

Finance and Administration Council and Related Groups

6/18/03

The Finance and Administration Council (FAC) was founded in 1997 as an outgrowth of the Administrative Services Redesign (ASR) project. The charge and membership of the FAC has been essentially unchanged since its inception. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the effectiveness of the FAC and related groups, and to clarify and propose improvements in the way we do business. This reflection has been informed by interviews of FAC members, and is set in the context of the final stages of Project FRESH, which has necessarily consumed much of the FAC agenda over the past several years. In general, the FAC has been an effective communication, problem-solving, and advisory body to the VPFA. There are, however, some areas where changes or clarifications are in order beginning in September of 2003.

Membership

The vision and purpose of FAC requires that its membership be confined to the CFO's of each RC Unit (heads of Business Service Centers) and a representative - normally the head of the office - of each central office that interacts in a primary way in partnership with most or all Business Service Centers (Controller, Human Resources, CIS, Budget, Academic Affairs, Research & Public Service, Office for Sponsored Research). We have agreed to return to the original policy that members unable to attend a particular meeting will not send substitutes, nor will members bring members of their staff with them unless specifically invited to do so in the agenda announcement.

Meetings

The FAC has been meeting every two weeks in order to deal with the large volume of issues arising from Project FRESH. We will return to a monthly cycle, meeting on the second Tuesday of each month for two hours, effective in September of 2003.

Agenda Management

As we emerge from Project FRESH, we are able to focus the agendas of the FAC less on detailed, operational items and more on broader areas of institutional policy, strategy, professional development, and problem-solving. An Agenda Committee (Candace Corvey, John Griffith, Leigh Anne Melanson, Tammy Goldberg, Sharon Demers, and Ken Cody) will plan FAC agendas well in advance, and will include in their planning a solicitation of agenda topics from the members. The agendas will be coordinated with those of the Finance and Administration Forums (see below).

There will be an expectation that each FAC meeting open with a roughly fifteen minute report from the VPFA on issues of importance to the institution. There will also be an expectation that the heads of all the central offices mentioned above will have responsibility for various presentations and discussion items during the course of a year. In particular, it is expected that finance, human resource, and related policy or procedural

changes under consideration will be brought to FAC well before they are complete so that meaningful dialogue and input can occur. There will be an expectation that materials associated with the agenda will be supplied to members at least two days in advance of the meetings. Members unable to attend a particular meeting may obtain handouts and a summary of the proceedings from an FAC Affinity Group colleague (see below.)

FAC Affinity Groups

The members of FAC have much in common, but there are also some natural differences that flow from the missions of the various units of the University. There will be three FAC Affinity Groups – Academic Affairs, Research Administration, and Administration & Service. These groups will meet as frequently as they choose and will agree upon their own agendas and operating rules, including whether members may bring a staff member with them to the meetings. Some members of FAC may reasonably join more than one affinity group. Some groups may have formal chairs and others may prefer to be more self-directed. From time to time FAC Affinity Groups may suggest agenda times for FAC meetings.

Finance and Administration Forums

What started as the Monthly Business Manager Meeting in 1992, and morphed into the BSC Forum in 1997, will become the Finance and Administration Forum. The Forum will be offered every other month. The responsibility for agenda setting, which has been shouldered for too long by a small number of FAC volunteers, will shift to the FAC Agenda Committee. The purpose of this shift is to ensure that there is good articulation and lack of redundancy between the FAC and F&A Forum agendas. The intention is that the F&A Forums will focus more on procedural, process, professional development and training issues and that each relevant central office will have prescribed timeslots for presentations. Regular attendees will be members of FAC and all BSC staff. In addition, members of FAC are encouraged to issue invitations to these meetings to a broader audience depending on the agenda and the needs of the particular RC Unit.