

Central Business Operations Council (CBOC) – Recap Notes

Friday, November 10th at 9:30 am

Bayou Building, Room 2311

Attendees: Nicole Lenderman, Rhonda Warner, Mark Denney, Deja Sero, Robin Shannon, Debbie Carpenter, Cindy Saltzman, Abby Varela, Erika De Leon, Carmen Canales, DeAngel Bonilla, Greg Haines, Jacqueline McGregory, Rich Stebbins, Luisa Gallegos, Bubba Jones, Lea Black, Faron Samford, & April Felan-Butler (Online: Krista Buckminster and Darron Johnson).

1. Introduction

2. Agenda Item:

- a. Abby Varela, Greg Haines, & Jacqueline McGregory:

The Offer Letter Process for Colleges

- HSH and Human Resources have been working together to streamline the hiring paperwork process for new faculty members by using DocuSign for offer letters. HR is starting with the colleges since the bulk of the rehires and temp hires come from these areas. HSH has a template offer letter so the goal is to have all colleges using the same offer letter template, but this has proven to be challenging as some of the letters are different from one another. It would be helpful for the colleges and HR to use the same template.
- HSH and HR will be meeting with Sheeba Thomas to finalize the DocuSign form and ensure that they are on the same page regarding the verbiage and format of the form before it goes live. The plan is to have several consistent offer letter templates available in a shared DocuSign folder for all of the colleges.
- The offer letters will go the following route for signatures: 1. Department chair, 2. Instructor, and finally, 3. HR. Once signed by all parties, the envelope with the completed document will be sent out to the entire group. This will help streamline the entire process and eliminate excess steps for HR to complete.
- Greg Haines showed a DocuSign example to the group and the offer letter template. He also told April that he would send her an email with the sample offer letter so it could be shared with the entire group following the meeting. This ensures that everyone is on the same page regarding the verbiage, format, etc.
- To summarize, there are many great benefits of having the offer letters through DocuSign: It saves a lot of time and it is a very secure platform.

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3. Cost Savings Discussion (Open Forum)

- Mark Denney reminded everyone that UHCL is currently in the 2nd year of a substantial decline in enrollment. To sum up, our 10 years of growth is gone in 2 years. The student population is currently less than it was before the downward expansion in fall 2014.
- As a result of this significant loss, we need to identify savings opportunities and also identify ongoing savings in order to avoid any across-the-board cuts. The last time across-the-board cuts were implemented, they did not work very well.
- Dr. Walker recently stated that any savings that divisions find that they can offer up to come centrally, he will earmark, and in a future year, he will be able to provide them back, but only if we recover our enrollment loss in the coming year. Mark stressed that if divisions identify any savings, they need to give them centrally so we won't spend it. We cannot count the savings if they're in your budget when we go to show system, we have a 10% reserve. UH System will only allow us to count reserves that are in an unallocated cost center. We will make a placeholder to help keep track of the repayment of funds as we can.
- Lea Black asked if C/DBAs would be expected to talk to cost center managers or unit managers, or if he would talk to them. Mark responded that the end-of-year fund balances that we were proposing should be pulled centrally. The VPs received data and they should have been having conversations with the C/DBAs about them.
- There's still a conversation in University Advancement because they wanted to hold on to 250,000 and Enrollment Management to do a marketing campaign to push enrollment and University Advancement wanted to keep \$125,000 for 50th anniversary celebrations in 2024. This will be a key opportunity because this will only happen once and we will be able to encourage our alumni to give to our endowment cause.
- For specific academic programs, the colleges should be paying with their DDT. Mark stated that C/DBAs can have all the conversations they want with their budget managers, but to keep the information discussed confidential. If the budget manager is not the VP, then they can have that conversation.

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- Deja Sero confirmed that once fund balance sweeps are agreed upon by the VPs, Krista will send them once they are completed. We'll send a notification to everyone like normal when we do those types of transfers and a copy of that transfer too.
- VP Aschenbrener (SEM) identified several fund balance sweeps. Ongoing contracts are funded through fund balance. While Dr. Aschenbrener has enough fund balance to continue doing this, ongoing contracts should not exceed current year budget.
- Greg Haines: When we look at summer hiring budget, we need to demonstrate that we are taking care for ourselves at the very least. It would probably be best if there was sort of a consistent tool that was shared across all of the colleges that we were able to do that. Mark agreed that we need to be more efficient in how we deliver our courses because we are looking at how much overload we pay because we deliver sections either more sections than we needed to service our students, or more sections taught by tenure track faculty, then we needed to service our students. For the last 3 yrs, Mark has been working on a report; however, the data has been junk and Mark cannot determine where the error is, but most of it ties back to the inconsistency of how we record our faculty across the university. If we operate inefficiently, this causes our students to pay more tuition than they should.
- Current trends suggest that although the high school graduation rates are increasing, the college enrollment rates are declining due to the rising costs of a college education. Unfortunately, we are pricing potential students out of college and many of them choose other paths. This is why it is so important that we find cost savings that do not cut out the meat of what we do.
- Enrollment has been growing at San Jac and Alvin the last couple of years and it is our hope that growth will matriculate to UHCL as long as we stay engaged with San Jac and Alvin.
- We have to hit a certain number, and if we do not hit it easy, we will hit it hard.
- Debbie Carpenter: Dr. Hawn wanted to remind all the C/DBAs about the changeover from Bank of America to JP Morgan Chase and replacing credit card readers, and to let her know immediately because they will stop working very soon.

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- Deja clarified that for the current year, we should be looking at identifying fund balance but also reducing our central budget to help reduce our deficit for next year and cost savings going forward. Also look at all sources of operating funds (1,2, & 3), not just the fund balance. It is more than just looking at data, but rather, developing strategies that can be deployed in each division singularly or across the university with regard spending and activity, which reduces the cost.
- Deja also reiterated that the Planning and Budget Office is open all the time to stop in and ask questions and clarify things. Everyone can also reach out to Luisa Gallegos (Budget Analyst III) via email since she is our control officer and she can answer any questions about how to manage and redirect funding. Luisa is a great resource and she can help offices take a look at all data and use the tools that we have in place. We can also develop a query in PeopleSoft, if necessary.

4. 2023-2024 CBOC Meeting Dates:

(All are scheduled at 9:30 a.m.)

- **Friday, December 8th, 2023**
- **Friday, January 19th, 2024**
- **Friday, February 16th, 2024**
- **Friday, March 22nd, 2024**
- **Friday, April 19th, 2024**
- **Friday, May 17th, 2024**