**Delaware Will Shine Concept Papers**

**Models of the New American Research University**

**Issues Outside of Undergraduate and Graduate Education**

**Academic Organization Group**

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

***Budget Model***: A revenue-based budgeting (RBB) model was adopted by the University of Delaware in 2009. As stated by the Budget Office, “Revenue-Based Budgeting is a financial management philosophy that supports achievement of the highest academic priorities; decentralizes decision-making; and aligns authority, responsibility and accountability for both revenues and expenditures. UD's leadership recognizes that providing an environment where decision makers are rewarded through incentives, has much greater potential to move the University forward than a traditional expense-oriented budgeting environment.” The unfortunate timing of the implementation of RBB with economic downturn as well as perceived flaws in this system has resulted in it being unpopular and viewed as a hindrance to some aspects of UD’s development.

***Organization of Units:*** Some instructional activities at the University of Delaware are highly centralized (for example curriculum development), while others are decentralized (for example academic advising), and the rationale for the differences is not always clear. Decentralized services can result in high coordination costs and inconsistent experiences among students. UD’s core offices have a history of lean staffing that has been exacerbated by both the economic climate and the changes in our organizational structure. Although UD is moving to a college-centered structure, many of the core offices remain at a University level. Some of these offices, for example Human Resources, the Research Office, Admissions, and Career Services, are essential for recruiting and supporting high-quality faculty, staff, and students. Staffing, particularly in Human Resources and the Research Office, has been insufficient to keep up with UD’s growth and change in structure.

***Beyond Newark:*** The University of Delaware has a history of reaching constituents outside of the main Newark campus. Formal arrangements include the Associate in Arts program in which students take classes in Wilmington, Dover, or Georgetown campuses towards a 2-year Associate’s degree and then matriculate into the University of Delaware Newark campus. With the implementation of RBB on the main campus, this program became housed within the College of Arts and Sciences. For students on the Newark campus, loose arrangements with corporate partners exist that help to lead our students to off-campus experiences including internships. Though Career Services serves as a central location to post internships, relationships with these external partners have primarily been forged through the efforts of individual faculty or staff members.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

***Budget Model***: The positive outcomes of RBB are increased decision-making at the level of the Colleges and increased attention to revenues and expenditures. Perceived negative outcomes of RBB include decreased quality of undergraduate education, competition among the Colleges for tuition and institutional research dollars, and difficulty in developing cross-college interdisciplinary activities.

***Organization of Units:*** Moving from a more centralized model to a more decentralized model has resulted in some issues. These primarily stem from a lack of coordination among decentralized units, for example multiple units developing parallel initiatives or a lack of specific services within an individual unit. In addition, increased autonomy of college units has reduced cross-disciplinary activities and resulted in development of redundancy. UD’s history of lean staffing has created a problematic environment in which there are insufficient staff persons to provide an optimal level of support for academic and research programs.These include essential University-level offices such as Human Resources and the Research Office. These core offices are overburdened and lack integration with the colleges. UD is not perceived as nimble or organized in the creation and dissolution of units that might address “hot topics” or “frontiers”. For example, students feel their plan for the creation of a Sustainability Office has gone unheard and efforts to increase diversity or international impact are not coordinated well between administration and the colleges.

***Beyond Newark:*** The AA program is an aspect of the University of Delaware’s commitment to Delawareans and allows students to take high-quality UD courses closer to home. Course offerings are limited, however, and students that come to the Newark campus with an AA degree come in behind their peers in major-specific courses and may not be able to graduate with some majors following only four years of study. There is a perception that UD is currently underserving the southern part of the state. The contribution of the University of Delaware student body to our external corporate partners is highly valued. Interns are skilled and motivated and employers seek our graduates.

**NATIONAL and GLOBAL TRENDS**

***Budget Model:*** The University of Delaware fared better than peer institutions during the economic downturn. AAU universities that have adopted an RBB-like budget model are struggling with similar issues especially inter-college competition and decreasing cross-unit collaboration.

***Organization of Units:*** Historically, there have been fewer administrative leaders at UD compared to peer and aspirant universities. Additional administrative leader positions have been established under President Harker but these have been widely perceived as unnecessary. The number of people in our Research Office is significantly smaller than at other peer institutions in the AAU, and at UD they must divide their effort between proposal support and reporting requirements.

***Beyond Newark:*** Peer and aspirant universities are increasingly broadening their curriculum delivery to reach non-traditional students through remote campuses, creative online education, and competency based programs. They are also increasing their partnerships with external corporations and organizations to provide students with increased off-campus learning opportunities.

