A Review of Organizational Structure/Processes and Budget Planning at the University of Northern British Columbia

Leading by Design Inc.
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A. INTRODUCTION

Terms of Reference

Leading by Design1 was engaged at the request of Dr. Don Cozzetto to conduct a review of the roles and responsibilities of senior positions reporting to the President and their associated organizational structures. In addition, they were asked to consider improvements that could be made to the university’s budget planning process. Leading by Design was specifically asked to:

– analyze options and make recommendations, including the reporting relationships of all operating units currently supervised at the vice-presidential level
– prepare a candid assessment of the issues and “gaps” created by the proposed structure
– propose an implementation strategy for the new organization, including integrating processes that enable and complement the formal structure
– monitor and respond to emerging developments in UNBC’s finances, as well as system-level developments, as the review proceeded.
– Review past budget planning processes and identify how they could be improved.

Bringing an independent, well informed perspective to their projects, Leading by Design’s principals draw on their knowledge of current and emerging practices in Canadian universities and their extensive career experience in university administration and leadership. Leading by Design works closely with each client, complementing local knowledge and insights to develop practical solutions that take into account the institution’s own mission, culture and resources. The UNBC project exemplifies this approach. On the basis of considerable deliberation and discussion, this report identifies issues, presents recommendations and reviews next steps.

Assumptions and Considerations

The approach to the review, outlined below, was based on the following assumptions and considerations.

• The University of Northern British Columbia has grown in scale and complexity since it opened twelve years ago, and is seen to be meeting the promise upon which it was founded. The provincial and national post-secondary environments have undergone

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1 Leading by Design’s partners are Alice Mansell and Glenn Harris. More information is available at www.leading-by-design.com.
significant transformation during the past decade, however. Changing student expectations and program demands, along with changes to the social and economic realities of northern regional communities, call for UNBC to respond in a timely and effective manner if it is to continue to grow and thrive. This review is particularly timely in light of the recent expansion British Columbia university system and the pending Campus 2020 report.

- The President recently assumed his position at UNBC. He is committed to a transformational agenda and has publicly declared his commitment to six planning priorities:
  - enrollment management with an emphasis on FTE growth
  - implementing the Academic Visioning Initiative (AVI)
  - university advancement (external relations, alumni, and fund-raising)
  - research, business and industrial partnerships
  - regional operations including First Nations
  - athletics, including health and wellness

- In addition to the need to examine the organizational implications of the President’s six planning priorities, there are a number of other signals that the time is right to review UNBC’s structure and processes. For example:
  - A number of senior positions and the units for which they are responsible (especially at the director level) ‘evolved’ as the university grew, but may not now address current needs. Evolved structures need to be redesigned from time to time to provide a coherent framework of roles and responsibilities and enable the more integrated activity demanded by contemporary issues and opportunities.
  - Chronic budget constraints place a high priority on realizing operational efficiencies as well as enhancing effectiveness. The current organization needs to be examined with this in mind.
  - It is not clear that the current academic structure – two undergraduate colleges and many program areas – is able to support the effective development of the academic themes laid out in the AVI.
  - The current structure may benefit from consideration of its capacity to realize meaningful integration (a) between teaching and research and (b) across the wide range of student directed services that determine the quality of the total student experience.
  - UNBC created separate administrative and academic information technology (IT) service structures during an era of rapid technological development. In the current environment it may be necessary to explore other models that enable the university to move towards the multimedia, online program delivery and research support it envisions, and to realize AVI’s pedagogical themes more fully. The promise of NorthLink also requires a close examination of UNBC’s IT structures and services, as well as those needed to support its regional community partners.
  - Governance support and executive support arrangements may need to be realigned in response to any changes made to senior leadership structure and process.
B. THE REVIEW PROCESS

The President’s Executive Committee agreed to engage in a facilitated review process in the form of a 3-step process.

During step one, undertaken in October and November, Leading by Design sought confidential input directly from key stakeholders. The list was developed in consultation with the President and his executive team. (Appendix 1 presents the list of those interviewed, together with the interview questions.)

