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# ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT REVIEW

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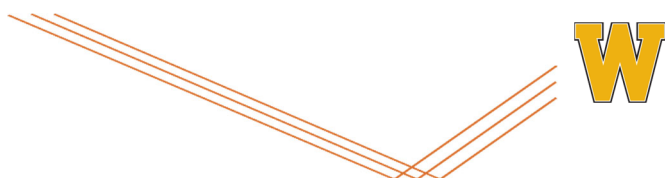
FINAL REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*January 29, 2020*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
Office of  
Institutional Effectiveness

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# ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT REVIEW

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## Final Report

*January 29, 2020*

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the process and outcomes of Administrative Unit Review (AUR).

## Executive Summary

Unlike the previous academic and learner-support program review cycles, the process for review of administrative units was completed using cabinet members' discretion. Divisions had the choice to use an online template and process developed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in the Division of Academic Affairs, or to establish one of their own making. The only stipulation was that all reviews would be completed at the division-level by December 1, 2018, so that discussions with the president could be completed during spring semester 2019.

This report tracks the results of those using the online template to complete the AUR cycle.

## Administrative Unit Review Process

According to the Integrated Program Review and Planning Model (rev. May 29, 2018), developed for reporting to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), as part of evidence collection for WMU's upcoming reaccreditation comprehensive visit, Administrative Unit Review was scheduled to begin during fiscal year 2017-18 with a Beta development year, followed by full-implementation in fiscal year 2018-19. Data would be collected to examine program effectiveness as well as alignment with the Gold Standard 2020, WMU's institutional strategic plan. Specifically, questions were to be developed to "test" the following GS2020 categories developed during the "academic" and "learner-support" program review cycles:

- Strategic Planning (e.g., divisional and unit plans, program mission and vision, etc.)
- Demand and Assessment (e.g., communication, assessment of program outcomes, internal/external program review, etc.)
- Learning and Discovery (e.g., personnel, diversity and inclusion, experiential learning, etc.)
- Law and Policy (e.g., compliance, program guidelines, etc.)
- Resource Management (e.g., human and financial resources, facilities, etc.)
- Impact and Opportunity (i.e., overall impact, opportunity analysis)

At the time, it was anticipated that 61 administrative offices within the divisions of Academic Affairs; Business and Finance; Development and Alumni Relations; Diversity and Inclusion; Government Affairs and University Relations; Intercollegiate Athletics; Legal Affairs and General Counsel; Research; Student Affairs; and, the Office of the President would be reviewed.

As administrative units function very differently from academic and learner-support programs, as well as across divisions, WMU President Montgomery announced, in February 2018, that all cabinet members would conduct reviews of their divisions by whatever means they deemed valuable, and provide a summary of their findings to him by December 1, 2018.

## Scope of the Review

Administrative Unit Review took place during a period of leadership turnover and division-level restructuring. The Office of University Relations was separated from the Office of Government Affairs, in June 2018, when WMU created a new vice president for marketing and strategic communication. The office was renamed the Office of Marketing and Strategic Communications, beginning July 1, 2018, and given a new direction. As such, this new division was exempt from completing the AUR process during this cycle. In addition, to accommodate the appointment and transition of a new senior athletic director and senior woman administrator, Intercollegiate Athletics was granted an extension through July 2019 to begin its review process.

## Self-Study Template

With guidance from the vice president for business and finance, a uniform template was condensed and reorganized from previous integrated program review templates, and made available in paper and online formats for those wishing to use one (*see Appendix A*). The online version was built into Compliance Assist: Program Review, a module of the Campus Labs enterprise system. To introduce the online platform to members of the President's Cabinet, an online letter was emailed on February 21, 2018 (*see Appendix B*).

## Training and Training Materials

Between March 27 and October 31, 2019, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness held face-to-face training sessions with each division that chose to use Campus Labs' Compliance Assist: Program Review platform to conduct reviews. In addition to demonstrations of how to use the system, trainings covered information on the purpose of the review and its intended outcomes, and how the process fit with regional accreditation compliance. Participants received copies of the "Administrative Program Review and Planning Guidelines" (*see Appendix C*), "Technical User Guide for Completing the AUR Self-Study Template" (*see Appendix D*), and the condensed version, "Accessing and Using Compliance Assist" (*see Appendix E*). Unit supervisors also received a copy of the "Observation and Next-Level Walkthrough Guide" (*see Appendix F*), while Cabinet members received the "Division-Level Walkthrough Guide" (*see Appendix G*). Members of the Institutional Effectiveness team remained on-call, throughout the process, to provide additional one-on-one assistance as needed.