**STRATEGIC THEMES**

***Budget Model:*** Negative perceptions regarding RBB came up in most of our stakeholder meetings with faculty and staff. RBB was viewed as a divisive force that created a barrier to collaboration and development of interdisciplinary research and educational programs. Another common theme is that RBB has generated inefficiencies as colleges, each attempting to balance their budgets, are actively competing against one another to attract student tuition dollars, for example by developing redundant courses or by restricting student choices. Funding has acted as a de facto planning tool to drive academic priorities. A sense of financial inequity was also expressed by some stakeholders. For example there are college-level perceptions that the budget model currently favors wealth transfer into specific STEM disciplines. Additionally, there are parts of the university that feel excluded from priorities that current budget practices have created.

***Organization of Units:*** Development of new administrative positions over the past decade was perceived by many constituents as counter-productive, but it was the finding of this committee that the new positions are in fact valuable and problems would be eased by improved communication and coordination between administrative offices and operational units. The decentralization of units that has occurred in the past decade was perceived as resulting in an organizational model that is inconsistent and inefficient. Some activities are highly centralized while others are decentralized, and the rationale for these differences is not always apparent and can result in increased operating costs and disservice to students. Overall, there is a perception that the level of staffing is not adequate to support the amount of work being done. Lean staffing in academic units has resulted in faculty doing work that would be better carried out by trained professionals (for example undergraduate advisement). Lean staffing at the level of the colleges and core offices has resulted in a wider range of responsibilities than an individual may be able to effectively perform (for example HR liaison work) and offices that run inefficiently (for example the Research Office). Lack of administrative support was commonly identified as an obstacle to academic operations. For example, colleges are not appropriately organized with Human Resource units to address hiring and termination. Similarly, the Research Office is understaffed and lacks support at both the central office and academic unit levels. Developing a mechanism that integrates core activities from the level of the central office through the academic units will reduce frustrations and increase success of UD as a whole.

***Beyond Newark:*** One emerging theme of our stakeholder meetings was a concern about the future of the AA program. Staffing was perceived to be lean and course offerings were perceived to be limited. The AA program primarily serves traditional undergraduates seeking a smaller campus feel while non-traditional students favor neighboring colleges and universities for further education. Should recruiting the non-traditional population be of interest to UD, the AA program or other programs on the Newark campus might evaluate how to better attract non-traditional students. Instruction in Newark and satellite campuses is tied to a traditional model of course delivery, but more flexible models might help to draw in the nontraditional population. Traditional AA undergraduates who matriculate to the UD Newark campus can be at a disadvantage compared to peers who have been in Newark for all four years due to inability to take many major-specific courses during the AA program. Also echoed at various meetings was a sense of disconnect between the Newark campus and satellite campuses, and members of both the central and satellite campuses expressed an interest in strengthening connections to better serve our students. Those in the satellite campuses and elsewhere in southern Delaware expressed a sentiment of being underserved or ignored by the Newark campus. Another theme that emerged was on the potential to strengthen our relationships with commercial partners. Relationships with external partners are typically maintained at the level of a department or an individual. Development of an office to build and maintain partnerships with external organizations and corporations would be of a benefit to our students by increasing internship and job placement opportunities. This would also provide a clear point of contact for those external partners interested in our students to reach out to.

**SHORT-TERM TASKS (1-2 years)**

***Budget Model:*** Monitor and assess the revised RBB model that is expected to be implemented this year.

***Organization of Units:*** Develop college configurations that allow for a clear and defined purpose for each college but at the same time promotes communication among colleges and cross-disciplinary activities. Increase the communication and coordination of activities between the administrative leaders and the colleges. Increase the number of staff members and consider reorganization of essential core offices including Human Resources and the Research Office, particularly at the level where they interact with individual colleges. Implement practices to improve the culture that pervades the relationships with some of these offices, which is contentious and sometimes polarizing, as opposed to collaborative. For accredited programs, the full APR process creates large amounts of additional, often duplicative work. A more flexible policy that would allow these programs to report only on areas not included in the accreditation process (e.g. faculty research) would be more efficient and less burdensome.

***Beyond Newark:*** Develop a task force to evaluate the AA program to determine whether it should be strengthened or abandoned. Develop a plan of action for increasing partnerships between UD and external businesses and organizations; Career Services, business partners, and southern Delaware stakeholders should be included in this planning process.

**LONG-TERM TASKS (2-5 years)**

***Budget Model:*** Regularly assess and revise the budget model using a transparent process

***Organization of Units:*** Develop a mechanism to coordinate and communicate directives from the administrative level through the academic unit level. Include core support offices in this coordination. Evaluate whether continued lean staffing is congruent with UD’s long-term goals.

***Beyond Newark:*** Implement appropriate changes to the AA program based on the findings of the task force. Use the stronger relationships with external corporate partners to provide all UD students with experiences outside of the classroom.