During step two, facilitated discussions were held with executive team members and others to arrive at shared understandings and possible solution strategies. At this point serious budget problems became evident to UNBC leadership that lent increased urgency to the review process, since significant budget reductions extending over several years would need to commence in 2007. It was evident that, in light of ongoing budget commitments, even with UNBC’s enrolment growth plans, not all programs and services would be sustainable in their current form. It also became clear that restructuring decisions would need to be made quickly, and implementation plans accelerated, in order to put in place an organization better suited to making both difficult budget decisions and continuing to advance UNBC’s strategic agenda. This situation focused attention on the following questions and their relationship with possible changes in organizational structure and process:

- **Staff**: Are there more discrete support units and services than UNBC’s size can justify and, if so, does a consolidation strategy offer opportunities to reduce staffing and costs?
- **Faculty**: What do the AVI Thematic Academic Clusters and Foundational Themes, and UNBC’s enrolment experience, suggest about opportunities to restructure programs and reduce faculty complement?
- **Research**: Can research activities be more effectively clustered and integrated with AVI-driven graduate programs in ways that protect the revenue stream, control costs and continue advancing UNBC’s research reputation?
- **Programs**: If Thematic Academic Clusters and Foundational Themes embraced both undergraduate and graduate programs, and if graduate and research supports were more effectively integrated, are there opportunities to reduce costs and increase quality in key programs?
- **Prince George and the Regions**: What innovative online and onsite pedagogy and program delivery options can be implemented to increase flexibility for the Prince George campus as well as provide a broader range of options for the regions?

In December, at the end of step 2, Leading by Design met with the President and Provost to summarize the key issues and outline options under active consideration.

During step three, informed by consultation activities that continued throughout January, Leading by Design worked with UNBC leadership on the development of recommendations. This work included the creation of a budget strategy that would accompany restructuring plans. These plans also took into account arrangements at
other institutions. Earlier research conducted by Leading by Design into the senior structures at a number of other universities was brought to bear as needed. In addition a more detailed review was undertaken into a range of IT and teaching/learning service structures and integrated operations models.

The Board of Governors retreat at the end of January constituted a major step three milestone. At that time the President and the Provost presented those restructuring recommendations that required Board approval. Since that time UNBC leadership has proceeded to implement a number of restructuring decisions, most of which are recommendations of this report.

C. FINDINGS

With respect to the budget situation:

- While UNBC has a balanced budget for 2006-07, this situation is not sustainable. A sustainable budget plan keeps ongoing income and expenditures in balance and at the same time fosters growth and development by investing in strategic priorities:
  - Even with its ambitious enrolment targets, growth in operating revenue will not be sufficient to cover normal inflation in salary and non-salary costs.
  - To achieve a balanced cash position in 2006-07, UNBC chose to defer its annual allocation for equipment replacement. This can only be a temporary measure.
  - There is no contingency provision to deal with unfavorable variances in income and expenditure during the year. This is not consistent with the uncertainty and volatility that characterize today’s post-secondary environment.
  - No ongoing source of funding has yet been identified for debt servicing and the additional operating costs associated with the current building program.
  - There is no explicit provision for investments in new, high priority strategic initiatives, in particular those in the ECPE priority areas.

- Leading by Design’s analysis confirms UNBC’s own estimates of the magnitude of its budget problem. Left unaddressed, by 2010-11 the gap between annual income and expenditures will have grown to $7.9 million, and the cumulative budget shortfall will have reached $22.9 million.

- The following information provides context for UNBC’s difficult budget situation:
  - UNBC’s grant per FTE student is 20% higher than the average of UBC, SFU and the University of Victoria.
  - UNBC’s operating income per weighted student is more than 20% higher than the average of Mount Allison, St. Francis Xavier, Winnipeg, Trent, Lethbridge, Regina and Brandon.
  - A slightly higher percentage of UNBC’s operating expenditures are incurred in non-academic activities than at the average of the 7 universities listed above.
  - In the last four years staffing levels at UNBC have increased by 10% with virtually no net change in FTE student enrolment.
  - Over the last four years, faculty FTE’s have grown by 7.0% and staff FTE’s by 13.8%. Non-faculty positions increasing at a faster rate than faculty positions is due in part to the need to use operating funds to promote and support activities funded from non-operating sources, especially research.
• When examining UNBC’s financial situation, it is important to keep the following considerations in mind:
  - Given UNBC’s small enrolments and its emerging state, it does not have access to the same economies of scale as other institutions. This will make it appear to be less efficient.
  - There are costs associated with pursuing UNBC’s regional mandate that are not incurred by other universities.
  - UNBC’s research intensity, compared to other small universities, generates additional indirect costs.

