

Report: Ad Hoc Committee on Cost Savings and Efficiency
April 2017

Committee Members: Susan Twombly, Mohamed El-Hodiri, David Day, Anna Paradis, John Rebein, and Hanna Hayden

Committee Charge (Recommended Activities):

- i.) Construct a survey mechanism to poll faculty, staff, students and alumni for cost-saving ideas. (Make such a mechanism anonymous, but with an option to self-identify, come and describe opportunity to committee.)
- ii.) Collect surveys
- iii.) Examine budgets, commission studies as necessary
- iv.) Identify how the need for cost savings (i.e. budget cuts) has been addressed in the last few years
- v.) Decide on priorities for the future
- vi.) Enlist expert help from within KU for cost savings and impact analysis
- vii.) Make recommendations publicly to the Administration.

The Committee met several time during the fall and spring semesters. The committee determined that given time and expertise, it would focus on collecting input from the university community. To that end, the committee met with Diane Goddard, Vice-provost for Finance and Administration; met with the Staff Senate and with two Student Senate committees; and conducted a campus-wide survey. 310s responses were received to the campus-wide survey.

We first present our recommendations based on the data collected followed by a summary of the findings from the survey and focus groups. A copy of the survey results is attached. Some of the recommendation speak more specifically to cost savings and efficiencies while others speak more to streamlining work.

Recommendations

Based on our data collection and discussions, the committee recommends the following:

1. Develop a proactive plan to make the campus more sustainable and reduce energy consumption and associated costs. **Responsible offices: Office of the Provost, Facilities Operations, Sustainability Office**
 - a. Gradually replace light fixtures with new, energy efficient fixtures; water faucets with timed faucets; leaky windows with more energy efficient windows; single exterior doors with double doors where possible.
 - b. Provide incentives to reduce energy use.
 - c. Focus on promoting sustainable practices among mega users, such as Student Housing.
 - d. Promote and reward sustainable practices, including better use of the Green Loan Fund <https://sustain.ku.edu/greenloanfund>.
 - e. Create mechanism to conduct energy assessments for units on request. Produce data on energy use by unit.
 - f. Consider the costs and benefits of making schools responsible for energy costs and savings by sharing savings with units.

- g. Use efficient vehicles (e.g., the vehicle that reads license plates for Parking).
 - h. Continue to promote digital communication and reduce paper usage. This could be facilitated by simpler, more intuitive, document sharing options.
2. Examine the number of administrative positions at KU to determine if we are “right sized” in comparison with peers and whether administrative positions are in the right places. By administrative positions, we mean staff positions as well as upper level administrative positions.
Responsible units: Provost, Human Resources, Staff Senate
 3. Streamline most frequently used processes, such as faculty travel, to reduce staff time and effort. Responsible units: **Office of the Provost, SSC’s, KUCR**
 4. Improve communication.
 - a. Develop better online systems for entering and processing work orders and for notifying individuals in the workflow queue that something is ready for review.
 - b. Improve messaging from top down about the university’s core mission and values and the role of each person in carrying out the mission.
 5. Morale. Engage in university-wide low-cost activities to boost faculty and staff morale with the goal of higher commitment, increased work productivity, and reduced cost human and financial associated with turnover. **Responsible: Office of the Provost, HR, University Senate, Faculty, Senate, Staff Senate**
 - a. Activities could include things like providing occasional meal tickets to Mrs. E’s for lunch or unsold tickets to Lied Center or athletic events. A website exchange could be developed to allow ticket holders to give away unwanted tickets to other KU faculty and staff. **Governance** might be a good location for such an exchange.
 - b. Retain the staff tuition assistance program and consider expansion.
 - c. Offer flexible work time and work-from-home flexibility for staff as appropriate.
 - d. Institute a regularly administered climate survey (shorter than the Rankin survey) on a regular three-year basis. See Ohio State University’s faculty and staff climate survey for an example.
 6. Conduct a university-wide satisfaction survey about the shared services centers. This should be a neutral, university-wide survey administered by **OIRP and the Provost’s Office**.
 7. Evaluate the effectiveness of student support programs that are not subject to academic program review to ensure that they are yielding expected outcomes important to the university’s mission. **Responsible: Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Vice Provost for Student Affairs**
 8. Examine the efficacy of current university-wide purchasing contracts that reportedly yield better prices. Some existing contracts discourage, if not prohibit, unit ability to purchase at the lowest price. **Responsible: Vice Provost for Administration and Finance, KU IT**
 9. More carefully vet and evaluate large enterprise software purchases for capability and usability. Responsible: **Vice Provost for Finance and Administration, KU IT**
 10. Implement a single university-wide scholarship application form to centralize and ease the process of applying for scholarships. **Responsible: Office of Enrollment Management, Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, Graduate Studies.**
 11. Simplify the job application and interview process for positions in the various dining halls. **Responsible: Office of Student Housing, Kansas Memorial Unions.**
 12. Generate a list of best practices for saving money to distribute to units across campus. Make this list widely available to units across campus. **Responsible: Vice Provost for Administration and Finance.**

13. Consider making the relationship between the university and Kansas Athletics more transparent to help faculty, staff, and students better understand how athletics are financed at KU.
Responsible: Chancellor, Director of Athletics.

