



UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA

Office of the Vice President for Management and Budget

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**Process Simplification  
2008 – 2009 Annual Report**

July 15, 2009

## *Overview*

Process Simplification (PS), the University's formal improvement effort, seeks to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of processes that affect faculty, staff, and students and to build institutional capacity for continuous improvement efforts. In 2008-09, PS pursued this mission through the work of cross-functional projects, education and outreach opportunities for employees, and solicitation of improvement ideas from employees.

Team-based projects addressed improvements to processes in the areas of university mapping, conference organization and planning, moving and relocation of new hires, and long distance telephone service. PS coordinated and delivered various sessions for faculty and staff to learn about improvement tools and approaches, including a University-wide conference, "Advancing Improvement and Innovation," and a series of short training sessions. PS made several presentations to University groups, such as the Provost-Employee Council and the ITC Project Management Community, to raise awareness about the work of PS and to solicit employees' input for potential improvement projects. Further, a formal program to solicit employee suggestions was launched, and the submissions led to the initiation of four team-based projects.

The PS Advisory Committee met on a monthly basis and provided assistance with the identification of projects, selection of team members, and oversight of project progress. The PS Steering Committee met in January 2009 to review current projects. PS is grateful for the commitment and support of both the Steering and Advisory Committees. For a list of committee members and PS staff, see *Appendix A: Process Simplification Committees and Staff Members*.

The following report provides a brief summary of each initiative in 2008-09. For more information, full project reports are available on the PS web site:

<http://www.virginia.edu/processsimplification/>

While the historical PS staff roles of Director and Coordinator remain vacant\*, the Vice President and Assistant Vice President for Management and Budget remain committed to continuing a formal improvement effort for the betterment of the institution. At this time, PS work will be executed with current staff and will leverage the vast expertise within the University community. In 2009-10, PS will continue its efforts to execute team-based project improvement work in partnership with key stakeholders and to foster an improvement-conscious culture.

\*Nann Keenan has joined the U.Va. Medical Center's Department of Quality and Performance Improvement. Lea Moore has left the University to pursue personal interests.

## **TEAM-BASED INITIATIVES**

### **University Mapping Initiative**

The production of University maps is a decentralized function, often resulting in duplication of effort and varying map styles across Grounds. This team was established in January 2009 to increase the efficiency and accuracy in the production of University maps. External benchmarking of peer institutional practices and surveys of users served as the basis for recommendations for improvement. Final recommendations include consolidation of surface mapping functions, centralization of base mapping resources, creation of user self-service for mapping, increased educational efforts about available mapping resources, and regularly scheduled aerial flyovers. The departments of Facilities Management and Space & Real Estate Management are currently reviewing the recommendations and collaborating on implementation. Adoption of some or all of these improvements will reduce duplication of map production, promote greater consistency and accuracy, increase standardization, realize cost savings, and increase the level of service for the University community.

#### Team Members:

Scott Martin, Team Lead, Facilities Management  
Garth Anderson, Facilities Management  
Nicholas Bartley, Space and Real Estate Management  
Todd Campbell, Medical Center  
Julia Monteith, Office of the Architect  
Bill Palmer, Office of the Architect

### **Moving and Relocation Process For New Hires**

While multiple units at the University make every effort to assist new employees in their relocation to Charlottesville, the lack of a standardized process often results in unnecessary complexity. This team sought to streamline the moving and relocation process for the University community and to create a simplified and pleasant experience for newly-hired employees. A survey was used to solicit employee feedback regarding personal experience with the University's current moving and relocation process, while best practices were ascertained through benchmarking of peer institutions. Recommendations for improvement include offering new hires greater flexibility in the selection of relocation services from contract vendors, providing departments the option of offering sign-on bonuses to new employees as part of their relocation packages, establishing a group of departmental subject matter experts who can assist new hires, and creating a centralized moving and relocation web site to serve as a repository of related contact information, forms, policies and procedures, and frequently asked questions.