• Nevertheless, even taking these considerations into account, UNBC appears fairly funded relative to other BC universities and the selection of small universities across Canada. These data suggest that:
  - in the short term the current budget crisis should be treated as an expenditure management problem rather than a revenue issue
  - while there are legitimate reasons why UNBC’s patterns of general expenditure will not precisely mirror those of other institutions, at the macro level there are no striking anomalies
  - with improved structures and processes, there should be opportunities to reduce spending in ways that do not compromise important services
  - while the challenges are significant and difficult decisions do need to be made, the university should be able to continue pursuing its new, strategic agenda

The picture painted above is consistent with stakeholder comments and Leading by Design’s own observations about the opportunities presented by a changed organizational structure and by strengthened processes.

• People are expecting things to change. They do not see how UNBC’s current range of activities can be sustained, especially given fiscal realities, and they recognize that UNBC is at a crossroads.

• Most units became accustomed to depending on the previous President for guidance and approval on any matter of consequence. While such a heavy reliance on central direction may have been appropriate in UNBC’s early years, there is little support for continuing this mode of operation.

• Most people like the new President’s comments about the need for change, including more delegation of authority, and the focus created by his six planning priorities. He is still an unknown quantity, however, and some wariness exists, provoked in part by his early decision to have the incumbent Vice-President Administration and Finance refocus on special projects.

• UNBC is a ‘flat’ organization consisting of a number of disconnected units, many of which are quite small. This structure has the effect of involving the President and Vice-Presidents in an excessive number of issues and decisions, many of which are of an operational nature. In addition to limiting the extent of delegated authority, these arrangements are seen as interfering with the achievement of greater efficiencies and the realization of a more integrated, collaborative campus-wide approach to planning and operations. The high degree of compartmentalization,
particularly in the support structure, also limits the scope for administrative leaders to engage in work that is truly strategic.

- There is little evidence that budget reductions in recent years have driven major change in either structure or operations. Their impact appears to have been at the margins of established arrangements. The notable exception to this was the decision to reallocate resources for enrollment management.

- Consistent with the previous point, comments favoring change, particularly to a more empowered organization, were typically quite abstract. Most of the concrete suggestions for change had only local, incremental implications. The comments also revealed considerable uncertainty about how the new executive leadership style will – and should – change UNBC’s management and governance processes.

- There is a perception that it is difficult to recruit fully qualified staff to UNBC and Prince George, and many units have learned to rely on a “grow their own” strategy. As a result many faculty and staff have limited experience outside the UNBC environment upon which to draw when confronting the challenge of change.

- There is widespread support both for the products of the AVI process and the consultative manner in which it was carried out. This has contributed to a high level of trust and confidence in the Provost, as well as confidence in future prospects for a more inclusive approach to planning and decision making.

- The evolving ECPE process is seen as building appropriately on the success of the AVI initiative. People are ‘discovering’ ways they can get involved, thereby creating a model and expectations for change. The ECPE process is still at the “oil on water” stage, however, and it is not yet clear to people how ECPE priorities and objectives will link to operational and budget decisions.

- There were a number of comments about the need for more effective accountability systems, relating to both organizational and individual performance. At this point they are not sufficiently well developed to support the needs of UNBC’s ambitious agenda.

In summary:

- Significant, broadly based organizational change is needed to create an efficient, adaptable structure and enable UNBC to pursue its planning priorities successfully.

One vital objective must be to allow the President and other members of the executive team to focus on those leadership responsibilities central to their roles, and reduce the extent to which they are called on to play integrating and facilitating (and daily management) roles simply because they are situated where the “organizational pieces” come together.

