



# **ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN OPTIONS FOR SHARED AND CENTRALIZED SERVICES**

2015-2016 Luoma Leadership Academy, Minnesota State  
Colleges and Universities

*Our research found the administrative areas yielding the greatest efficiencies include Human Resources, Finance and Information Technology.*

- Action Learning Team #9

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# Organizational Design Options for Shared and Centralized Services

Action Learning Team #9

## Executive Summary

### Team Project

As regulatory requirements have grown, the demand for consistent practices has increased and budgets have tightened. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities want to find the most effective way to deliver administrative services across the system. Therefore, the charge given Team #9 was the following: Research administrative service delivery models used in other public higher education systems throughout the country and their funding mechanisms. Analyze the models used by other systems and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Recommend one or more option for MnSCU to consider implementing.

To address the charge, Team #9 conducted a literature review, interviewed higher education systems and reviewed MnSCU services. Examination of all data occurred to identify the most typical services to share or centralize as well as themes related to effective implementation. Promising practices and pitfalls to avoid were summarized for each theme.

Centralized and shared services for higher education systems add value in a number of ways as experienced by several colleges and universities discussed in this report. There are lessons to be learned from our own Minnesota experiences as well as those of others from around the country. Our recommendation is three-fold:

1. Convene a leadership group to target transactional areas such as human resources, finance and information technology and create a plan addressing the following:
  - a. Strategic Planning and Governance
  - b. Benchmarking and Metrics
  - c. Decision-making
2. Create a system-wide communication plan to ensure transparency
3. Implement action plans using promising practices
  - a. Review two recommended reports: Hanover Research and Education Advisory Board
  - b. Examine the Comprehensive Matrix
  - c. Consider examples of promising practices within report

### Team Learning

In addition to the action-learning project, Team #9 members grew individually and collectively. Some of the highlights of working together shared by members include:

- Recognizing that each person has different strengths and working with those is a benefit to the whole team

- Enjoying time to step away from regular, “task oriented” jobs to learn from each other and from the research
- Working in a group requires us to realize individuals are at different places
- Meeting face-to-face was better for productivity and relationships

## Problem

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities strives to create a transparent and robust organizational design that enables the system to provide leadership, governance and campus-facing services efficiently and effectively—while also respecting the uniqueness and autonomy of each of our colleges and universities.

Our colleges and universities enjoy considerable local autonomy to manage their administrative functions, while still obligated to maintain compliance with system policies and procedures and other state and federal requirements. They also vary in their capability and capacity to provide a full range of administrative services and meet administrative requirements.

Over the past decade regulatory requirements have grown, the demand for consistent practices across our system has increased and budgets have tightened. As a system, we continue to look for the most effective way to deliver administrative services across our system so that we can provide “the highest value/most affordable higher education option” for Minnesotans.

The challenge we face with our diverse system is how do we design an organizational structure that meets the needs of all our institutions, from our largest universities to our smallest colleges? How do we strike the balance between local autonomy and system wide consistency? How do we encourage collaboration, cooperation and economies of scale throughout the system?

We believe there is significant value in understanding how other systems throughout the country address these issues. Have they developed new or innovative service delivery models that we can learn from? If so, what are those models? How are they financed? What services are provided centrally, regionally or locally? What choice, if any, does a college or university within a system have in selecting the service delivery model that works best for them?

### Team Charge

1. Research administrative service delivery models used in other public higher education systems throughout the country and their funding mechanisms. Which administrative functions are provided centrally? Which are provided locally? Which are provided through another organizational structure (such as a cooperative or a regional model)? How are the services funded? Do campuses pay for specific services they “purchase” or are they funded through some other method?
2. Analyze the models used by other systems and identify their strengths and weaknesses.
3. Recommend one or more option for MnSCU to consider implementing.

## Executive Sponsor

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# Method

The method used to research administrative service delivery models used in other public higher education systems throughout the country including their funding mechanisms and their strengths and weaknesses involved several steps:

1. Define terms and determine questions
2. Review of MnSCU system services
3. Identification and review of literature related to the topic of shared and/or centralized services
4. Development of questions regarding higher education systems
5. Facilitation of follow-up interviews with higher education systems where information was not otherwise available through reports and websites
6. Examination of all data to establish themes, promising practices and pitfalls to avoid
7. Finalization of recommendation

Team #9 developed a work plan to guide our work and met monthly to implement it. We shared and co-created our work through our Microsoft OneDrive for Business folder. We set meeting agendas, shared facilitation and posted minutes. We reviewed progress with team advisors during the academic year to ensure our efforts were aligned with their charge.

The following provides an overview of the method used to gather information to address the team's charge.

## Definition of Terms and Development of Questions

One of the first things we needed to do was define our terms to ensure common understanding and develop a set of questions aligned with the charge to guide our literature review and interviews. Therefore, the following definitions for Shared Services and Centralized Services provided a guide for our work.

**Shared Services:** the provision of a service by one part of an organization or group where that service has been previously found in more than one part of the organization or group. Thus, the funding of the service is shared and the providing department effectively becomes an internal service provider. Examples found within MnSCU: ImageNow, Distance MN, H.R (time card unlocking),

**Centralized Services:** services provided by the MnSCU system office. Examples found within MnSCU: Risk Management/Insurance, I.T.: ISRS, DARS, D2L Brightspace, Staff/Faculty contracts, RightNow, student payroll.

Two sets of questions were used for our research. The first set of questions, context and background, identified the context of the higher education system and its background. The second set, services and outcomes, addressed the services, challenges, successes, etc. found in that system.

### *Context and Background:*

- Provide definitions for centralization, shared services, regionally offered, locally offered.
- Size of the system
- How the system is funded?
- Service delivery: how do you provide those services (centrally, regionally, shared, etc.)
- What was the rationale for the implementation of shared service centers?
- How is efficiency of the shared service measured?
- When tasks are moved from individual departments to a shared service center, is institutional knowledge recorded? If it is recorded, what techniques are used? Can they provide samples of captured knowledge?
- Were there attempts to consolidate differing departmental processes into a standard set of processes?
- If processes were consolidated, how were differences among departments resolved?
- Were there measures of service levels for the implementation- divided into planning and implementation?
- What changed as a result of the share service?
- Would you describe the implementation process as top-down or inclusive?
- What choice, if any, does a college of university within your system have in selecting the service delivery model that works best for them?