#### Team Members:

Charles Kidd, Team Lead, Procurement Services  
Stephanie Bingler, School of Medicine  
Nancy Knight, UHR Payroll  
Beth Reinhard, UHR Payroll  
Brett Schnell, Department of Athletics  
Raj Seneviratne, Office of the Executive VP and Provost

## **Conference Organization and Planning**

Because multiple entities across Grounds provide conference and/or event planning services, conference organizers struggle to manage numerous contact points to ensure a successful event. Furthermore, concern among some University faculty suggests the current infrastructure is not robust enough to support conference planning efforts during the academic year. Believing that shared and centralized services would produce a more efficient and effective process, this team aimed to streamline conference planning services for the University community and to enhance institutional capacity to host large conferences on Grounds, especially during the academic year. Information gathering efforts included convening two focus groups consisting of U.Va. faculty and staff to understand individual experiences with conference planning, interviewing internal conference planning groups at the University to understand current processes, and benchmarking other universities to determine best practices. While the final report will not be issued until the end of summer 2009, potential recommendations include creating a web site dedicated to conference planning and designating an office that would maintain a University-wide conference calendar, establish a dynamic inventory of available meeting space, and serve as a liaison between conference organizers and vendors.

### **Team Members:**

Nargis Cross, Team Lead, Office of the President  
Brian Cullaty, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost  
Kim Dixon, School of Continuing and Professional Studies  
Rachel Dudzik, Darden School of Business  
Laura Pence, UVA Foundation  
Matthew Harris, Boar's Head  
Mary Kay Ohaneson, Housing Division  
Danny Steeper, Newcomb Hall  
Zach Wheat, Strategic Communications

## **Long Distance Telephone Service Review**

Currently, University personnel must have a *Forced Authorization Code* (FAC) to make long distance telephone calls. University employees have reported unsatisfactory experience with long distance access as a result of lengthy processing times for FAC requests; illegible, hand-written access code cards; and delayed receipt of monthly and annual telephone bills. The team is examining ways to streamline and automate the access code request process by: reviewing existing workflows, interviewing various staff/faculty around Grounds to determine process deficiencies, exploring methods for electronic requests, and assessing opportunities for a secured online code generation system. Conversations with the University Auditor have clarified requirements and degrees of flexibility in processing long distance access codes. As a result, it has been determined that an online, automated process would meet audit requirements, and ITC will seek to implement an online system when resources are available.

### **Team Members:**

Rick Oliver, Team Lead, ITC Communication Services  
April Brown, ITC Communication Services  
Roberta Mason, ITC Communication Services  
Mandy Wyant, Office of University Career Services  
David Thacker, Audit Department

## **OTHER INITIATIVES**

### **Review of the University Telephone Directory**

A heightened awareness of constricted resources, reports of production overruns, declines in usage, and a sensitivity to environmental sustainability led to the examination of the current University Telephone Directory production practices and whether or not more efficient processes for the dissemination of University contact information could be developed. Analysis of the current production process revealed routine ordering in excess of actual need, resulting in additional storage and disposal costs. External benchmarking of peer institutions demonstrated that several universities have ceased production of a print directory in favor of an online format. Internal usage surveys showed that, on the whole, faculty, staff, and students rarely turn to the University Telephone Directory for their contact information needs. PS has shared three options for improvement with ITC and the VPCIO: 1) Eliminate production overruns; 2) Print departmental listings only; or 3) Cease print production altogether and enhance existing electronic directory features.

### **Training Administration**

The PS Advisory Committee (PSAC) has raised concerns about the lack of central information and coordination of the various training sessions offered around Grounds. With an increasing volume of training demands placed upon faculty and staff, the concerns about coordination, quality, and necessity have intensified. While acknowledging the complexities and challenges of administering training at a decentralized institution, there is consensus that this topic warrants further investigation and that there are ways to achieve improved effectiveness and efficiency through enhanced collaboration of the various training delivery entities.