A second objective must be to enable other senior administrators to move beyond their unit-based, operational duties and assume meaningful leadership roles in matters of strategic importance to UNBC.
To make the new structure fully effective, UNBC’s planning and decision making processes need to be strengthened to support the university’s focused, dynamic and integrated agenda. They are also central to developing the capacity of the organization and its leaders to drive and sustain change. The AVI process laid an important foundation for moving forward, establishing a cross-institutional mode for effective consultation. The ECPE process is building on this success, but the institution has little other experience with this more collaborative style of operation.

AVI and ECPE allow UNBC to position budget planning as part of strategic and annual planning, not disconnected from it. It is extremely important that strong connections continue to be built between these planning processes and the budgeting system, and that the results fully enable the new organizational structure.

These processes need to ensure roles and responsibilities are properly assigned and assumed, and they need to incorporate effective accountability systems that assess progress, provide feedback and, where necessary, revise plans and expectations.

Given the pace and extent of change this review contemplates, effective communication is essential. There is considerable apprehension across campus and it is easy for the actions of UNBC leadership to be misunderstood, especially among longer term faculty and staff. While the need for change is widely acknowledged, it is important to recognize UNBC’s accomplishments and protect its areas of strength. The type of effective consultation accomplished to date referred to in the previous point is critical to success. It is equally important for all difficult management and budget decisions to be conveyed with care and sensitivity.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS ON BUDGETING

UNBC’s approach to budgeting needs to be strengthened to address the immediate budget problems and establish a solid foundation for the future.

The following considerations should guide future budgeting at UNBC.

UNBC’s budget plan needs to be balanced and sustainable. When these criteria are met:

- ongoing income and expenditures are in equilibrium
- the integrity of core programs and services is protected
- strategic priorities are explicitly resourced
- the budget plan has clear objectives, is transparent and accommodates uncertainty and change
- budget policies and practices foster behaviours that align with the plan’s objectives
- progress against plan is continuously assessed, corrective action is taken when necessary, and an effective accountability system is in operation.
It follows that a balanced, sustainable budget should be developed according to these guiding principles:

- a “full picture” view is taken:
  - all financial resources are taken into account, not just the core operating budget
  - with respect to the core operating budget, it is not simply an incremental/decremental exercise
- the objectives and expected outcomes of the budget plan are clear
- the budget provides resources for programs, services and projects, not to be “owned” by organizational units
- activities are fully costed and there are no hidden subsidies
- spending decisions are in the hands of people best able to weigh the merits of alternative actions

The budgeting process needs to be a disciplined activity within an integrated planning process that ensures the university’s strategic priorities and academic plans are driving resourcing decisions.

- there should be well defined steps in the planning and decision making process
- there need to be clearly defined decision making and accountability structures
- roles and responsibilities must be clear, and people must operate within a collaborative framework (i.e. “separation of duties, integration of activity”)
- major decisions demand due diligence
- progress towards goals should be continuously monitored, using quantitative and qualitative measurements and paying close attention to unintended consequences. In this way maximum efficiencies and discontinuance of activities that add insufficient value can be managed across the organization
E. RECOMMENDATIONS ON STRUCTURE

Fully endorsed by Leading by Design, these recommendations were developed collaboratively with the President and Provost to support the achievement of UNBC’s strategic and financial objectives, and enable an integrated and collaborative approach to planning, implementation and ongoing evaluation of progress. They address structural changes and revised roles and responsibilities under the following headings:

1. The President’s Executive Team
2. The Provost and Vice-President, Academic
3. Integrated Undergraduate/Graduate Academic Programs and Research
4. Teaching, Learning and Technology
5. Student Success and Enrolment Management
6. The Chief Financial Officer

The reports “Findings” have driven the development of recommendations, in particular the need to:
- align the structure with UNBC’s priority areas
- design a structure that “fits” the university’s size and breadth of activity
- work within budget constraints
- facilitate meaningful delegation by executive offices
- enable more effective, integrated planning and operations

Structures and functions at a number of other universities have been examined closely, while never losing sight that UNBC is unique in terms of its location, regional presence and mandate, age, research profile and graduate enrolment levels. All recommendations are designed to strengthen UNBC’s capacity to realize its strategic objectives in a tightly constrained resource situation. The proposed structure generates some direct budget savings, but more importantly it positions UNBC to make better decisions and operate in more cost effective ways to enable its mission and its sustainability.