## Completion of the Process

The self-study completion period ran from April 1 through October 31, 2018, with submissions from 35 units in six divisions. Following is an overview of each participating division:

### *Office of the President*

The Office of the President chose to use Campus Labs' Compliance Assist: Program Review platform to conduct a review of its administrative operations and those of the Chief of Staff. Division-level review was completed on October 28, 2018.

### **Key Findings**

The Office of the President staff has strategically navigated an important transitional period in the history of Western Michigan University while stewarding alignment with the strategic plan. Staff remains focused on supporting the President's transformational approach to leadership. Presidential connectivity, image, and influence are all managed through the Office with care and diligence. Staff has prioritized unifying around function, mission, and skill in order to best serve executive leadership and evolving initiatives. Staff is deeply committed to WMU and the numerous stakeholders.

The Office of the President staff continues to assess processes and procedure as it relates to assisting executive leadership. Streamlining logistics takes time organizing complexities and transforming past practice. Continued collaboration and effort will lead to advanced efficiencies that can serve as an example for other divisions on campus.

### ***Action & Follow Up Items***

The Office of the President staff will continue to develop a functional foundation involving annual strategic planning and assessment analysis. Staff seeks review opportunities and champions continuous improvement. Continued change is inevitable in this highly functioning and visibly key division as organizational priorities are developed and implemented. The review and supporting material provided is thorough and accurately describes the forward direction of this important leadership area.

### ***Academic Affairs***

The Division of Academic Affairs also chose to use Campus Labs' Compliance Assist: Program Review platform to conduct all of its reviews. The following units participated in this cycle:

- College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office
- College of Aviation Dean's Office
- College of Education and Human Development Dean's Office
- College of Engineering and Applied Sciences Dean's Office
- College of Fine Arts Dean's Office
- College of Health and Human Services Dean's Office
- Extended University Programs
- Graduate College Dean's Office
- Haenicke Institute for Global Education
- Haworth College of Business Dean's Office
- Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies
- Office of Information Technology
- Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- Office of Institutional Research
- Lee Honors College
- University Libraries

The aforementioned units were tasked to submit their completed self-study/self-review reports to the provost no later than September 1, 2018; however, due to changes in administration, the deadline was extended to October 1 for those unable to meet the initial deadline. Final division-level reviews were completed by December 21, 2018.

Having participated in prior reviews of academic and learner-support programs, the Division of Academic Affairs focused its Administrative Unit Review on the operational concerns of its college- and associate provost-level units. Focus areas included evaluating the development of unit-level strategic planning and alignment with the division's strategic plan; units' major functions or services, and how they relate to and impact the division and university; internal and external communication with campus and community stakeholders; promotion of a culture and climate of assessment throughout the university; opportunities for unit staff and administrators to engage in learning and discovery; compliance with laws and policies specific to units; management of unit-level resources; and, identification of potential challenges and opportunities for the next five years. The following is summary of the key findings from the review.

## **Key Findings**

- Planning and alignment. Academic Affairs units are self-reflective. Although relatively new to strategic planning, they keep the division's plan in mind when setting unit-level goals and identifying metrics. Units report on their progress semi-annually, and are beginning to use that information in decision-making.
- Major functions. Academic Affairs units are diverse, spanning nine colleges and seven non-academic units that work collaboratively with all other divisions to conduct the main work of the university; educating and graduating generations of future experts and leaders. Units strive to be responsive to change, developing academic programs with flexible delivery mechanisms to meet the needs of a rapidly changing economy, while providing support for domestic and international learner success both inside and outside of the classroom. Units are collaborative, working collectively with other university areas, as well as developing partnerships with business, community, and industry that provide a plethora of opportunities for internships and extra-curricular, service-learning, research, and community-outreach activities.
- Assessment. Academic Affairs is leading the university-wide effort to advance the growing climate of assessment into a culture of assessment. The Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies facilitates the University Assessment Steering Committee, a university-wide cross-collaborative body tasked with educating on and assisting with the development of student learning and operational outcomes assessment. The office also conducts direct and indirect assessments of student learning, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, and the Collegiate Learning Assessment.
- Compliance. The Division of Academic Affairs oversees the university's regional accreditation and compliance with U.S. Department of Education policies and processes. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness works with the Accreditation Liaison Officer to prepare the university for its 2021 Comprehensive Evaluation by the Higher Learning Commission, and facilitates the work of criterion teams as they prepare the Assurance Argument. The office also facilitates training for strategic plan reporting.
- Challenges and opportunities. Academic Affairs units identified a need for stronger coherence between departments, colleges, and divisions, working toward dismantling existing siloes and preventing new ones in the future. Units see this as possible through better communication practices within and across units, specifically regarding policy changes and development of additional avenues for stakeholder feedback. Regarding personnel, units identified a need to be more attentive to hiring and programming not only for historically underrepresented populations, but also mindful of field-specific underrepresented demographics. In addition, the need for more opportunities for staff and administrator professional development and engagement in research and scholarly/creative activities was identified. Problems associated with lagging resources are expected to improve by the implementation of a new university budget model.