PSAC has engaged in a dialogue with the UHR about this issue, and PS staff are working with the Director of Employee Development in UHR to develop an assessment plan. The PSAC has recommended that a work group be established with appropriate expertise to review University-wide training and professional development resources, services, and offerings in order to:

- Assess the effectiveness of training in terms of fulfilling the larger University's needs (e.g. accessibility of services, scope of offerings, content of offerings, quality of training, transferability/application in the workplace, etc.)
- Ensure that programs, courses, and services being offered by multiple providers are complementary, not duplicative, and therefore, maximize University resources.
- Suggest recommendations to enhance continuous communication and collaboration among training and professional development provider across Grounds.

## **OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

### **Benchmarking for Improvement Sessions**

The University's annual planning activities, Critical and Secondary Functions, in part, calls for the identification of best-in-class or best practices at other institutions. For many functions, exemplary practices may not be readily known or evident. To assist the reporting units of the Vice President for Management and Budget, PS designed and delivered three sessions entitled "Benchmarking for Improvement." Participants learned a systematic benchmarking approach: plan-analyze-act. This approach guides one through the selection of critical processes for benchmarking, collection of internal

baseline data, the identification of exceptional performers, gap analysis of data to reveal areas in which performance lags behind peers, how to plan for the adoption and adaption of best practices, and implementation of improvements.

### **Advancing Improvement and Innovation Conference**

On October 15, 2008, PS hosted an inaugural, one-day conference to promote institutional improvement and innovation at the University by exploring resources for initiating and managing projects and facilitating change, showcasing successful improvement initiatives, and providing a forum for University faculty and staff to connect with colleagues with similar interests. Special addresses were provided by Colette Sheehy, Vice President for Management and Budget, and Leonard Sandridge, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. The keynote speaker, Louise Sandmeyer, Executive Director of Planning and Institutional Assessment at Penn State University discussed, “Creating a Culture for Continuous Improvement: Lessons Learned”. A modified version of Ms. Sandmeyer’s speech was published by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) as a chapter in Barbara J. Sherlock’s edited volume, *Integrating: Planning, Assessment, and Improvement in Higher Education*.

The conference was attended by 49 University faculty and staff from a broad array of academic and administrative areas, including the medical school, nursing school, engineering school, provost office, information technology, procurement services, facilities management, development, and student affairs. Participants attended breakout sessions on the topics of: process mapping and benchmarking; change management; team dynamics; performance measurement; project management; and management methodologies for improvement. In addition to the PS staff, presenters were leaders from a variety U.Va. departments. The conference closed with an “Ask the Experts” panel discussion, providing an opportunity for participants to ask subject matter experts about process improvement methods, practices, and tools. To access conference presentations please visit: <http://www.virginia.edu/processsimplification/conference.html>

### **Process Simplification Project Challenge**

While PS has always invited the University community to share ideas for improvement, this formal, on-line process standardizes submissions and provides greater visibility to the solicitation process. The Process Improvement Project Challenge was launched in October 2008 as a formal means for any employee to identify areas in need of change and promote improvement across Grounds. The overall desired outcomes are to implement streamlined services, products, or processes; maximize resources; and improve communication around the University.

Each potential project was evaluated based on the clarity of the issue; alignment with institutional priorities and/or department mission; degree of benefit; level of required financial resources (if applicable); and potential impact to University departments, students, faculty and staff. PS staff conducted a first-round review of fourteen projects. PS presented five semi-finalists to the PS Advisory Committee (PSAC) for final selection. Four projects, University Mapping, Conference Organization and Planning, Moving and Relocation Process, and Long Distance Telephone Services, were selected by PSAC for PS to establish a cross-functional improvement team to study each issue and make recommendations for improvement. Descriptions of the selected projects are listed in the previous section entitled, “Team-Based Initiatives.”

## **Presentations and Resources**

In an effort to raise awareness about PS, PS staff conducted presentations to various employee groups. These included: the Provost-Employee Council, the ITC Project Management Community, the Fiscal Administrators Group, and the University Development Procurement Solutions Group. These presentations provided information on PS mission and services, educational opportunities for employees to gain improvement skills and knowledge for application in their everyday work, and the project challenge.