1. The President’s Executive Team

The current model, shown below, is composed of separate portfolios with unified effort, in the past, largely dependent on close supervision by the President. Indeed, in recent years, most major issues and decisions appear to have been handled directly by him. While this arrangement worked at an earlier stage of UNBC ‘s development, the current executive team is not well served by a model that fails to reflect the more complex nature of today’s issues, and by the need to foster a more collaborative, team-based approach at all levels of the organization.
The Current Executive Structure
(at the time the review commenced)

This structure yields a small Executive Team with well developed coordination and support functions that can enable a truly collaborative approach to university leadership. Its core members would be the President, Provost, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the Executive Director, University Advancement.

To be an effective team, each member’s leadership responsibilities need to be clear and distinct. In particular:

- the President should focus primarily on strategic leadership, community and government relations, and resource development
- the Provost should focus on academic leadership and assume responsibility for integrated planning and internal operations
- the CFO should focus on the effectiveness and integrity of the university’s resource planning, management and accountability systems

Recommendation 1: Implement the new executive structure represented in the chart below and described in the notes that follow.

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- the President should focus primarily on strategic leadership, community and government relations, and resource development
- the Provost should focus on academic leadership and assume responsibility for integrated planning and internal operations
- the CFO should focus on the effectiveness and integrity of the university’s resource planning, management and accountability systems
To implement the new model, the following actions should be taken:

- Empower the Provost to act as Chief Operating Officer (COO). This reflects the intent of the “Provost” title and is consistent with practice at a growing number of Canadian universities.

- Eliminate the position of Vice-President Administration and Finance and create a Chief Financial Officer. This change emphasizes the strategic importance of sound fiscal planning and management, and reinforces the Provost’s COO role. (This is described more fully under Recommendation 6.)

- Eliminate the position of Vice-President Research and create a Vice Provost Research and Graduate Programs reporting to the Provost. This facilitates more effective integration of academic programs and research at UNBC. (This is described more fully under Recommendations 2 and 3.)

- The Executive Director, University Advancement would remain focused on development and alumni relations, especially the launch of the campaign. This position was recently given a new mandate and no change in its scope is recommended at this time. The Executive Director should also continue to provide leadership to the External Relations priority area as part of ECPE. It should be noted that the range of activities embraced by this ECPE initiative extend beyond those undertaken solely within the Advancement portfolio. Specifically, in addition to the campaign and alumni relations, the External Relations priority area should include branding and marketing as well as relationship development and management. This illustrates an important point. Reorganization cannot eliminate the ongoing need for “matrix-like” approaches to UNBC’s most important initiatives.

- Change the title of Director of Media and Public Relations to Director of Communications and Marketing. This more accurately reflects the department’s important support role for all ECPE priority areas including, but not limited to, External Relations.

- Create the position of University Policy and Governance Officer to support UNBC’s governance, policy development and compliance activities, including freedom of information. The position should also advise on and coordinate legal services.

- Assign responsibility for Athletics to the President. This takes advantage of his extensive experience with and personal interest in this ECPE priority area.

- Develop an administrative support group supervised by a Manager, Executive Team Support to realize integrated workflow across the senior administration, Senate and Board of Governors. The group would function as a common service to the university’s governing bodies and number of senior administrative offices. It would also facilitate more effective coordination and communication among the leadership team’s executive assistants. The Manager should report administratively to the Provost, consistent with his COO responsibilities.

Position descriptions and terms of reference will need to be developed for all positions affected by the new structure positions and should be completed within six months of
implementation. New incumbents may need some assistance and support as they take up new roles and accountability functions.

2. The Provost
The current structure, shown below, has too many people reporting directly to the Provost, and the units they supervise vary enormously in size and complexity. Many of their activities are closely related, but they tend to operate quite independently of one another. This places unreasonable pressure on the Provost to be involved in operational and management issues, and leaves insufficient time for sustained leadership activity. It is appropriate that the Provost has been leading the campus-wide ECPE process, and he has demonstrated that the institution is ready to adopt a more integrated, strategic approach to planning. Unfortunately the Provost’s portfolio is not currently set up in ways that will bring these plans to life.

