

Provost Task Forces on Cost Reduction and Revenue Enhancement

To continue the momentum of U-M's cost containment efforts, five task forces of faculty and staff were appointed to explore areas where we can further reduce costs or enhance revenue. The U-M continues to face unprecedented uncertainty around the state appropriation, and this effort is part of our ongoing strategy to prepare our institution in these times of economic distress.

Since 2002, we have been engaged in a disciplined program of strategic [cost containment initiatives](#). These initiatives have been highly successful and have so far helped us avoid the devastating cuts occurring at many other universities. We continue to improve our efficiency through consolidation of our major information technology units, central scheduling of classrooms, and revised travel and hosting guidelines, which will be rolled out in the coming months. We can and must do more.

The topics that were explored by the task forces emerged from the deliberations of the Prudence Panel, convened by the Provost's Office, and were further refined at a special deans' retreat in June, 2009.

Best Practices for Centers and Institutes

Update as of Fall 2010

Charge

The Centers and Institutes task force was charged with exploring best practices within the centers and institutes at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor campus including what attributes and structures make them productive, successful and efficient.

Recommendations

- Ensure that all academic centers and institutes have mission statements that are consistent with the mission of the University of Michigan.
- Ensure that all centers and institutes have clear metrics for evaluating their progress toward fulfilling those missions.
- Aggressively seek opportunities for shared staffing and space among centers and institutes.

Next Steps

We are now finalizing a complete inventory of all centers and institutes highlighting key indicators such as general-fund expenditures, faculty, staffing and space. We are also working to review unit mission statements and metrics, consistent with the task force recommendation, and we are formulating a set of best practices for the management of units. Finally, we are working to identify opportunities for shared staffing and efficient use of space.

Creative Staffing and Shared Services

Update as of Fall 2010

Charge

The charge of the Creative Staffing and Shared Services task force was to look systematically at ways of sharing resources for more efficient delivery of administrative support services. The task force considered a broad range of delivery models and service functions. In particular, it explored the use of shared services, a concept originally developed in the private sector as a means of improving efficiency and service responsiveness in large, complex, and decentralized organizations, by consolidating back-office functions in a way that assures accountability and avoids the problems often associated with centralization of services, including lack of responsiveness and decreased quality of service.

Recommendations

- Invest in information technology that better supports work flow.

- Make use of a set of selection criteria developed for the U-M environment when deciding where to deploy shared services, and complete a detailed business case before moving forward with particular services.
- Ensure that in shifting to shared services, we adopt key customer-oriented features such as service-level agreements and customer-led governance structures.
- Prefer the creation of new shared service centers over than absorption of tasks into central operations.

Next Steps

Following completion of the task force work, we integrated their recommendations with the results of a recent benchmarking study done on campus. The results of this work have been discussed with campus representatives, including budget administrators. Next we will engage an outside consultant to develop detailed analyses, business cases, and proposed implementation plans for targeted shared services opportunities.

Expansion of Spring/Summer Instruction

Update as of Fall 2010

Charge

The ESSI task force was charged with identifying two or three options for increasing the intensity of Spring-Summer instruction and developing comprehensive plans for how U-M might implement each option. The task force was asked to limit its scope to instruction in credit-bearing courses.

Status of Recommendation

- This task force's report is still being finalized. The task force expects to make its recommendations public soon.

Next Steps

There are many benefits to spring and summer education, but the economic model is complicated and requires further study. Further analysis of these issues will be undertaken both by the Provost's office and by the College of Literature, Science and the Arts.

Marketing U-M to Non-resident Undergraduate Applicants

Update as of Fall 2010

Charge

The Marketing Undergraduate Programs to Out-of-State Students task force was charged to advise U-M on ways to increase both the non-resident applicant pool as well as the number of non-residents who accept.

Recommendation

- Identify and establish relationships, including increased visits, with a set of out-of-state feeder schools.
- Develop a coherent marketing plan that differentiates among resident and non-resident audiences.
- Implement a process of rigorous experimentation and analysis to develop an optimal financial aid strategy for non-residents.

Next Steps

We have already developed a set of criteria for selecting new partner high schools, and using those criteria, have identified an expanded set. Along with that, we have increased the number of out-of-state high school visits made annually. We are in the process of developing enhanced marketing strategies for non-residents, and are studying alternative financial-aid strategies.

Non-traditional Education Programs at U-M

Update as of Fall 2010

Charge

The Non-traditional Educational Programs at U-M (NEPU) task force was charged with recommending programs that the University of Michigan might develop that deliver non-credit bearing education experiences to paying customers with positive return on investment for the University.

Recommendations

- Coordinate information about continuing education programs, both for internal efficiency and to facilitate external access.
- Create a shared Web portal for information about all U-M non-degree programs.
- Consider the creation of a shared service for coordinating tasks such as marketing, registration, and administration of continuing education programs on campus.
- Undertake a targeted review of venue space practices with the goal of increasing their rental potential.

Next Steps

In response to these recommendations, a new working group of directors of continuing education programs has been formed with the goal of creating opportunities for sharing information, expertise and resources while enhancing the potential for collaboration. The working group will be making recommendations about ways in which central coordinating mechanisms might be beneficial. A shared web portal will be developed for information about all U-M non-degree programs. Finally, the university also will undertake an operational review of current venue and unique space use practices and management.