### *Services and Outcomes:*

- What services do central administrative offices provide for individual campuses?
- How do system administrators determine which services to centralize or share?
- To what extent do university systems centralize or decentralize administrative capabilities?
- What resources do university systems allocate to central administrative units?
- What was the rationale for the implementation of shared service centers?
- How is efficiency of the shared service measured?
- What did you find that worked well? Recommendations for implementation?
- What did you find that did not work well? Pitfalls?
- What choice, if any, does a college or university within your system have in selecting the service delivery model that works best for them?

The information gathered was then summarized into a Comprehensive Matrix (Appendix A). The Matrix includes information about 22 college and university systems. Specific details are provided about human resources, finance, information technology, procurement, student services, public relations, special higher education processes, campus personnel and shop services.

The next step was to identify MnSCU shared and centralized services and the context surrounding Minnesota's system.

# Review of MnSCU System Services

Team #9 received the following information from MnSCU sponsors:

1. Services provided by the MnSCU system office for universities and colleges to compare to other Systems of Higher Education
2. Responses to a survey sent to MnSCU by the SUNY system on Higher Education System Office - Services and Delivery Method
3. MnSCU Master Green Sheet - FY 15-FY 17 Final Omnibus bill, to better understand Set Asides and fund allocations.
4. Results from a survey conducted by Campus Service Cooperative polling college presidents. (Appendix B)

## Literature Review

Team members conducted a literature review, including over 20 documents. Files were created in chronological order for the literature reviews so the age of the article could be easily determined. Given the number of articles and resources reviewed, a one-page summary of each article was compiled and added to the project's OneDrive site. Review of the articles often lead to further questions, which were then addressed via follow up interviews or additional web searches. The information from this literature was used to identify emerging themes.

## Notable Research and Reports

Noted earlier, the team developed questions to guide our literature review and interviews. Two reports were particularly noteworthy and informative: Hanover Research (Appendix C) and Education Advisory Board (EAB) (Appendix D). The information contained in these reports is worth examining, because it is not reproduced in this report and is of central importance to the mission of this report. References to these and other reports are contained in the reference section at the end of this report.

The Hanover Research report looked at shared and centralized services from the following systems:

- University Systems of Georgia
- University of Michigan
- University of Missouri System
- University of North Carolina
- University of Oklahoma
- The State University of New York
- University of Texas System

The EAB report looked at shared and centralized services from the following systems:

- University of Arkansas System
- University of Maine System
- University of California System
- State University System of Florida
- University of Massachusetts System
- University of North Carolina System
- University of Wisconsin System

EAB provides research to Institutions of Higher Education on best practices and innovation in higher education. The EAB website was searched and a key report was found. The initial report found on the EAB website was an anonymized version that left out the names of the higher education systems referenced. Through a follow up call, the report's author was able to provide the team with a non-anonymized version that included both the name of the system requesting the report and the systems studied.

### Interviews with Institutions of Higher Education

Based upon research from our literature review, we conducted four follow-up interviews with institutions of higher education to seek further context gleaned from the initial data. Interviews were conducted with the following schools or systems:

- University of Arkansas System
- University of Maine System
- University of California System
- East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania

All interview notes are included in Appendix E.

### Examination of Data to Establish Themes, Promising Practices and Pitfalls to Avoid

In order to better understand the topic we would be researching for our action-learning project, an effort was made to first develop a literature review from which, once reviewed, the team would be able to develop a common knowledge and terminology pertaining to the subject matter.

Dozens of journal articles and research studies were investigated and eventually, this sizable collection was honed down to a core set of key references. From this initial set of reports, the Hanover Research report titled Consolidation and Shared Services in Higher Education was identified as a critical resource.

Additionally, citations, footnotes and references contained within these selected reports led the team members to other documents and reports produced by collegiate systems and institutions that would provide meaningful supporting evidence and context.

Key findings and themes emerged from the combined use of the Hanover and EAB reports, which were cross-referenced with the entire collection of reports, studies and articles to verify our initial conclusions. The project team then discussed and debated the key findings and themes to ensure their merit, as they would ultimately serve as the framework of our report.

Once information was gathered, through literature review and interviews, the information was consolidated and several important themes emerged as well as promising practices and pitfalls. This information is shared later within the text of the report, through examples and in the appendices.

# Results: Emerging Themes

Based on the literature review, interviews, and consolidation and examination of findings, we found that the administrative areas yielding the greatest efficiencies when shared or centralized include:

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Information Technology

Further research highlighted five themes related to successful implementations: Leadership, Strategic Planning and Governance, Benchmarking and Metrics, Decision-making, and Communication and Transparency.

## Leadership

Research shows leadership is the only factor consistently and positively correlated with effective change. Proper leadership is critical to successful change because it provides a framework necessary for success, helps overcome resistance to change, and is useful in communicating a clear vision of what success looks like.

In 2013, the University of Maine System performed an administrative review of Information Technology Services. During its review, the system described individual universities as autonomous, making their own recommendations and decisions regarding technology solution. They found that technology deployment and support were typically provided at a local level and the willingness to use shared services was generally the prerogative of the institution. As a result, viable shared or centralized services were instead replicated at the campus level, which prevented individual institutions from focusing on academic technologies.

The University of Maine system presented many recommendations in their report. Their recommendations were to transform existing methodologies into one with greater accountability, engagement and oversight by campus leadership. In the new model, campus-based IT leadership would be functionally responsible to the system CIO, but continue a formal and direct relationship to campus administration.

This approach would facilitate alignment through functional management rather than unchecked power, authority, and autonomy while still preserving campus relationships. This strategy would also refocus on optimizing efficiency and cost savings as well as place a greater focus on academic programs and activities.

This new approach would require the establishment of a true system CIO who would have the authority to lead all technology-related initiatives, to make commitments, decisions, and most importantly, to be accountable for meeting defined outcomes of service performance. To aid in the effectiveness of this process, a CIO cabinet would be established which would include a select group of IT leaders to monitor operations and provide advice based on data and research.

This model incorporates nearly all of the key characteristics of effective leadership cited in the Hanover Research Report.

## Promising Practices

According to our research, successful implementations of shared or centralized services exhibited many characteristics of effective leadership.