The Provost’s Current Structure

At the same time UNBC needs to achieve better integration and fully realize the COO role by moving additional functions into the Provost’s portfolio. These include the Vice-Provost Research and Graduate Programs and the Manager Executive Team Support, both of which were described in Recommendation 1. They also include the Director, Human Resources and the Director, ACIS, both of which would move from the portfolio of the Vice-President Administration and Finance.

These considerations dictate significant reorganization to reduce the number of direct reports, cluster like units and place them under the leadership of senior positions with clear mandates, and create better organizational alignment with UNBC’s key priority areas.
This new structure will enable the Provost to focus on academic leadership and, as COO, to direct integrated planning and internal operations. It builds on the AVI, creates an organizational focus on ECPE priorities in the areas of enrolment management, research and regional operations, and sets the stage for NorthLink.

To fully implement this new model, the following actions need to be taken (in addition to those described in Recommendation 1):

- As part of creating the new position of Vice-Provost Research and Graduate Programs (from Recommendation 1), eliminate the position of Dean of Graduate Studies. This new position and its relationship with the Deans of CSAM and CASHS are described in Recommendation 3.

- Create the new position, Dean of Teaching, Learning and Technology, with the responsibilities described in Recommendation 4. Note that this structural change also merges CTS (formerly reporting directly to the Provost) and ACIS (formerly reporting directly to the Vice-President Administration and Finance) to create a single unit reporting to the new Dean of TLT.

- Expand the mandate of the Dean of Enrolment Management to include student service, registrarial and student advising functions and change the title to Dean of Student Success and Enrolment Management. (This is described in detail in Recommendation 5.)

- Change the reporting relationship of the Director, Human Resources from the Vice-President Administration and Finance to the Provost. This creates opportunities to improve coordination and avoid overlap in faculty and staff human resource services. It gives the Provost direct access to additional professional support in the areas of organizational and professional development, an important consideration given the challenges posed by new organizational structures and processes. It also makes it easier for Human Resources to participate in student employment initiatives. Note
also that the CFO would provide financial and administrative oversight on pension and benefit matters (described in Recommendation 6).

3. Integrated Undergraduate/Graduate Academic Programs and Research

UNBC has been very successful attracting research funding, especially when one considers its size. It also enjoys a higher relative level of graduate enrolment than one would expect in an institution of similar size. Nevertheless, despite this success, the current structure poses challenges that need to be addressed.

The Current Structure

The above chart reveals a significant organizational separation between the three areas of research, graduate studies and undergraduate studies. The current organizational model is more typical of a larger university and does not easily allow integration of research directions and activities with undergraduate and graduate programs. For example, Graduate Studies operates in quite an isolated fashion. It is not well integrated with either the Colleges' undergraduate programs or the activities of Office of the Vice-President Research. This situation interferes with maximizing the growth potential of UNBC’s graduate programs. It also appears that organizational divisions have contributed to over investments in underperforming undergraduate programs and tied up limited resources. Left unaddressed this will frustrate the realignment of academic programs called for by the AVI.

Larger institutions establish this type of structure to cope with the scale of their operations and, as a result, have begun to wrestle with integration problems at the executive level. UNBC is much smaller, however, and is unnecessarily creating many of the same coordination problems for itself.
This structure will make it easier to align program and research planning, continue developing graduate programs and enrolment in a coherent manner, and for the entire academic organization to take better advantage of the leadership and support available in the research portfolio. It should enable more extensive faculty involvement in research planning and projects, and create new graduate student/program opportunities as well as research project opportunities for senior undergraduate students.

The structure will enable UNBC to move forward on Phase 2 AVI implementation, supporting greater integration of graduate and undergraduate programs to achieve a more focused academic and research agenda. It will facilitate the growth of selected high quality graduate programs and allow UNBC to continue competing successfully for research funding and training support. More generally it should also contribute to the achievement of UNBC’s enrolment management goals.

