

TASK FORCE ON UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the university creating this task force?

To determine if we are utilizing best practices in business operations and avoiding redundancy of effort. The goal is to clarify the roles and responsibilities between the UT System administration and the campuses and institutes it serves, an exercise the University has engaged in since the 1980s.

Is this a workforce-reduction initiative?

Improving staff productivity to effectively meet the increasing challenges in higher education is a primary goal rather than reducing our workforce.

So does that mean that no one's job will be eliminated? If positions will be eliminated, how will the job reductions be determined?

While we can't guarantee that the review will not result in recommendations to eliminate or revise the responsibilities of a position, eliminating positions is not the purpose of this review. If it is determined that a position is duplicative in a particular area or is not adding value to UT campus or System administration operations, plans will be made to appropriately eliminate or make adjustments to that role. Any recommendations to phase out or redevelop a position will be handled by the appropriate System or campus officials, and a plan and timeline for the intended changes will be discussed with impacted units and personnel.

How did you determine which departments to examine?

We felt addressing the system's institutional support positions made the most sense. Capital projects, communications and marketing, human resources, information technology, and procurement and contracting comprise the majority of institutional support activities shared between UT System administration and institutions. This review will be helpful to some of these operational areas, such as Human Resources and Capital Projects, that are currently seeking to solidify important roles and responsibilities in preparation for leadership searches in these areas.

What does the examination entail?

A working group of content experts in each field will be established consisting of a representatives from each institution and system administration staff. The group will analyze the necessary workflow elements and the basis for each workflow step. The group will work with a facilitator to determine whether there are workflow steps that can be eliminated or adjusted and clarify the responsible party for each step in the process.

Has there been any initial findings or research conducted?

In our initial examination, we found that institutional support positions across the UT System have increased about 15 percent since the budget reductions of 2012. We seek to better understand whether efficiencies can be achieved, or redundancies can be eliminated.

Will task force meetings be open to the public?

The task force is a working group of UT employees working through administrative processes just like hundreds of meetings that occur every week through the state. If any meeting occurs that involves the Board of Trustees or for another reason meets the definition of a public meeting it will be open.

How can the public receive information on the task force's work?

Plans are to publish recommendations on UT's transparency website, <https://tennessee.edu/transparency/>

When will findings be published?

The goal for the task force is to report initial recommendations to UT Interim President Randy Boyd by late spring.

Has this ever been done before?

Yes. Over the years, the University has undertaken a number of studies and initiatives to evaluate cost savings and efficiencies. The following is a partial list of previous efforts:

1. UT Board of Trustees Subcommittee on Efficiency and Cost Savings: 2016 – 2018
2. President DiPietro's Budget Advisory Group (BAG): 2015 – 2017
3. Information Technology Optimization Task Force: 2011 – 2012
4. UT Board of Trustees Committee on Effectiveness & Efficiency for the Future: 2008 – 2013
5. President Shumaker's Cost Savings Initiative (over 600 items considered): 2003 – 2004
6. UTK College-Level Reallocation Task Forces: 2001 – 2002
7. Streamlining of the Administration of The University of Tennessee (part of President Gilley's Academic Plan for Excellence; resulted in a dramatic reorganization of administrative functions at all campuses and institutes statewide:) 1999 - 2002
 - UT Wide Process & Organizational Review: 2000 – 2002
 - University-Wide Administration Cost Savings Task Force: 2001
8. University-Wide Administration Departmental Cost Savings program: 1997 – 1998
9. University-wide Review of New or Enhanced Revenue Sources: 1996 – 1997

10. University of Tennessee Systems Improvement Project (SIP; dozens of teams at all campuses and institutes used systems management and process improvement methodologies to conduct in depth process/system improvement projects in every administrative function): 1993 – 1996

11. UT Office of Management Services (conducted dozens of formal effectiveness and efficiency studies, resulting in improvements in every administrative process at every UT campus and institute): 1980s – 1990s

What is different about this task force?

The President's Task Force on Administrative Effectiveness is focusing on the roles and responsibilities of the UT System staff and those in commensurate positions at each campus or institute. The goal of the project is to eliminate redundancies and non-value-added processes.