The Hanover Research report found the following:

- Strong leadership
- Clear goals
- Widespread support
- Collaboration
- Opportunities for stakeholders to provide input
- Effective communication
- Transparency

The EAB (2014) report found the following:

- Culture open to change (EAB, 2014)

## Pitfalls

According to the EAB (2014) report, a system's ability to control and mandate changes, was often difficult to maintain. In addition, the report also found that a culture of change, to effectively address centralization and consolidation, was vital to success. A change lacking these elements could lead to unsuccessful implementations of shared or centralized services.

It is also reasonable to assume that the lack of any characteristic found in successful implementations, such as those denoted in the Hanover Research report, can be viewed as potential pitfalls to avoid. Deficiencies in these areas can have a negative impact on shared or centralized services initiatives. Without a strong leadership framework, the potential for successful implementations is greatly diminished.

## Strategic Planning and Governance

The governing models from our research samples are as varied and diverse as the schools these systems contain. This is due in part to the government structures that vary state-by-state as well as how each system has decided to arrange itself. Strategic Planning is an institution's ability to create goals that align to the mission of the institution and then create strategies in order to assist in decision-making for the allocation of resources to act on various strategies to achieve the goals.

## Promising Practices

Depending on the need of the individual system as well as the needs of each campus within that system, the following promising practices had a positive influence on implementation of shared or centralized services.

- Several systems need a culture of change in order to effectively address the core concepts of centralization (EAB, 2013).
- The University of Michigan successfully established an organization structure that is responsible for effective *planning, management, coordination and implementation* for the shared/centralized service (Hanover Research, 2013).
- Successful systems analyze currently share/centralized services and assess the strengths, weaknesses and operations of said services (RASS DISC, 2011; Hanover Research, 2013).

- Shared services are implemented only *as appropriate* (RASS DISC, 2011; Hanover Research, 2013).
- Centralized governance structures are preferred to ad hoc arrangements for system oversight and accountability (RASS DISC, 2011; Hanover Research, 2013).

### Pitfalls

Like promising practices, there are also a number of examples of which actions should be avoided. Authority could be difficult to institute and maintain when moving to a shared or centralized services model, particularly if the consensus of the culture is that the change is not necessary. A solution to force a cultural change often comes in the form of an elected/government-based driver of the change (either in the form of executive directives or legislative mandates). However, these top-down decisions often turn into unfunded mandates, which do not provide support to individual campus to implement the changes/mandates. This spiral begins when the institutions or systems starting the journey of shared or centralized services do not examine the balance of cost savings and service quality and do not identify the thresholds of acquiescence of the change.

### Benchmarking and Metrics

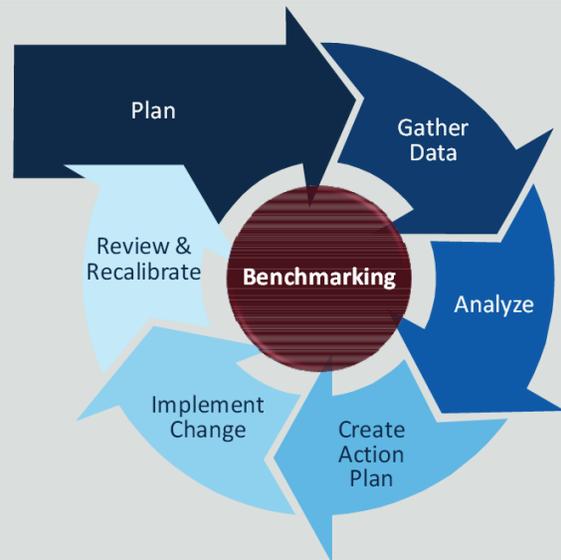
Benchmarking is the process of comparing cost, cycle-time, productivity, or quality of a specific process/method to another that is widely considered an industry standard or best practice. Benchmarking provides a snapshot of performance measurement at a point in time, and needs to be re-measured on an ongoing basis. Figure 1 illustrates the six phases of the benchmarking process.

**Figure 1 — The Benchmarking Lifecycle**

Benchmarking is not a finite process. It is a continuous, evolving cycle with six distinct phases:

- 1) planning and setting scope and goals
- 2) gathering the relevant data and information
- 3) assessing and analyzing the data
- 4) creating an action plan based on the analysis and desired changes
- 5) executing and implementing the action plan
- 6) reviewing results and recalibrating metrics based on expected vs. actual results

The process does not end after reviewing and recalibrating, but returns to the planning phase for the next iteration.



(www.werc.org)

There are many reasons to benchmark: to determine which services to improve, continually improve processes, increase quality, motivate culture change, gain efficiencies and cost savings, and to be the very best.

The use of benchmarking is a way to isolate weaknesses and strengths and make connections between best practices and performances through research and analysis of quantitative, factual data. It also is an

internal learning and sharing tool that continually improves processes by motivating culture change based on the idea that the institution can be one of the best in the nation. Adopting these practices can secure a competitive direction.

In order to achieve the greatest benefits, metrics need to be standardized to ensure comparability. Metrics provide an organization with an understanding of its operational performance relative to external benchmarks (such as the industry average and top performers). It also allows organizations to assess its own internal progress over time.

### Promising Practices

Planning, benchmarking, and carefully selecting processes and services that will have the greatest benefit and yield positive results should be focused on. Results should always provide some cost savings, create efficiencies, or improve services. Benchmarking processes against like processes, even when it includes the private sector, is good practice. The private, for profit sector, depends on efficiencies and effectiveness to ensure their bottom line and remain vital. They have also been benchmarking much longer than the public sector.

Our research found benchmarking could help in many ways:

- Achieve cost savings (Hanover, 2013)
- Determine consolidated services/shared delivery models (Hanover, 2013)
- Determine the types of activities to further monitor/benchmark (Texas A&M, 2011)
- Determine effectiveness/performance of departments (Texas A&M, 2011)
- Determine cost of providing quality services (Texas A&M, 2011)
- Gain buy-in and momentum from staff by initially choosing inefficient processes to benchmark and showing quick results ([www.iSixSigma.com](http://www.iSixSigma.com))
- Prioritize process vulnerabilities in greatest need for documentation, re-engineering, and automation (UBER-Making the Case for Shared Services, EAB)
- Show the cost and quality decrements of the current model, as well as a timeline for anticipated ROI. (UBER-Making the Case for Shared Services, EAB)

### Pitfalls

Benchmarking is ideal but it can be challenging. For example, a lack of metrics on funding allocation and performance make it difficult to benchmark. In addition, comparisons to other institutions can be challenging when metrics are not the same and cannot be compared. In education, some practices are difficult to measure or have not been measured so there is a lack of data. Several Universities, colleges, and systems are toiling with benchmarking, for example:

- Like many universities, Yale has issues with obtaining accurate and comparable data (StonyBrook, 2012).
- Institutions are struggling to find external institutions willing to share (Texas A & M June 15, 2009).
- While it is easy to compare metrics such as graduation rates, faculty salaries, overall budgets, and student aid across institutions, more specific metrics about the efficiency of certain administrative or spending practices are not widely available (Inside Higher Ed- Where Universities Can Be Cut, 2011).

