

a technician team leader and cross-trained co-workers, the technicians on each team will have multiple avenues for training and easy access to advanced knowledge which will increase service for the units.

Continuous coverage for the units

When staffing at the unit level is only one person, it often leaves the unit struggling to covering duties for leave and other absences. The size of the teams allows for units to receive support in the absence (planned, unplanned, or transitional due to turnover) of any individual team member including the team leader for whom coverage would be available from one of the advanced level technicians.

Advancement Opportunities – staff retention

One of the complications which many units have had regarding staffing entry level positions is that often there is no room for advancement within the unit itself. After employees are with the unit 6-18 months they often accept other positions within the University. While this might be a good way to staff the more advanced positions at the University, it is difficult for the units who seem to be in a continual cycle of recruiting and training.

Each of the four technician positions would have a pre-determined and pre-approved progression by reaching targets which are tied to increases in steps and grades. Specific skills within each specialty would allow for step increases while cross training between specialties would allow for grade increases. New employees would be hired into the progression at a competitive wage based on their experience. It would allow for less experienced applicants with potential to have a way to join the University staff and receive training and support while more advanced applicants would fill a different roll and have a justification for their compensation. There would be advancement opportunities for employees which would increase retention in turn providing the University with a more stable and experienced workforce.

Caution

There are a few areas which will need to be carefully considered in order for the new structure to be effective. Responsibility and authority must be carefully matched. The proposed structure will not be successful if the individual positions do not have a proper correlation between the responsibility and authority of their position. For the Executive Officers, if a position is supposed to be responsible for budget adherence, then that position needs to have the associated authority to veto expenditures. For Fiscal officers, if a position is advisory in regard to budget, then the responsibility for adherence to budget limits rests with the individual who has signature authority for the expenses. For technicians, it should be clear who has which authority so that various tasks (position descriptions, job requisitions, job forms, journal vouchers, labor redistributions, requisitions, call numbers, travel authorization) are initiated only when appropriately requested and routed to the proper individuals for approval prior to final execution.

Addressing concerns

It is likely the expertise of the units being served will assist in optimizing the plan by listening to their feedback. It will be important to listen and address the concerns of staff during both the initial planning stage and during implementation. There will be concerns from the departments about knowing who to contact (fiscal officer for budget/planning, team manager for tasks), priority of their individual work (effective date driven, other than late submissions which will not be allowed to hinder timely requests),

availability of sufficient staff time to accomplish all the necessary task (assurance that staff estimates are realistic and will be adjusted if necessary), and loss of authority (expenditure responsibility and authority remain with the units, but the staff training and supervision will be with the business office team).

Transition planning

This is not something which can just be implemented immediately. It will be very important to plan the transition carefully to retain as many individuals as possible during the transition such that their institutional knowledge is not lost. It will be difficult at first to provide the full documentation needed for training as well as placing employees at the proper grade and step until training resources and a full advancement schedule are developed.

Note: While the transition to the organizational structure is possible with the current systems, the maximum efficiency of this new structure will likely take 12-24 months to realize while new streamlined processes are developed. Additional efficiencies may be possible if underlying statewide processes are improved (e.g., more electronic submission methods become available for transactions or a more efficient Enterprise Management System is implemented in its entirety).