## *Business and Finance*

The Office of Business and Finance chose to use a paper-based template, of their own creation, that used the same information as the online template. The vice president for business and finance then chose the following units to participate during this cycle:

- Accounts Receivable/Cashiering
- Auxiliary Enterprises
- Community Outreach
- Facilities Management
- Grants and Contracts

- Human Resources
- Investments and Endowment Management
- Logistical Services
- Payroll/Disbursements

OBF reported that all units successfully completed their self-study reporting and unit-level reviews by their November 1, 2018 deadline. Division-Level review was completed by November 26.

Business and finance performed an extensive review of the majority of the critical operations carried out by the division. Aspects of the review included evaluating the alignment of mission and values, staffing talent, interaction with campus and the broader community, efficiency and effectiveness of operations, and whether or not the division's efforts promote the broader strategic vision of WMU – school of choice, diversifying revenue streams, and recruitment and retention. The results of the review itself are extensive. This summary remains focused on the key discoveries resulting from the review.

### ***Key Discoveries***

1. Business and finance is a diverse organization that performs critical functions essential to the success of WMU. We provide the power; keep campus clean, attractive and operating; we pay people; we collect tuition dollars; we procure the goods and services necessary for campus; we design and construct the buildings; we invest the cash; we pay bills; we manage the total work-life from hire to retire; we manage benefits; we negotiate contracts; we maintain roads and parking lots, we keep campus safe; and, we are often the “go to” division. Business and finance has a significant impact on campus life – both for the present and the future.
2. We are an evolving organization. The degrees, professional certifications, licenses, and training certificates of today's work force represent a much stronger human capital portfolio than in past years. This evolution has been promoted through a deliberate hiring and training strategy as we have as staffing opportunities arise.
3. The culture within business and finance is aspirational. As a division, we are strongly committed to fostering change. Our historical record as well as current efforts are a testament to our team members' adaptability and openness to new ideas. We evaluate our initiatives on the basis of whether or not the change allows us to better serve the campus community as well as gain efficiencies. In evaluating the merits of the change, we use data and best practices to determine whether or not to proceed.
4. Business and finance has implemented an effective succession strategy. Potential internal talent is identified early. Training and leadership growth opportunities are provided to continue to develop this talent. If the organizational hierarchy is too narrow, positions are added which allow for more professional growth opportunities to continue to nurture talent. We also recognize the benefit of hiring talent from the external market. When this occurs, we attempt to provide overlap between the current incumbent and the individual assuming that role. This approach to talent growth and also continuity and transfer of institutional knowledge enables us to maintain operations that function at a peak level.
5. Facilities Management is one of our strongest departments as you consider alignment of mission and values, peer benchmarking, and defined operational metrics. It is also an operation where it is easier to obtain peer comparative information due to the national professional societies and published information.
6. For those areas that noted additional development needed, the focus was usually on the need to more clearly define and align the mission and values between the department/division/university, greater use of outcome metrics and peer benchmarking, as well as policy and procedure review. The repetitive nature of the areas needing attention,

signals that effort has been more focused on daily output and business needs rather than developing the strategic framework for operations.