- There is no common understanding of how much each institution spends for each dollar it raises, no statistics about staffing ratios, and no available information on what other universities spend in financial transactions (Inside Higher Ed- Where Universities Can Be Cut, 2011).
- Less than 40 percent of business officers at public and private institutions said their college or university was very effective at using data to inform decision-making (Inside Higher Ed- Where Universities Can Be Cut, 2011).
- System offices receive their funding from state legislatures and maintain few metrics to determine their own budgets or staffing levels (EAB-Central Administrative Functions of University System Offices, 2014).
- Metrics to determine system office funding and budget are few and may be difficult to benchmark across systems given the disparate nature of system functions and missions nationwide (EAB-Central Administrative Functions of University System Offices, 2014).
- External benchmarks suggest that university business processes take longer, cost more, and have higher error rates than in outside sectors. Even internal benchmarks demonstrate wide variation across single institutions or within state systems, belying the fact that, at the very least, each unit should be able to meet its own campus's best internal performance standard (EAB-Making the Case for Shared Services, 2009).

## Decision-making

Decision-making is closely intertwined with the other key themes identified in our research and plays an integral part in the success of implementing shared or centralized services. With the aim of achieving greater cost savings and efficiency of resources, it is imperative to determine which processes can best achieve these goals. Good decisions will advance the goals of the system and bad ones will not. Decision-making is the process of choosing between two or more possible solutions to a problem. How decisions are made can be based upon several factors: intuition, reason, or some combination of the two.

Based upon our research, decisions made by other systems were based more heavily upon benchmarking and were thus, more closely associated with a reasoned process.

## Promising Practices

The Hanover Research report highlighted the importance of establishing a central governing committee, tasked with “overseeing consolidated and shared services initiatives and to establish accountability metrics”. The tasks of this committee were identified as promising practices. They include:

- Collection and analysis of benchmarking data
- Identification of the greatest risks and opportunity for cost savings and service improvements
- Identification of projects that have the greatest benefit to the university or system but do not negatively impact the core mission of those institution or sacrifice service quality
- Establishment of accountability metrics
- Establishment of clear expectations for leadership and responsibilities across business units

By collecting, analyzing, and evaluating benchmarking data, committees can make informed decisions based upon facts and not assumptions or gut feelings. This is imperative to the successful implementation of shared or centralized services.

An added benefit of a central governing committee is that thresholds or tipping points can be identified for acquiescence to a centralized service model (EAB, 2014). The identification of these tipping points creates a clear point at which a decision can be made, thus increasing the likelihood of a successful outcome.

### Pitfalls

Choices need to be maximized for cost savings and improvements, minimized for risks, and aligned with the larger mission of the university or system. Making decisions based upon intuition or feelings runs a strong risk of overlooking, missing, or jeopardizing these goals.

## Communication and Transparency

According to an *EDUCAUSE Review* article (2011), successful service partnerships hinge upon “frequent communications, clear goals, and transparency.” These twin mechanisms of communication and transparency play an important role in any change initiative.

The role of communication seeks to: inform, clarify, provide a source of information for decision-making, set levels of expectations, and help control the change process. Communication is also a two-way street, in that it provides a mechanism to inform stakeholders, but also receive feedback and information from them. It should not only deliver information, but also receive it.

Transparency's role is to provide visibility into the change initiative. The act of sharing or centralizing services has an impact on its stakeholders. Promoting transparency into the change builds stakeholder confidence, fosters their ownership in the change, and ultimately increases the likelihood of success.

### Promising Practices

Our research identified several promising practices of communication and transparency. In the Hanover Research report, researchers noted that successful implementations utilized these mechanisms:

- Provided an opportunity for stakeholders to provide input.
- Established a process for individuals to provide immediate and ongoing feedback to the implementation team.
- Development and definition of a list of current shared services within a system and a list of possible new opportunities for shared or centralized services. (See Appendix F for a list of MnSCU shared or centralized services)

By being able to provide and communicate input into the change process, stakeholders were able to retain a sense of control over the change. Thus helping to mitigate any "loss of control" that might have been felt and reduce any resistance to the change.

### Pitfalls

The pitfalls inherent with this theme are demonstrated in what happens when communication and transparency are not present. It is commonly accepted that filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock is a master of suspense. The technique he employed so effectively was that of leaving key parts of the story up to the user's imagination. This lack of information created an opportunity for the viewer to fill in the gaps with whatever they wanted, thus heightening the suspense with their own fears. This insight can be applied to the theme of communication and transparency as well. A lack of communication and transparency

will leave stakeholders to their own imagination and they will fill any gaps with their own thoughts, defining those missing pieces with emotions, fear, and supposition.

# Discussion: Recommendation

In this section, a recommendation is provided following a brief discussion of the overall findings.

## Overall Findings

The five themes that emerged from our review of other systems, literature review, and interviews, are integrated in their implementation. They build upon each other and when effectively used can have significant impact. Given that the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system “strives to create a transparent and robust organizational design that enables the system to provide leadership, governance and campus-facing services efficiently and effectively—while also respecting the uniqueness and autonomy of each of our colleges and universities” the research suggests the following:

Shared or centralized services in the transactional areas of human resources, finance, and information technology provides the greatest impact. When moving a system from one model to a different model, the following five intentional actions guide and support the process.

1. Leadership
2. Strategic Planning and Governance
3. Benchmarking and Metrics
4. Decision-making
5. Communication and Transparency

**Leadership** is consistently and positively correlated with effective change. Proper leadership is critical to success because it helps overcome resistance to change, and is necessary in communicating a clear vision for success. Without a strong leadership framework, the potential for effective implementations is greatly diminished.

Leaders have many responsibilities and one significant role is to organize and guide a process for **strategic planning and governance**. Strategic planning is an organization’s process of defining its direction, aligning its goals, and allocating resources to pursue the strategy. Strategic planning requires an understanding of an organization’s governance and decision-making processes.

