AS-IS FINAL REPORT (CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT)
Integrated Support Services Project
June 2016

Introduction

The University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee is taking a coordinated and inclusive approach to identify how the administrative support services of Finance & Accounting, Human Resources, Procurement (i.e. a combination of processes related to the acquisition of goods or services, currently provided by the Accounts Payable and Purchasing departments), and Information Technology can be delivered with service excellence. UWM seeks to identify opportunities to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of service to the campus, with a focus on how an integrated services model, which incorporates shared services components, may provide the foundation for such excellence.

Universities across the country are developing and implementing a wide range of alternative service delivery models to address the same challenges faced by UWM today, including extreme budget pressure and the need to direct resources to core activities. Over the last 10 years, Universities have increasingly incorporated aspects of shared services for benefits such as: cost reduction through simplification and standardization; concentration of resources on core higher value activities; increased service quality to the Campus community; improved response to organizational changes; as well as facilitation of technology deployment.

The goal of the As-Is Assessment is to assess and understand the current processes, organization, and technological challenges within the four business functions to inform a design to provide high quality in functional delivery. The project framework Integrated Support Services was developed to enable a review that includes broad input from campus stakeholders and direct input and leadership from people with in-depth knowledge of the functions and service delivery details. This assessment provides a basis for the recommendation to further explore the case for shared services at UWM.

Project Approach (As-Is Assessment Phase)

To develop the As-Is Assessment Report, the project teams utilized the following strategies and activities.

Project development and initiation

Early in the project, the Functional Leadership Team made presentations to governance and leadership groups, providing the context and approach for the project. Many of the concepts

presented were well received. The Team was cautioned about restructuring support services without institutional input. This feedback helped define the needs for stakeholder input and data gathering through the As-Is Assessment phase. As such, the As-is phase was completed to assess and understand the current state and inform a subsequent design phase.

Leverage knowledge of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on Functional Teams

The ISS Functional Teams are made up of individuals from across campus with specific and varying expertise. The teams include staff and managers from central administrative offices, school/college department and division offices, and administrative department and division offices. The current state assessment and key findings were completed by each functional team based on the data gathered through their specific As-Is activities. The detailed As-Is Assessment Reports from each Functional Team are included in the appendices.

Utilize external knowledge and expertise

The functional teams researched service delivery initiatives at other universities, utilizing documentation and direct contact with other institutions to gather lessons learned and preferred approaches for the current state assessment and the development and implementation of alternative delivery models, including shared services. Through conference calls and other communications, the teams received insight and guidance from within higher education.

The project also utilized consulting expertise through an engagement with Huron Education, who provided assistance in the review of UWM's procurement and payables functions.

Identify and Engage Stakeholders

Multiple approaches were used to identify stakeholders and to gather information about current policies, procedures, and practices. Using surveys, interviews, discussion sessions, and informal meetings, input was sought from staff who currently provide services to academic and/or administrative units, as well as from faculty and staff who rely on these support services.

Identify, document, and evaluate key processes

Key processes within each function were identified and prioritized for in-depth review and process mapping. Utilizing the knowledge and expertise within the teams, as well as input and feedback from SMEs across campus, current state process maps were developed and analyzed. This provides documentation and insight into those processes, as well as indications of service delivery issues and gaps overall.

The specific steps taken to document and evaluate key processes varied across Functional Teams. Those details are provided in the Functional Team Reports in the appendices, along with a list of processes and the process documentation.

Focused data gathering

In addition to the stakeholder engagement referenced above, a variety of other data gathering activities were conducted throughout the As-Is Assessment phase. The Functional Teams also gave presentations to groups with particular interest in their functional areas.

Other data gathering included an inventory of IT hardware, mediated spaces and classroom technology; and purchasing and payables transaction volume, policies, organization charts, positions descriptions, and relevant technology.

Current State /Key Findings

During the As-Is Phase, the ISS Functional Teams identified the critical challenges and issues for service delivery in their respective functions. Through review and discussion of the Functional Team findings, the Core Team discovered that the key issues and challenges are consistent across all of the functions. Several themes emerged, which may be considered impacts of the key issues/challenges.

Those include:

1) processes take too long, often resulting in significant missed opportunities;

2) much time is spent searching for policy and procedure information that is needed to inform decision making and/or transactional processing;

3) much time is spent on back-and-forth communication about process steps and requirements and/or correction of errors;

4) individuals and units rely heavily on personal relationships with specific knowledgeable people to navigate policies and procedures and facilitate transactional processes; and

5) processes often do not achieve expected or desired outcomes.

Below is a summarized assessment of the challenges identified within three categories– **Process**, **Culture/People/Organization** and **Resources**.

Process

- Processes lack standardization and aren't focused on outcomes

- Interpretation of policies and related procedures are not consistent across departments and/or transactions (different day, different person, different requirements)

- Processes are predominantly manual – technology has not been leveraged for process automation

- A high volume of paper forms causes significant administrative burden and data inaccuracies

- Processes are not well documented

- Lack of transparency promotes misinformation, confusion, and inefficiency

- Providers and recipients don't always understand who is responsible and who has decision authority within a process

- Duplicate/competitive services exist between central and decentralized units

- Data is not consistently available to support processes and decision making

Culture / People / Organization

- A lack of accountability inhibits efficiency, effectiveness, and process improvement efforts

- Service delivery is highly decentralized and relies heavily on generalists

- There is a perception that UWM's aversion to risk creates unnecessary work/process burdens

- High value is placed on having staff within the unit to support these functions, advocate for unit needs, and facilitate processes with central offices

- There is a perception that central offices do not understand and support the business needs of the academic units

- Standards and practices for approval authority are inconsistent and irrational

- There is a general lack of understanding about the compliance/risk context for processes within these functions

- There is a lack of formal policy and procedure related to the majority of IT support functions and processes

- The lack of accountability and role clarity for staff who work within these functions inhibits understanding of the value of their work and their contributions towards UWM's mission.

Resources/Technology

- A disparity of resources at the unit level (people, technology and knowledge) results in inconsistent support levels and process outcomes

- Lack of technology makes performance measurement difficult

- Performance metrics are not available or not consistently utilized to assess performance and improvements

- Training is insufficient and this results in a knowledge gap that negatively effects efficiency and effectiveness of processes

- Shadow systems are used to support departmental business needs – significant time is spent on duplicate entry and reconciliation between systems

Recommendations

The project team recommends pursuing a review of alternative service delivery models, including components of shared services, to address the needs identified and establish service excellence in the business functions. Next steps will include the development of a business case that incorporates both stakeholder input and institutional needs and goals. The business case will inform a high level model and path forward, including a detailed implementation plan. The business case will outline costs, benefits, key assumptions and risk factors of implementing a new service delivery model, as well as a high level model design.

Appendices

Finance and Accounting

- Finance and Accounting As-Is Final Report
- Business Process List

Human Resources

- HR As-Is Final Report
- Business Process List
- Business Process Review Feedback
- HR ISS Project Committee Charge and Mission Statement

IT

- IT As-Is Final Report
- Desktop Support Organizational Charts
- ISSP Providers of Service Survey IT Section
- IT Asset Inventory
- IT Support Groups by Client
- IT Training Additional Information

Procurement

- Procurement As-Is Final Report
- As-is Assessment Report (Huron Consulting)
- Process Mapping