Results of Data Collection Efforts

Results are reported by general theme.

Sustainability/Energy Savings

By far the most suggestions for saving money fell into this category. Suggestions include

- Fix major air leaks around doors in Haworth and at Edwards, install weather stripping
- Install double doors to prevent heat loss
- Regulate heat and cooling better in all buildings
- Turn down room temperatures by one degree in winter and up by one degree in summer
- Install more solar and wind energy sources
- Hand dryers in restrooms to replace paper
- Timed faucets in restrooms
- Install motion sensors to control lights in buildings and classrooms
- Install more efficient blinds on windows
- Replace light bulbs with LED lights
- Reduce food waste in dining halls
- Turn off fumehoods in Haworth when not in use
- Fix outdated HVAC systems
- Do not leave university vehicles running when making deliveries, etc.
- Get rid of steam whistle

Suggestions for implementation:

- Collaborate with solar panel companies to install more solar
- Invest in Revolving Green Loan Fund, a Harvard University program to encourage sustainability
- Move utility budgets to the school, unit level and allow them to keep savings.
- Sticky note signs for bathroom mirrors discouraging water waste

Bus Service

- There were a number of questions about the number of buses and number of bus stops, hours of service and a recommendation that buses should only make right turns

Administrative Costs

Some of the recommendations in this area were about positions and others were about administrative processes

- Cut the number of scholarship hall director positions
- Improve Shared Service Centers, one center at a time

- Replace health insurance as a benefit and replace with a stipend for health insurance
- Reduce salaries of top 20% earners among staff and faculty
- Reduce number of assistant, associate deans, provosts AND reduce salaries
- Reduce number of employees whose work duplicates that of shared service centers
- Reduce paper; use digital sources
- Reduce number of central administrative executive positions and their salaries
- Judiciously deconstruct SSC's
- Review all student support programs for effectiveness (e.g., Common Book). If not effective, reallocate funding.

Services

- Better tracking systems to hold staff accountable for work
- IT audits of all units to determine opportunities for cost savings
- Return SSC positions to departments
- More library book returns on campus
- Reduce frills like pancake night in the residence halls

Processes

- Eliminate paper course evaluations
- Get rid of 3G hiring process for GTA hiring
- When new addresses are added to Enroll and Pay, notice should be given to financial staff
- Reduce administrative work associated with travel reimbursement
- Standard computer devices
- Dropbox at KUCR for deposit of checks to save time or allow SSCs to have deposit capture to reduce staff time
- Simplify enrollment process
- Implement one university-wide scholarship application*
- Simplify job application and interview process for student employees in the dining halls
- Have each unit review its processes for potential efficiencies leading to time/cost savings**
- Reduce costs for recruitment (dinners, etc.) **
- Develop error or quality assurance processes to oversee communication/workflow systems. Example given: Many systems across campus have electronic routing (work orders, finance, student services) that rely on people being notified in order to move a process forward. When those notifications have errors there is no way from someone in the chain to know the process has stalled. Develop stronger processes which reduce notification reliance and build staff confidence. **

Purchasing

- Review contracts. Some are higher than one can pay from other sources, e.g. Dell, Amazon
- Agreements with airlines to get reduced prices
- Evaluate enterprise software purchases more carefully for capability and use. Stop buying or renewing licenses for large software systems that don't work
- Revise policy on alcohol purchases

Costs

- Reduce tuition
- Reform student fees
- Make it easier to enroll in 1 credit hour

Drinking fountains

- Install water bottle drinking fountains in Green Hall

Staff

- Allow staff to work from home on certain days and with supervisor approval
- Allow staff to sell back sick leave
- Engage in activities to boost morale, e.g, provide meal tickets to Mrs. E's or tickets to Lied Center events. Boosting morale leads to reduced turnover and costs associated with replacing and training staff and contributes to increased commitment.**

Revenue

- *Sell alcohol at game events*

Athletics

- *Eliminate football*
- *Cut salary of coaches*
- *Cut budget to Confucius Institute*

Faculty and Staff Morale

One of the most significant recommendations came from the Staff Senate and concerns improving morale leading to greater work commitment, lower turnover, less time and money spent on recruitment and training.

*Unique ideas from Student Senate committees

**Unique ideas Staff Senate meeting

Appendices

Notes from Student and Staff Senate meetings and results of survey.