To fully implement this new model, the following actions need to be taken (in addition to those described in earlier recommendations):

- Create the new position of Associate Dean Graduate Programs.
- Establish a Graduate Program Council to steer graduate program planning and processes. It should be chaired by the Vice-Provost Research and Graduate Programs and consist of the new Associate Dean Graduate Programs, the Deans and faculty graduate advisors.
- Working with the Graduate Program Council and others on the Provost’s leadership team, task the Vice Provost Research and Graduate Programs to:
  - review current activities and planned initiatives to ensure a focus on thematic areas over next three years
  - identify underperforming programs and courses that do not fit with AVI’s Thematic Academic Clusters and Foundational Themes and design a process to reduce faculty resource commitments in those areas

Recommendation 3: Implement the integrated academic programs and research structure represented in the chart below and described in the notes that follow.
- review the effectiveness of the portfolio’s research services, exploring opportunities to restructure and reduce costs, especially through collaboration with other units
- pursue partnerships in the regions to support applied research and related graduate program activities through research site services
- explore new opportunities for online services in Prince George and the regions with Director of Regional Services and Dean of Teaching, Learning and Technology

4. Teaching, Learning and Technology

Organizational disconnects are strikingly evident when one examines the array of units involved in teaching, learning and technology services. (Relevant components of the current structure are represented in the diagram below.) No one disputes that separate academic and administrative IT service units – CTS and ACIS – contribute to inefficiencies (for example, duplication in help desks and systems support arrangements). In addition the Centre for Teaching and Learning is marginalized, its location within Regional Programs contributes to confusion about its mandate, and its distance education and online support activities are poorly coordinated with both ACIS and CTS.

The Current Teaching, Learning and Technology Support Structure

The separation of these units has resulted in very limited coordination in support of students, the research community and a variety of other institutional services, and has placed them in direct competition for resources. Indeed, when NorthLink emerged, it became self-evident that these structural problems, left unresolved, would make it impossible for UNBC to take on such an ambitious project.

In the past few years most Canadian universities have created or expanded their learning and technology support structures, and have taken steps to integrate both planning and service delivery. There is an urgent need for UNBC to do the same.
Recommendation 4: Create the Teaching, Learning and Technology organization represented in the chart below and described in the notes that follow.

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<th>Dean, TLT</th>
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<tr>
<td>UNBC NorthLink Project Development &amp; Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>University Librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director, Teaching, Learning &amp; Technology Services (TLTS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Skills Services</td>
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<td>Director, IT Services (ITS)</td>
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<td>Educational Media Services</td>
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This structure facilitates more efficient and more effective IT and teaching and learning support services within UNBC. It positions the University to capitalize on the opportunities presented by NorthLink. It is also designed to further the objectives for innovative pedagogy emerging from the AVI process, as well as other ECPE-related goals in the areas of regional development and enrolment management.

To fully implement this new model, the following actions need to be taken (in addition to those described in earlier recommendations):

- Confirm and formally communicate the mandate of the new Dean of Teaching, Learning and Technology. This mandate should emphasize the importance of an aggressive, collaborative approach to innovation in pedagogy, online learning delivery and support, and the delivery other IT services.

- Merge ACIS and CTS, including Educational Media Services (EMS), to create an Information Technology Services (ITS) unit under a single Director. ITS is to provide an integrated set of services in support of students, faculty and administration.

- Create a new position, the Director of Teaching, Learning and Technology Services, to provide coordinated professional, technical and production services, and manage onsite and distributed course design and production services. It should be noted that this is not just an enlargement of the current distance education model, it means that the new arrangement facilitates the development and support of new pedagogies and delivery models across all programs.

- Change the reporting relationship of the University Librarian from the Provost to the Dean of Teaching, Learning and Technology. This change creates new
opportunities for integrated planning and service delivery, especially with respect to the access, distribution and use of learning materials/resources.

- Move Learning Skills Services from Student Services to TLT to achieve an even sharper organizational focus on effective learning design and support.

5. Student Success and Enrolment Management

The organizational challenge here is similar to the one confronting Teaching, Learning and Technology. As the chart below demonstrates well, current arrangements involve a large number of distinct units in different aspects of student recruitment and retention, many of whom are quite small.

Key Elements of the Current Structure

Not only is this structure inefficient, it is impossible to realize the focused effort required to achieve ECPE goals, especially in the area of enrolment management. Student demographics and expectations are changing, but there is no assurance that, without change, different parts of the university will rise to this challenge in consistent, mutually reinforcing ways. In addition policies and practices that are failing to serve university needs remain in force (such as credit transfer arrangements). Unit heads find themselves competing for resources and sitting at diverse planning tables, and they tend to develop localized goals that are not reconciled with the university’s overarching priorities. This situation was particularly apparent in Student Services.