Leaders facilitate a process to uncover proper **metrics and** establish a plan for **benchmarking** used in strategic planning. In short, benchmarking business functions and processes provides a creditable reference point and helps analyze the areas needing improvement. Leaders can look to public and private institutions that have already started to benchmark to understand how they have measured their data and use it to compare against their own.

“If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it.”  
– Lord Kelvin

The benchmarking process can be used for improving performance by continuously identifying, understanding, and adapting outstanding practices and processes found inside and outside the organization. Strategically, benchmarking provides a baseline today for growth tomorrow. It shows the value associated with any improvements, efficiencies and cost reductions gained, which can translate to increased profit, and more importantly, a cost savings to students and taxpayers.

Most importantly, benchmarking with proper metrics leads to better **decision-making**. Being strategic in decision-making was identified as an important theme because it guides leaders and change agents to make a reasoned decision at the right time for the right reasons. Decision-making steps set within the organization's governance structure is necessary for intentional change.

Finally, it is important – even imperative - in successful implementation of shared or centralized services to clearly **communicate** goals, opportunities for participation and to be **transparent** about planned actions.

### Recommendation for Consideration

Shared and centralized services for higher education systems add value in a number of ways as experienced by several colleges and universities discussed in this report. There are lessons to be learned from our own Minnesota experiences as well as those of others from around the country. Our recommendation is three-fold:

- 1 Convene a leadership group to target transactional areas such as human resources, finance and information technology and create a plan addressing the following:
  - a. Strategic Planning and Governance
  - b. Benchmarking and Metrics
  - c. Decision-making
- 2 Create a system-wide communication plan to ensure transparency
- 3 Implement action plans using promising practices
  - a. Review two recommended reports: Hanover Research and Education Advisory Board (Appendices C, D)
  - b. Examine the Comprehensive Matrix as a means to begin the process of benchmarking (Appendix A)
  - c. Consider examples of promising practices within report

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### **Additional Resource Sites**

Webcast: [http://www.werc.org/assets/1/workflow\\_staging/AssetManager/3761.PDF](http://www.werc.org/assets/1/workflow_staging/AssetManager/3761.PDF)

# Appendix A

The two attached matrixes are a compilation of information gathered from various places:

- Literature reviews
- Interviews
- Books
- World Wide Web

[Campus Size Comparison](#) (xls)

[Shared Service Comparison](#) (xls)

We have compared 22 different colleges, universities, and systems. Both matrixes are sorted by Public University Systems, State University Systems, Public Research Universities, Private Ivy League Colleges, and Other (tabbed along the bottom of the spreadsheet).

The first matrix compares institution size. We broke it into four categories: Campus Information, Employee Information, Enrollment Information, and Fiscal Information. This provides the reader with a sense of the size of the system and how well it relates to MnSCU.

The second matrix compares shared services among the institutions. We looked at Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology, Procurement, Student Services, Public Relations/Marketing/Communications, and Special Higher Education Process. We added a “Notes” column on the Shared Service Comparison spreadsheet for important information on perceptions, current and future developments, and other information related to shared services we felt was important.

# Appendix B

On August 4, 2015, Dawn Master met with Vice Chancellor Phil Davis of the Campus Service Cooperative (CSC). Chancellor Davis provided her with information on the purpose of the CSC and the services they provide. A copy of the Scoring Matrix, sent to all campus presidents, in which they were asked to rank Shared Service Projects for the 2015 calendar year, was also provided. The scoring matrix and results of the constituent feedback are available below.

Contact was made again on May 9, 2016 with the CSC by email and phone. Michael Nobel-Olson, Chief Procurement Officer, provided our team with information on all of the current shared services among MnSCU campuses that he was aware of. Since many of them are done locally, they may not be well known/advertised.

## Constituent Feedback

### Shared Services Projects for Calendar Year 2015

1. Purchasing (already in place)
2. Payroll Hub Expansion
3. Financial Aid Processing
4. Employee Expense Reports
5. Retirement Processing
6. Accounts Receivable/Accounts Payable
7. Talent Sharing
  - a. Investigation Services
  - b. Institutional Effectiveness/Reporting
  - c. HLC/Accreditation Consulting
  - d. Grant Writing
  - e. Interim and Temporary Leadership/Staffing
  - f. Project Managers/Specialists

## Scoring Matrix

<p align="center"><b>Shared Services Projects for Calendar Year 2015</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Scoring Matrix</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>A Potential Savings</b></p> <p>1 – small savings potential 5 – large savings potential</p>	<p align="center"><b>B Risk Mitigation</b></p> <p>1 – low impact on risk mitigation 5 – high impact on risk mitigation</p>	<p align="center"><b>C Ease of Adoption</b></p> <p>1 – lots of anticipated barriers 5 – few anticipated barriers</p>	<p align="center"><b>A+B+C= Total Score</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Rank</b></p>
<p><b>Financial Aid Processing</b> Reduce processing time on financial aid applications by establishing shared service hub or hubs. This will improve the speed of processing applications and allow campus financial aid staff to focus on face-to-face student advising.</p>					
<p><b>Payroll Hub Expansion</b> The two payroll hubs serve eleven MnSCU institutions. Expand participation in the hubs and create new hubs as needed. This will ensure continuity of payroll services, utilization of standard business practices, and mitigation of the risks associated with turnover of payroll staff.</p>					
<p><b>Employee Expense Reporting</b> Established shared service processing of employee expense reports. This will create standard business practices and increase efficiency of campus business office staff.</p>					
<p><b>Investigation Services</b> Establish a shared service program that conducts investigations, including harassment and discrimination investigations. Campuses can buy and sell services based on the availability of talent. Ensures timeliness and quality of investigations and compliance with statutes, policies, and procedures.</p>					

<p><b>Institutional Research Services</b> Establish a shared institutional research service. Campuses can buy services, evaluate effectiveness of their practices, identify best practices and use reporting tools that interface with ISRS. Enables multi-campus solutions.</p>					
<p><b>Talent Pool Registry</b> Establish a registry of campus specialists and administrators who could be available to assist sister campuses with urgent or important projects. Assignments could be ad hoc, temporary, or long-term. This would make efficient use of internal talent, promote campus collaboration and staff development.</p>					
<p><b>Admission Processing</b> Establish a one-stop admissions center with staff expertise to advise applicants on all system campuses and programs; receives and processes admission applications, monitors customer relations management systems. This will increase access to accurate program an admissions information for prospective students; admission to multiple MnSCU campuses with a single application.</p>					
<p><b>Retirement Services</b> Establish a shared service to administer employee retirement, including calculation of pension benefits, advising employees, and tracking and maintaining retiree data. This ensures accuracy of information, timely advising and efficient processing of retirement applications.</p>					
<p><b>Graduate Follow-up and Employee Satisfaction Surveys</b> Engage in system wide purchasing and administration of surveys to</p>					