Some of the specific changes that occurred as a result of the review are listed below:

- Grants and contracts organizationally moved to research
  - Retiree health insurance billing moved from quarterly to monthly and became mainstream with regular invoicing process
  - Recycling transferred to Facilities Management from Academic Affairs (Office for Sustainability)
  - Completed the retirement investment initiatives projects which impacts all benefits eligible employees – both active and retired
  - Requested proposals for working capital and endowment investment advisory services and subsequently engaged a new advisor and modified the investment policy statement
  - Evaluated and changed how we manage seasonal/cyclical work in facilities that require a unique skill set and training
  - Created a K-9 unit
  - Completed a market recalibration project for our salary compensation system employees
  - Purchased and implemented a contract management software.
7. The review highlighted the need to continue to make greater use of technology to enhance both efficiency and effectiveness. One department identified where this need is the greatest is and human resources. Many current processes are either manual or rely on technology that is outdated or does not interface well with other systems. We dedicated both financial and human resources and have identified new technology that will be implemented to make the hiring process better for the hiring department as well as human resources. Position management is critical to our future success.
8. We also identified our tuition assessment structure and billing as another critical area needing improvement. As a result, we engaged one of the premier consultants to help us deploy a new billing model that will make it easier to administer as well as for our students to understand. Roll-out will occur summer 2020.

### *Diversity and Inclusion*

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion chose to use Campus Labs' Compliance Assist: Program Review platform to conduct its review of the ODI Central Office and IT Unit. All other ODI units were reviewed during the Learner-Support Unit Review cycle. Division-level review was completed on July 23, 2018.

Diversity and Inclusion focused its program review on strategies for better use of resources, engaging in collaboration across our area and campus, fostering opportunities for professional development for students, staff and faculty as well as contributing to the recruitment of more diverse faculty, staff and students. As a unit we found that we have done some significant work in the areas but also were able to identify areas of improvement. Through this review we were able to identify additional strategies to meet our goals.

### **Findings and Actions:**

- In the area of assessing the efficient and effective use of our resources, both human and financial, ODI had each staff member complete a time study of daily activities as well a budget review for each area. This led us to create a budget analyst position, and reclassify the Director of Operation Position to a Budget Manager.

- We also created Teams to address assessment needs, staff morale, marketing needs and streamline our administrative functions. This also led to creating a VP Leadership Team to oversee operational policies and procedures. We reallocated positions with the office of the VP and Disability Student Services to improve sustainability of programming and services.
- To maintain our efficiency, we have centralized our time reporting and created a centralized database to store all program activities on a monthly basis.
- It has also been a goal of ODI to reduce waste, so we have significantly reduced our use of paper by utilizing the TEAMS application to communicate and share information across areas, have improved the use of our webpages.
- As financial resources are reduced we have intentionally sought alternative means to fund programs. This resulted in securing a grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation for \$47,000 to help support CAMP students beyond the first year, a grant to allow us to hire a part-time position for LBGT-SS to assist with doing pre-college programming for LGBT students and collaborated with Student Affairs, HIGE and Speech, Language and Hearing Science Dept. to cost share for programs. We are also soliciting donors to support ODI programs and areas.
- We improved the diversity network by dissolving the Diversity Council and enlarging the Diversity Steering Committee by adding athletics, honor's college, graduate college and extended university programs.
- We have developed new collaborations with Human Resources to provide online training in diversity and inclusion for new employees. Collaborated with Admissions to provided diversity and inclusion presentations to first year students as part of new student orientation and work with the Office of Institutional Equity to offer implicit bias training to more staff and faculty.
- We continue to engage in pre-college programming with our collaborations with Kalamazoo Public Schools: Bronco Buds, High School Visitation Day, Middle School Career Cruising, and Gear Up. Through these programs we provided programming for 180 middle school and high school students.
- We continue to foster the interest in research and partnerships as evidenced by the Real Talk programs, Everyone Counts Diversity Learning Communities, Safe on Campus and Concerned Student workshops, and sponsoring of Student Organizations events, Multicultural Meet and Greet, and co-sponsoring with the Honors College and Student Affairs our participation in the Equity in Mental Health Project through the Steve Fund.
- WE have had two undergraduate students conduct research projects re: the experience of LGBT students on campus and had students in our Kalamazoo Promise Scholars program present at the Clemson University Men of Color Summit with a graduate intern.
- To highlight and encourage diversity and inclusion work across campus we have provided some avenues to showcase diversity and inclusion work such as the Teach-In as part Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration and our Excellence in Diversity Awards.

