

Project Plan

Reorganization of Facilities Services At URI

*University of Rhode Island
February 5, 2001*

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Business Issues

In recent years, both public and private universities have faced the challenges of increasing competition and budget constraints. While economic and external pressures have been present in our recent past, their importance and impact on the future of the University of Rhode Island has never been greater. A key factor affecting the operations of the University in recent months has been the FTE cap. This cap on positions was imposed on all arms of state government in the 1990's during a period of fiscal crisis brought on by the collapse of the Credit Unions in Rhode Island. One year ago, the University exceeded its limit and a hiring freeze went into effect. The result has been a dramatic drop in our flexibility to fill positions and maintain current service levels. Although some employees can move laterally within the organization, once a vacancy occurs, the position becomes frozen.

One of the key strategic initiatives in President Carother's three-year strategic plan is to "increase structural and operational efficiency." As a result of this initiative, coupled with the external pressures facing the University, the President issued a directive to Kathleen Mallon, Director of Strategic Planning and Institutional Research (SPIR), to embark on this reorganization project. The purpose of this project is to consolidate the resources dedicated to facilities services: maintenance, repair and janitorial in the Auxiliaries with those in Academic Affairs and Business and Finance. Ultimately, the intention is to have one centrally funded and managed Facilities Services operation with scope and responsibility for service and maintenance of all University buildings and grounds. Ideally, this will be accomplished through the redesign of the organizational structure and business processes such that the University can provide a uniform level of service across all campuses and divisions.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of this project are to develop an implementation plan that will:

- Provide a high quality of facilities service to all campuses and departments
- Provide a consistent level of facilities services to all campuses and departments

- Eliminate duplication of effort across the institution
- Have the ability to deploy staff in a more flexible manner to areas of critical need
- Maximize the efficient use of human, capital and operating resources
- Conform with statutory requirements governing auxiliary enterprise fiscal integrity

Project Scope

The redesign of services will encompass all facilities services units and function on all University campuses which include Kingston, Providence, Bay and Alton Jones. Services will include:

- Maintenance and Repair
- Custodial Services
- Landscapes and Grounds
- Administration of these services
- Contract and support services

Methodology

The methodology used for this redesign project will be as follows:

1. **Assessment and analysis** of current policies and procedures, to include:
 - process mapping
 - benchmarking of peer institutions
 - focus groups and surveys
2. **Creation of vision, mission and goals**
3. **Redesign of processes-** this will include identification and possible redefining of job descriptions; followed by a newly created organizational structure to support the redesign
4. **Evaluation-** this will include the creation of a business case
5. **Plan Implementation**
6. **Redesigned processes implementation**
7. **Continuous monitoring and evaluation of redesigned processes**

Timeline

This project is embarking on an ambitious timeline of completion and implementation. The President would like to implement some change beginning with the fiscal year 2002 budget cycle. The schedule is as follows:

- February 2001- information gathering and assessment-focus groups, surveys, peer benchmarking
- March 2001
 - Week 1: creation of vision, mission and goals by steering committee
 - Week 2: return to focus groups for comment, change, modifications or improvements
 - Week 3-April 2001: Redesign phase
 - Return to focus groups at completion
- May 2001- Evaluation and business case
- June 2001- Implementation plan creation and development
- July 2001- Redesigned processes implementation

Budget

The President's office budget and existing budgets from other areas will cover the expenses of this project which will include campus-based meetings, printing and supplies.

Project Organization

The Executive Sponsor of the project is President Robert Carothers. The President has delegated authority to Kathleen Mallon of SPIR to lead the process to achieve the reorganization. The University will manage this project using a team approach, with an Executive Committee providing direction, coordination and resources for the project. This committee is accountable to the entire University for the successful completion of this project. Other responsibilities of this team include:

- Ensure project success and commitment from University Administration

- Make decisions that can change project scope
- Ensure that the direction of the project continues to be in-line with the original mission and goals set forth at the beginning of the project
- Remove obstacles to meeting critical success factors, which may impact the successful outcome of the project

Members of the **Executive Committee** are:

Dennis Stark, Vice President of Business and Finance

J. Vernon Wyman, Assistant Vice President Business Services

Thomas Dougan, Interim Vice President of Student Affairs

Anne Marie Coleman, Director of Labor Relations

Kathleen Mallon, Director SPIR

Bonnie Saccucci, Assistant Director SPIR

A **Steering Committee** will be created to serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive committee. Its members will include:

Bruce Hamilton, Director of Memorial Union

Chip Yensan, Director of Residential Life

Kathleen Gianquitti, Director of Dining Services

Edward Smith, Director Facilities and Operations

Gary Lulli, CCE

Jeff Callahan, GSO

Tom Mitchell, Alton Jones

At critical times during the process, elements of the project plan as well as the implementation plan will be brought to **focus groups** comprised of employees from all levels of the organization for feedback including comments, changes, modifications or improvements.