<p>determine graduate employment and employee satisfaction. This will reduce the cost of the surveys, increase efficiency of administration and the ability to compare results across institutions.</p>					
<p><b>Grant Development and Grant Writing Assistance</b>  Staff basic grant development services, including help in identifying grants and coordination of system level grants when appropriate. Individual campuses may purchase grant writing assistance. These services will be most valuable to campuses that do not have enough grant activity to warrant a full-time employee but who would benefit from staff with system-knowledgeable expertise.</p>					

# Appendix C

Hanover Research - <http://www.hanoverresearch.com/>

Hanover Research, Academy Administrative Practices (August, 2013). *Consolidation and shared services in higher education*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from [www.hanoverresearch.com](http://www.hanoverresearch.com).

# Appendix D

Education Advisory Board (EAB) - <https://www.eab.com/>

Education Advisory Board: Academic Affairs Forum (2013). *Considerations for university system organization: Mission identification and prioritizations at university systems*. Retrieved from eab.com.

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# Appendix E

## Case Studies (Interview Summaries)

- University of California System
- University of Arkansas System
- University of Maine System
- East Stroudsburg University, Pennsylvania

## Interview with University of California System

Interviewer: Brad Doss

Interviewee: Zoanne Nelson, Chief of Staff for System CFO

Date: 4/25/2016

Size and notes about the System:

- (10) 4-year state universities
  - Medical Centers and teaching hospitals
  - \$ 25 billion system wide budget
  - System office handles requests to the State for appropriation every 2 years and distributes appropriation to the campuses.
  - Revenue sources are: 12% Tuition, 11% appropriation, 29% Medical Centers, 15% government contracts, Auxiliary Services 21%, Private Support 7%, Other 5%
  - Universities use different registration, financial aid, accounting, etc., systems.
  - In a bargaining union environment, that System Office negotiates for all unions.
  - In process of starting up a new payroll system for all of the system employees that will be managed by System Office. Previously had separate payroll systems at each university that were very expensive to run.
1. What services do central administrative offices provide for individual campuses?
    - Human Resources and payroll (just starting), Retirement services, Labor Agreements, Budget, Procurement contracts
  2. How do system administrators determine which services to centralize or share?
    - Working the past 4 years on centralizing human resources and payroll and have created a Central office for this that currently has 80 employees and when fully operational will have 400 employees. As these staff retire or leave positions at Universities, they are not replaced.
    - Procurement contracts at System office have estimated savings for system as a whole of \$ 200 Million a year. Goal is to reach \$ 500 Million a year.
  3. To what extent do university systems centralize or decentralize administrative capabilities?
    - Would consider the system as a whole to be decentralized as Universities have separate registration, financial aid, IT and accounting systems. Currently do not have a strong system level Facility Officer as those functions are each handled at the University level.
  4. What resources do university systems allocate to central administrative units?
    - Chargeback to campuses for procurement services as 80% of procurement employees work at the system office.
  5. What was the rationale for the implementation of shared service centers?
    - Cost savings. Newest University UC-Merced uses UCLA's financial reporting system. Several Universities work together on their own for shared services.
  6. How is efficiency of the shared service measured?
    - Universities create their own metrics with little involvement from system office.

7. What did you find that worked well? Recommendations for implementation?
  - Shared service agreements that Universities developed on their own.
  
8. What did you find that did not work well? Pitfalls?
  - Wish they had a common financial system and financial reporting system. Difficult to manage for annual financial system audit.
  - Each university has to fund its own debt service to pay back for construction projects.
  - State has not funded new construction projects for the system as a whole in several years.
  
9. What choice, if any, does a college or university within your system have in selecting the service delivery model that works best for them?
  - High Local autonomy to choose systems used at each university.

## Interview with University of Arkansas System

Interviewer: Brad Doss

Interviewee: Barbara Goswick, Vice Chancellor of Finance

Date: 4/15/2016

Size and notes about the System:

- (5) 2 year campuses
  - (4) 4-year state universities
  - (1) Flagship state university
  - (1) Teaching hospital
  - \$ 2.7 Billion annual budget of which 75% is dedicated to flagship and teaching hospital.
  - Legislature directly sends appropriations to individual colleges and universities and system office. 90% enrollment driven and 10% performance based. If performance measures are not achieved institutions have funds taken away from them. Appropriation funds are requested each year by campuses and system office. System budget is \$ 7.9 Million.
  - Main revenue sources are appropriation and tuition and fees.
  - Colleges and universities choose their own registration, financial aid, accounting systems so none of the institutions have the same systems. Are exploring getting a common system though. Hope to have a common chart of accounts in the next couple of years.
  - No employee unions so bargaining is done by each institution.
1. What services do central administrative offices provide for individual campuses?
    - Legal services- located both on campuses, system office and hospital
    - Internal Audit-located both on campuses and system office
    - Facility Management- Campuses submit building and other capital improvements to Board of Trustees as they complete their building improvement requests. System office staff issue bonds for approved projects. Several bond issues are made a year and the college or university needs to cover 100% of the debt service for project. This service is provided by Finance staff at system office as there are no facility management staff.
    - Health Insurance-System is self- funded and system office bids out health plans for campuses.
  2. How do system administrators determine which services to centralize or share?
    - Past practice of services offered. Do not really analyze this.
  3. To what extent do university systems centralize or decentralize administrative capabilities?
    - System office would be considered decentralized and campuses have high local authority to choose how they function. No IR, IT, HR, Budget, Financial Reporting or Facility Management staff at system office level to provide guidance.
  4. What resources do university systems allocate to central administrative units?
    - Only resource is system office finance staff.
    - Charge back only for Legal fees, Internal audit fees and health insurance premiums. 75% to campus and 25% to employees.