***Follow-Up:***

- ODI plans to administer a Campus Climate survey to students, faculty and staff in spring 2020. The survey results will better assist us in identify needs to be addressed in improving the climate on campus.
- ODI has begun to reach out to alumni, faculty and staff to assist with the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff.
- At this time the professional development regarding diversity and inclusion issues is limited so the focus will be in developing more education opportunities through the Office of Diversity Education and in collaboration with other entities on campus.
- Offering an online module for students to engage with diversity and inclusion issues.



## Research

The Office of Research and Innovation chose to use Campus Labs' Compliance Assist: Unit Review platform to conduct a review of its administrative operations. Division-level review was completed on October 24, 2018 with an update as many changes have occurred with the recruitment of a new Vice President for Research and Innovation. The Office of Research and Innovation identified the following as its key strengths:

- **Leadership:** Recent reorganization and culture changes have empowered the staff leading the functional areas to be more responsive to WMU needs and implement more positive changes directly.
- **Staff:** The move of Grants and Contracts reporting to ORI as well as physically to Walwood has increased communication and efficiency.
- **Infrastructure of the office:** The remodeling of space at Walwood has created an improved working environment. After years of neglect computer refreshing is now standard in ORI increasing staff efficiency.
- **Collaborations and new ideas:** ORI has revised the Research Advisory Team meetings to be more collaborative with the colleges.

In addition, OVPR sees the following as its key challenges:

- **Lack of IT systems for research administration:** ecrt for effort reporting is a welcome addition, however the PAF system is home grown and suffers from many issue and is not sustainable. All other systems are paper.
- **Shrinking faculty pool partially driven excessive use of faculty specialists:** The increase in faculty specialists who do not have research in the role has decreased the pool of potential funded investigators.
- **Graduate school and tuition issues on grants:** The need to increase graduate students funded on grants and graduate assistants to do research with new faculty versus service roles on GA/RA positions is a challenge that needs significant review.
- **Aging equipment:** Equipment is aging and there are not dedicated funds to address this issue, analysis indicates that WMU is at the bottom of all Michigan universities in % of expenditures for research support of all expenditures.
- **Lack of an up to date space system:** There are concerns for the F and A proposal, efficient space utilization to support funded researchers and safety issues that space data is not readily available.

Office of Research and Innovation believes there is room for growth and higher quality services to be provided to the faculty and staff at WMU, and next steps are also dependent on members of WMU outside ORI (Deans, faculty and staff) and require a collaborative approach.

## Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs chose to use Campus Labs' Compliance Assist: Program Review platform to conduct all of its reviews. The vice president for student affairs then chose the following units to participate during this cycle:

- Assessment and Effectiveness
- Business Operations
- Facilities
- Finance and Infrastructure
- Information Systems
- Marketing

Division-Level reviews were completed on December 11, 2018.

### ***Key Findings***

- The review serves as a reflection process for both new and returning directors during which, directors can take the time to think holistically and critically about their unit in accordance with the criteria provided. It also served as an opportunity to reinforce how each unit serves and supports divisional and institutional priorities.
- Staff found the initial round of feedback (provided by the director of assessment) to be helpful prior to supervisory or divisional level review.
- Capturing the complex operation of the administrative units in Student Affairs in a succinct way that is easily understood for multiple audiences was challenging. Multiple offices reflected on their desire to tell their story and communicate their work.
- Most of the administrative units had substantial documentation, evidence, or data related to their practices. In line with, many offices mentioned the desire to devote time and energy towards key performance indicators, benchmarks, and strategic pathways for their units.
- Across administrative units there was a deep commitment to providing quality service.

### ***Action & Follow Up Items***

- Several units spoke to the desire to continue collaboration across Student Affairs and the institution in order to engage in diversity and inclusion work, provide assessment and strategic planning information, market information consistently, reduce risk, and provide policies and procedures that are meaningful and improve the student experience.
- Using data to drive decisions is an area of strength for some units and an area of growth for other administrative units. This is true for the division at-large. One action item for Student Affairs is to develop meaningful key performance indicators which serve as lead and lag metrics for the division and institution and can be benchmarked with other institutions to serve as an indicators of best practices. UPDATE: Since the administrative review wrap up, the divisional leadership team has developed a set of lead and lag metrics for the division and in also invested in an analytics platform which allows us to connect information across the multiple units in Student Affairs to make data-informed decisions as a whole.
- Continuing to provide support for strategic planning and program review is also a part of this effort.
- Finally, Dining Services was considered under the Learner Support Program Review; however, this unit would be better served undergoing the administrative program review and will make this change for the future.