSOs

The size of the Committee should allow adequate representation but be small enough to ensure that it operates effectively.

- OE must avoid impeding UCSF faculty success in realizing cutting-edge science and retaining/improving their grant funding. Indeed, OE should foster that success by reducing the burden on UCSF faculty and their staff. We therefore recommend that the faculty is given a majority voice on the OE Advisory Committee.
- The OE bodies currently constituted for each OE unit should continue to meet to deal with the specific details of implementing OE directives. They also provide suggestions for further improvements and will provide feedback on suggestions by the OE Advisory Committee. The OE Advisory Committee provides oversight and coordination of those activities.
- The APB envisions a hands-on Committee that would meet once a month. The creation of the Advisory Committee will free up the OE leadership from substantive outreach activities. Some of those outreach activities will instead be conducted by the Committee.

We thank you for reviewing this proposal and welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

**Committee on Academic Planning & Budget**

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