

Fiscal Sustainability Task Force: Administrative Efficiencies

The Administrative Efficiencies Working Group received broad recommendations in approximately twenty areas that were identified by the FSTF Phase 1 and the President's Executive Committee. The working group assessed these and read the original survey responses to Phase 1 for additional context. Cognizant of our charge to identify cost savings, revenue generation, and/or greater efficiencies, the working group identified six areas of study. This process included identification of common themes in the areas identified in Phase 1 and was informed by reading the surveys. The six study areas were:

- Personnel and reorganization of departments and offices
- Organizational structure with an emphasis on student-facing departments and offices
- External consultants, services, and systems
- Allocation of academic resources to campus offices and initiatives
- Consolidation of department and office operations
- Commencement efficiencies

After consideration, the working group eliminated the physical consolidation of department and office operations. While the idea may produce efficiencies, the group determined that the scope of the inquiry involved multiple constituencies on campus that were not involved in Phase 2, including academic departments, staff, and maintenance departments. This area warrants future consideration.

Focusing on five study areas, the group requested data and met weekly then biweekly to assess the reports. Data was received quickly; the subcommittee reviewed information as it became available. The working group for Administrative Efficiencies concentrated its analysis to three areas: Commencement Revisioning, Operational Savings, and Personnel Efficiencies.

In the area of revisioning commencement, the group considered and explored combining winter and graduate commencements with the traditional May commencement outdoors. It also discussed the option of holding a single commencement day in May at an indoor venue. We discussed the DCU Center in Worcester and Game On in Fitchburg, recognizing there may be other options. The committee found potential cost savings and is committed to researching this in more detail as one of the three areas of focus.

The subcommittee explored potential operational savings and inquired into consultant expenditures as related to software and professional development. In addition, the subcommittee examined expenses for catering, printing, branded expenditures for non-admission departments, and out-of-state travel expenses. The committee has committed to researching operational savings further as another area of focus.

Potential personnel efficiencies are being considered by the subcommittee as the third area of focus. We are researching non-instructional processes to better leverage technology and automation in order to enhance the student experience and operations. Efforts to assess academic resources relative to enrollments are ongoing. The assessment of non-academic units

is an area that is currently in development. The subcommittee plans to explore benchmarks and measures for operational staff relative to current enrollment and student expectations. The subcommittee will look at models utilized by other universities to inspire our own recommendations to enhance delivery and outcomes for students.

In its work, the Administrative Efficiencies subcommittee was aided by many departments and individuals on campus who complied with requests for information readily and efficiently, allowing work to proceed swiftly and with maximum transparency. For this, the entire Fitchburg State University community should be commended. We look forward to our work during the fall term: recommending savings, efficiencies, and opportunities to enhance teaching and learning.