The resources section of the PS web site was enhanced in order to provide employees ready access to useful change and improvement tools, articles, and templates. Materials address a wide array of topics including improvement methodologies, project initiation and management, tools for analysis, team development, facilitation, and change management. The redesign of the resource section will be ongoing.

## **Spring Education Series**

PS provided an alternative to its popular, "Introduction to Process Improvement" class by offering short training sessions as a means of enabling employees to implement improvement efforts in their own work and to prepare future potential PS project team members.

In the spring of 2009, PS coordinated and delivered various sessions on topics related to innovation and process improvement. A total of thirty-two employees from across Grounds participated at no cost.

- A webinar was offered in April featuring David Horth, Senior Enterprise Associate at the Center for Creative Leadership. The session described creative leadership competencies and provided participants with innovative tools for inspiring organizational renewal.
- Two workshops were offered in May. The first session, *Planning an Improvement Project*, taught participants the basics of improvement methodology, including how to clearly articulate a project's scope and goals, establish an effective project team, and collect data to support the redesign of processes.
- The second session, *Survey Design – Getting the Results You Need*, provided information regarding how to collect information from a sample of respondents in order to generalize to an entire population of stakeholders. It is anticipated that participants will choose more appropriate population samples, construct more user-friendly survey items, employ proven tactics for effective survey administration, and appropriately analyze survey data to improve unit processes as a result of this workshop.

## **SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

### **Showcasing Successful U.Va. Improvements**

PS has assisted units across Grounds draft submissions for various awards that recognize improvement efforts. To date, proposals have been prepared for the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement (NCCI) - Leveraging Excellence Award, the Southern Association of College and University Business Officers (SACUBO) - Best Practice Award, and the National Association of College and University Business Officers - Innovations Award. Although these submissions were not selected to receive an award, it has been rewarding to document successes and simultaneously increase the visibility of the University's commitment to continuous improvement among higher education institutions.

## **Sharing Expertise and Learning from Others**

PS staff participated in a conference call conducted by the Advisory Board, a best practice research firm serving a membership of more than 2,500 of the nation's leading hospitals and academic medical centers, colleges and universities. The firm produces more than 10,000 customized research reports for members each year. U.Va. was chosen to participate in the study as an exemplar of improvement and quality initiatives in higher education.

From time to time PS is called upon to share its expertise with other institutions. For example in the past year, the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia sought PS' guidance for establishing and sustaining a formal institutional improvement initiative. More recently, PS has been contacted by Notre Dame as it has embarked on an operational excellence project and James Madison University.

The University is an institutional member of the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education (NCCI), and PS is an active member. This consortium advances administrative and academic effectiveness in higher education by identifying, promoting, supporting and sharing organizational practices among member institutions. NCCI addresses a range of topics related to continuous improvement in higher education, including organizational leadership, assessment, process improvement, strategic planning, organizational development, academic and administrative integration, and change management.

## *Appendix A: Process Simplification Committees and Staff Members*

### **Steering Committee**

Colette Sheehy, Chair, Vice President for Management and Budget  
Arthur Garson Jr., Executive Vice President and Provost  
Pat Lampkin, Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer  
Thomas Skalak, Vice President for Research  
James Hilton, Vice President and Chief Information Officer  
Yoke San Reynolds, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
Leonard Sandridge, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer  
Susan Carkeek, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer  
Nancy Rivers, Chief of Staff to the President  
Edmund Kitch, Professor, School of Law, Faculty Senate Representative

### **Advisory Committee**

Barbara Deily, Director of Audits  
Michael McPherson, Deputy Chief Information Officer  
Rich Kovatch, Associate Vice President for Business Operations  
Carol Stash Stanley, University Registrar  
Christina Morell, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs  
David Smith, Professor of Environmental Sciences  
E. Clorisa Philips, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and SACS Accreditation Liaison

### **Process Simplification Staff**

**\*Nann Keenan**, Manager/ Assistant to the Vice President for Management and Budget  
**\*Lea Moore**, Process Simplification Coordinator  
**Sarah Collie**, Assistant Vice President for Management and Budget  
**Jesse Rine**, Doctoral Intern

\*resigned in spring 2009