5. What was the rationale for the implementation of shared service centers?
  - No shared services are offered that campuses can buy into.
6. How is efficiency of the shared service measured?
  - No measurements
7. What did you find that worked well? Recommendations for implementation?
  - Feel their self- funded health insurance system works well.
8. What did you find that did not work well? Pitfalls?
  - Would like to have a common system that each institution would use for registration, financial aid and accounting.
9. What choice, if any, does a college or university within your system have in selecting the service delivery model that works best for them?
  - Colleges and universities have high local autonomy in choosing the majority of the service delivery models that work best for them.

## Interview with University of Maine System

Interviewer: Brad Doss

Interviewee: Becky Wyke, Vice Chancellor of Finance

Date: 4/20/2016

Size and notes about the System:

- (7) 4-year state universities
  - (8) Outreach Centers
  - \$ 500 million system wide budget.
  - System office handles requests to the State for state appropriation every 2 years and distributes appropriation to the campuses.
  - Revenue sources are: 41% Tuition, 35% appropriation, 9% auxiliary, 12% Residential Halls, 3% Other.
  - Universities all use the same registration, financial aid, accounting, etc., systems.
  - In a bargaining union environment that System office negotiates for all unions.
  - Went through a major systems restructuring that was implemented in FY 16.
1. What services do central administrative offices provide for individual campuses?
    - Human Resources, IT, IR, Facilities Management, Procurement, Financial Management, Administrative Services
  2. How do system administrators determine which services to centralize or share?
    - Went through a major systems restructuring that included buy in from Board of Trustees, some of which were active members on task forces that reviewed systems to centralize. Result was that all IT staff are system office employees, majority of Procurement staff are system office employees, Campus CFO, Campus HR Directors all report to a System Office employee and are considered System Office employees.
    - Main reason for restructuring were budget issues the System was going through and the State of Maine and to reduce costs.
  3. To what extent do university systems centralize or decentralize administrative capabilities?
    - Maine System is highly centralized after the restructuring took place.
  4. What resources do university systems allocate to central administrative units?
    - Each university has a line item expense budget for central administrative services that they are charged for by the system office. System office records this as negative expense to equal what is charged each university in total.
    - A large amount of resources are provided as each division head at System Office has direct reporting authority over Campus division head.
  5. What was the rationale for the implementation of shared service centers?
    - There are no shared services that universities can buy into. They are required to pay for centralized services.
  6. How is efficiency of the shared service measured?

- Centralized services had targeted savings from reduction in staffing and costs in Human Resources, IT, Procurement, that were compared to actual results. Actual savings were very close to targets.
  - Facilities Management efficiency is a work in progress as benefit from new process will come when funds are received from the State for Capital improvements. System does not receive any dedicated funding from the State for capital improvements. New structure will require universities to submit Master Campus facilities plans to better document the need for capital improvements.
7. What did you find that worked well? Recommendations for implementation?
- Restructuring worked better when a Board of Trustee member was on a taskforce for a process. For example, for Procurement a Trustee member was on the taskforce and process was easier to implement because of this.
  - Getting University President buy in worked better than expected which was surprising seeing as the no longer had direct supervision for either Finance or Human Resources.
  - Vice Chancellor of Finance was a former Finance Commissioner for State of Maine and had lead a similar restructuring for the State previously.
8. What did you find that did not work well? Pitfalls?
- Very controversial due to the major restructuring that took place.
  - Buy in was more difficult when a Board of Trustee member was not active on a particular area that was being restructured.
  - Ultimately everyone saw it was in the best interest of the system to make these changes.
9. What choice, if any, does a college or university within your system have in selecting the service delivery model that works best for them?
- No choice as they need to use the service delivery model offered by the System.

## Interview of East Stroudsburg University (ESU), Pennsylvania

Interviewer: Erica Johnson

Interviewee: Teresa Fritsche, HR Director

Date: 3/22/2016

### System Makeup:

- This system does not operate as a system. Each school has the ability to operate independently. The hierarchy is such:
  1. Board of Governors
  2. Chancellor
  3. Trustees/Campus President
- The system is ONLY four-year schools. The two-years are under their own unifying group.
- The System is responsible for covering the Labor Relations employees of the system (union contracts, retirement, and payroll and plan administration).

### History & Changes:

The system came into existence in 1983. They are 25% funded by the State, making each campus budget highly tuition driven/dependent. Each school can operate as its own entity, but is held to following various policies laid out by the Board of Governors.

In 2014, the system saw a massive change in compliance. The Board of Governors pushed through a new background check policy, which does not exclude anyone. Therefore, any person collecting a paycheck is required to have an annual background check. This is costing the system in excess of \$4 million/year. From the HR perspective, it has moved their office from employee-support based to a compliance-based focus.

Campus are still individually responsible for their own day-to-day operations. There is no unified student information system (SIS), nor unified purchasing or administrative systems.

The ESU Finance/Purchasing division is currently attempting to build a regional consortium to help with purchasing/unified purchasing contracts and bargaining power. A secondary function of a regional consortium is to also look at reorganizing payroll functions. Currently every school runs their own independent payroll office. There are two third-party programs (S.A.P. and Cornerstone) which are utilized to set-up & manage payroll accounting across the system. A regional consortium would focus on There are some system-wide policies but each campus may adopt their own methods to uphold said common policies. i.e. "Each campus must develop their own method of background checks in compliance with the law." Experiencing many unfunded mandates.

No single SIS system. ESU uses Banner but the nearest system school (1 hour away) uses PeopleSoft. There had been a push to develop a single-student system.

There was a choice of three programs, however the systems office then had to develop yet another system to communicate with those three systems.

Just beginning a single finance/HR system, but it is being developed at ESU and they are looking for partners in this venture. The system entered into a partnership with a company called SAP however only one campus implemented working with SAP for HR/Finance needs. All campuses are paying for this contract, regardless of their use of the product.

Examples of issues: Each school conducts their own searches & recruitment differently.

Student Impact:

We had no real conversation surrounding the impact on students, save that a single SIS system would/could make transfer easier for students and could allow more flexibility in planning shared programs or in creating curriculum pathways, etc.

Recommendations:

- Unify the system with a single SIS,
- Board of Governors should provide for concrete direction for action when creating mandates (i.e. when a product is purchased for the entire system to access, do not give campuses the option to participate).
- Think more like a true, united system instead of fragmented units of the same governing body.