Critical Success Factors

Certain key issues have been identified and must be addressed to ensure the success of this project. It is important that these issues be clearly identified and resolved to ensure the successful, on-time delivery of the components of this project. These issues must be dealt with by the Executive Steering Committee and have the support of the Executive Sponsor to ensure that the resources needed are obtained.

Executive Support

The University's sustained support and commitment to change is vital to the successful implementation of this project. The University leadership must:

- Continue to make redesign a campus-wide priority by emphasizing improved services and committing resources appropriately
- Foster a culture of innovation by rewarding successes, acknowledging failed attempts as learning opportunities instead of setbacks and demonstrating that self-serving resistance to change will not be tolerated
- Maintain and communicate trust in individuals representing all levels of the organization to make decisions redesign and implementation
- Reduce or eliminate barriers to implementation
- Endorse policy or philosophy changes that are initiated in support of the recommendations

Change Management

Change management is a set of principles, methods and tools that help to assess people's readiness or resistance to change. It also communicates the benefits of innovations, involves them in the change process, and provides training in new skills. Additionally, change management alters systems and support structures to encourage new behaviors. The primary cause of the failure of a redesign project is not resistance to the change itself, but management's failure to deal with the resistance. We must remember that resistance to change is natural and inevitable. Our challenge is to recognize and manage the resistance.

Staff Retention

Understanding that a change of this magnitude may create high levels of stress among employees, every effort must be made to ensure a smooth transition to the new consolidated unit. This transition will be achieved through a proactive change management strategy and ongoing training programs for all levels of employees. The training program will be reflective of a commitment to support all staff and give them the tools for success. Though the scope of work may change for some individuals, it is not the goal of this process to reduce our current work force.

Communication

The entire campus community must receive continuous and clear communication concerning what changes are occurring, why and when the changes will occur, and how the changes will impact employees and their work. Various communication tools will be used and employees encouraged to provide feedback. The progress and successes of the implementation will be reported regularly to all concerned.

Team Member Participation

All employees of the Facilities Services units on all campuses will be encouraged to participate in the redesign and implementation effort. It is imperative that managers allow and encourage staff to provide input at all stages of the project. Leadership from the Steering Committee will be critical to the success of participation from all levels of the organization.

Training

All staff, including managers, will need to possess the skills and knowledge that will enable them to function successfully in the new environment. Training that addresses all aspects of team interaction, technical knowledge and service is essential. The university must ensure that time is specifically dedicated to training activities, and participation in training is integral to the employee's responsibilities and performance.

Labor Relations

Once the process redesign phase is completed, job descriptions will be reviewed as to their relevance to the new tasks. The Executive Steering Committee must take a proactive approach to addressing employee concerns related to collective bargaining contract issues and employment security. The active involvement of bargaining units and other employee representatives in planning and implementation will serve both employees and the University in ensuring a smooth transition to the new organization.

Performance Measurement and Assessment

Performance measures are needed to measure the effectiveness of process changes and management under the new organization, as well as measuring the effectiveness of meeting team goals. A performance assessment program will be developed to motivate and evaluate performance.

Conclusion

The reorganization of Facilities Services is a dynamic project with an aggressive timeline. However, there is no preconceived outcome other than that articulated in the project goals. Management of the employees involved in this change is of the utmost importance. The implementation of this consolidation project involves change not only to the work processes, but also changes to the ways in which employees relate to each other. Managing such change gives us the opportunity to minimize the cost of transformation. It is critical to understand that people, not technology, achieve reengineering. People have to execute the plans, perform the activities, and provide the interface to their “customers.”

We must remember that each redesign project presents its own set of circumstances, challenges and opportunities. As we learn to initiate and embrace change, our goal is to position the University to respond effectively to its ever changing and increasingly competitive environment, while providing its employees with the knowledge, ability and skills necessary to thrive in the new work place.