Leadership Task Force: Process Improvement Subcommittee

Executive Summary

I. The Charge:
A. Examine the culture of process improvement on campus.
B. Identify areas or methods for improvement.

II. Approach to Task:
A. Met bi-weekly from fall 2005 through the February 2006 Campus Conversation.
B. Identified processes that had been reviewed within the last three to five years and what could be gained from these completed process reviews.
C. Evaluated existing communication systems for information distribution and collection, including the applicability and currency of such information.
D. Discussed at length mechanisms to embed an environment of continuous review in the campus culture.
E. Compared numerous process review techniques and how they could be implemented on campus to review processes from departmental functions to campus-wide processes.
F. Sought and gained feedback from the Campus Conversation.

IV. Findings & Recommendations:
A. The subcommittee believes the success and ability to generate a culture of continuous process review at UNI is dependent on the following key elements.
   1. Championed at our highest level – the President and his Cabinet.
   2. Current documentation and easy access is mandatory, as is a mechanism for regular feedback and dissemination of information.
   3. An expectation that students, faculty, and staff take advantage of available tools for the betterment of their position/duties or activities on campus.
C. The Process Improvement Subcommittee realizes the creation of such a system is a long-term commitment and requires continual effort.
D. UNI needs to be intentional in the creation of a continual process review mindset and culture.
E. Recommendations
   1. Use Diagnostic Approach to Determine What Needs to be Improved
a. Encourage all departments to generate and solicit a tool for feedback of processes. Possible mechanisms to gather data could include:
   i. Survey to “customers”.
   ii. Focus groups.
   iii. One-on-one discussions.
   iv. Targeted meetings with established groups.

b. Establish expectation for all departments to engage in diagnostic activity.

c. Groups evaluating procedures should include representation from all practical impacted groups campus-wide.

d. Training in process improvement should be provided minimally at the dean/director/department head (DDDHH) and vice president levels. Training methods could include:
   i. Formalized training in process management (Lean, Kaizen, Six Sigma).
   ii. Practical application as part of other training programs.

e. Perform assessment of process changes, i.e., measurement of success.

2. Evaluate Existing Committees and Their Structure, Particularly Those with Broad Impact
a. Establish ongoing need for existing committees and determine that representation is appropriate and broad based.

b. Encourage “term” appointments with rotating membership to continually infuse new ideas and provide opportunity for participation to a larger number.

3. Improve Dissemination of Information, Particularly Items Significant to Performing Our Duties
a. Share information widely with focus on impacted and relevant groups.

b. Consider the creation of a single University calendar with all University events.

c. Determine mechanism to continually solicit feedback on suggestions and provide output, to include rationale for decisions made and not made. (Refer to recommendation for on-going campus conversation from Leadership Task Force - UNI Culture: Embedding a Leadership Model at UNI.)

4. Embrace the Idea of Continuous Process Review at All Levels of the University
a. Part of evaluation system/process.
b. Consider as part of candidate review, record of self-initiation and career improvement.
c. Leaders have responsibility for asking the questions of staff, i.e., better, easier, faster.
d. Employees have the mandate to suggest ideas.
e. Publicize “success stories” and promote benefits of process review.
f. Share resources across departments/divisions.

Members of Leadership Subcommittee: Process Improvement

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