# Appendix F

## MnSCU System Office Services – July 2015

<p>Academic &amp; Student Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Affairs provides leadership in the areas of             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy development and implementation in areas related to instruction and academia;</li> <li>• help identify, advance, and support academic and student support technology initiatives and innovations</li> <li>• academic planning and programming, transfer and articulation</li> <li>• coordinates resources for faculty professional development</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Student Affairs provides             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy development and implementation leadership in areas related to student life outside of the classroom, including but not limited to health services, veteran’s services, student government/clubs/activities and student conduct;</li> <li>• consultation and guidance to ensure compliance with numerous federal and state statutes and regulations, including but not limited to financial aid regulations, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Campus Security Act, and Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act;</li> <li>• System level representation at the Legislature on issues related to students (recent examples include bills on mandatory immunization for Hepatitis C, the state Data Practices Act, hazing policies, and issues related to international students);</li> <li>• Managing college and university transition issues.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Workforce Development and Customized Training provides colleges and universities with a number of coordinating resource development services designed to make the system’s efforts and partnerships with business and industry and the incumbent workforce more effective;</li> <li>• Research, data analysis and reporting</li> <li>• Coordinating Commission and Councils provides venues where academic and student affairs issues of mutual interest can be addressed by and communicated with constituencies within MnSCU, encouraging faculty, students and professional staff to engage in solution-oriented conversations.</li> </ul>
<p>Advancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates the public relations/marketing and communications efforts for the system and assists with campus level needs.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates, develops and executes the system’s government relations efforts on state and national levels.</li> <li>• Supports development, alumni relations and fundraising efforts.</li> </ul>
Campus Service Cooperative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sourcing and procurement services which leverage the system’s buying power through enterprise-wide contracts for goods and services.</li> <li>• Systems/shared services, which creates a forum for innovative sharing of programs and resources to improve quality, reduce costs and mitigate risk.</li> </ul>
Chancellor’s Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides academic and operational leadership to the system</li> <li>• Carries out Board policies and directives</li> <li>• Recommends capital and operating budgets as well as long range planning and strategic initiatives to the Board</li> </ul>
Diversity & Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consults, advises, trains and provides policy development in the areas of non-discrimination investigations, diversity, multiculturalism and affirmative action.</li> <li>• Engages in strategic and limited outreach to business, community and civic and educational organizations.</li> <li>• Conducts investigations under Board of Trustees Policy 1B.1 Nondiscrimination in education and employment opportunity.</li> <li>• Designs, develops and provides training to all investigators and decision makers on equal opportunity and diversity policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Team leader for the Office of Civil Rights reviews.</li> <li>• Develops affirmative action plans for the System Office.</li> <li>• Monitors and leads the effort to resolve protected class complaints from all system institutions.</li> <li>• Responsible for the ongoing development and execution of equity and diversity evaluation strategies in support of MnSCU's strategic plan.</li> <li>• Provides leadership and assistance to colleges and universities with diversity initiatives and programs related to underrepresented students and employees.</li> <li>• Conducts research and analysis on materials and best practices concerning diversity, equity, cultural competence, and social justice.</li> </ul>
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance provides support, resources, guidance and leadership to professionals in the finance and operations areas of our system.</li> <li>• Facilities encompasses a large range of diverse and complex services relating to the buildings, land and overall environment of the system’s 54 campuses, with services focused on acquiring, disposing, financing, constructing, planning and managing campus land and improvements.</li> <li>• Risk management, primarily related to property, auto, liability coverage and purchased policies issues, is centrally</li> </ul>

	<p>coordinated in partnership with the campuses, and is governed by Board policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Reporting coordinates and manages the annual system audit program, provides campus assistance in the areas of accounting and financial management, coordinates with IT the business related technology needs for the system, and provides policy and procedure leadership in areas related to the system’s financial operations.</li> <li>• Financial Planning and Analysis assists colleges, universities and the system office with developing annual budget plans, offers guidance on implementing policies and procedures, allocates the system’s appropriated funds, monitors enrollment and other projections.</li> <li>• Tax services are available to the colleges, universities and the system office to ensure compliance with federal and state tax laws and regulations.</li> <li>• Public Safety and Compliance assists each college and university and the system office to create, implement, and monitor appropriate plans, programs, procedures, and training consistent with applicable legal and professional standards, regulations and available resources that promote safety and security of individuals and system property. These measures include, but are not limited to, compliance with standards for security for individuals and system property, environmental health, occupational safety, and emergency management.</li> </ul>
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides support, resources, guidance and leadership to campus HR professionals, particularly in the areas of policy development and implementation, staffing and compensation guidance including credentialing.</li> <li>• Labor Relations represents the system in administering a comprehensive employee relations program, including but not limited to policy development and implementation, negotiation and implementation of collective bargaining agreements, managing grievance arbitration procedures, training for managers and supervisors, and coordinating meet and confer sessions with bargaining units.</li> <li>• Coordinates and manages the HR information systems, including reporting requirements and data services;</li> <li>• Coordinates and manages the system’s defined contributions retirement plan.</li> <li>• Coordinates and manages the system’s workers’ compensation plan.</li> <li>• Talent Management provides leadership, guidance and support to the colleges and universities in the areas of workforce planning, recruiting, training and development, performance management, leadership development and succession planning.</li> </ul>

<p>Information Technology Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide technological support for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities’ learning enterprise as well as system and campus services, maintaining a balance between a reliable common infrastructure and the flexibility to tailor to local needs.</li> <li>• Oversees and supports local and system technology infrastructure services including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ information security,</li> <li>○ enterprise software and applications,</li> <li>○ reporting and data services,</li> <li>○ network services,</li> <li>○ web design and support,</li> <li>○ identity and access management,</li> <li>○ instructional management systems,</li> <li>○ enterprise business applications and tools, and</li> <li>○ Technology tools that enable and enhance collaboration.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Office of General Counsel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advises the Board, system leadership and colleges and universities on matters of law and legal services available.</li> <li>• Provides training and information on legal topics and the impacts to colleges and universities. Such topics may include but are not limited to employment law, contract, real estate, intellectual property, immigration, data practices, copyright and litigation.</li> <li>• Liaisons with the MN Attorneys General.</li> </ul>
<p>Office of Internal Auditing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides independent and objective assurance and consulting services to colleges and universities.</li> <li>• Conducts system-wide studies as assigned by the Board and external audits as required by third parties or the Board.</li> <li>• Conducts fraud inquiries and investigations on behalf of individual colleges and universities or the System.</li> <li>• Provides training and advice to promote accurate implementation of laws, regulations, policies, procedures and standards that impact individual colleges, universities or the System.</li> </ul>