As a number of other universities have recently discovered, the structure needs to change in order to centre the institution’s attention on common goals and strategies relating to student success and enrolment management.
The new structure represents a better organizational framework within which to pursue UNBC’s enrolment management goals, to maximize service efficiency, convenience and responsiveness, and more generally enhance student success. It will enable a more integrated, consistent and cost effective approach to recruitment, registration and retention services. By working closely with the TLT and Regional Services portfolios, it should facilitate better coordinated support for online and other forms of distributed program delivery outside Prince George.

To fully implement this new model, the following actions need to be taken (in addition to those described in earlier recommendations):

- Resolve and communicate each change in title, job responsibilities and reporting relationship associated with the implementation of the new model.

- Task the Dean, working with rest of the SSEM leadership team, to take advantage of opportunities created by the new structure to critically examine all services and staffing levels. The goal should be to eliminate activity that is not adding sufficient value, reduce costs in transaction-oriented work, and maximize the resources directly serving student success and enrolment management goals.

- In particular task the person in the newly configured role of Director, Student Success, working with the Dean and the rest of the SSEM leadership team, to develop a sustainable, more integrated set of student services whose priorities and targets flow directly from ECPE objectives.

- Use the Provost’s leadership team to resolve the ongoing debate about the merits of centralized vs decentralized student advising. Current arrangements appear to be a
source of inter-unit conflict and may interfere with efforts to facilitate more “self service” and in other ways automate the more routine aspects of student advising. The governing decision criteria should be the quality of service to students and overall cost effectiveness.

- Further to the previous point, use the Provost’s team to reduce the complexity of program requirements, particularly block transfer arrangements.

6. The Chief Financial Officer

The former President provided budget leadership with the assistance of the Vice-President Administration and Finance. Instead of a primary focus on the effectiveness of university-wide resource planning and management activities, the latter role has been largely focused on managing “the non-academic side of the house”.

The Administration and Finance portfolio was structured accordingly. A large number of corporate and ancillary service units have reported directly to the Vice-President, and the position has been very heavily involved in detailed, administrative matters. The lack of integrated activity at the executive team level has been mirrored in the operation of the Administration and Finance portfolio. Indeed the “hub and spoke” image in the chart below is quite appropriate.

In addition to chronic shortages, growing complexity, risk and accountability demands characterize the resource environment of most universities. Many have been rethinking executive team mandates and structures to allow the senior financial officer to focus on these challenges. UNBC is no different. Recommendation 1 speaks to the creation of a Chief Financial Officer and the primary responsibilities of each Executive Team member. Other recommendations have already addressed the move of ACIS and Human Resources to the Provost’s portfolio. Further structural changes are recommended to enable the newly conceived CFO to carry out its resource planning and stewardship role.

The Current Structure
Recommendation 6: Create the CFO structure represented in the chart below and described in the notes that follow.

This structure enables a more focused, team-based approach to the CFO’s role. Operational management responsibilities are delegated and each unit has more staffing depth, addressing the critical mass problems associated with the existence of large numbers of small units. In addition to concentrating on the university’s resource planning, decision making and accountability processes, the CFO is in a position to stay on top of the most critical financial and business-related developments, including those in the portfolios of other Executive Team members. For example Housing’s budget situation needs to be monitored closely; in its early years the Northern Sport Centre will require close attention; benefits cost containment will always be a priority; and the business and financial dimensions of major projects like NorthLink demand due diligence and careful oversight.

To fully implement this new model, the following actions need to be taken (in addition to those described in earlier recommendations):

- Establish a “dotted line” relationship between the Director of Human Resources and the CFO with respect to the financial and administrative aspects of HR’s operation, particularly those relating to pensions and benefits.

- Once the current program of major construction projects is complete, recombine the Capital Projects and Planning unit with Facilities Management to create a single facilities development and management group.

- Consider very seriously the centralized events planning proposal recently developed by staff in Administration and Finance. There are significant opportunities to use the approach outlined in the proposal to realize financial gains, and promote UNBC’s visibility and the use of its facilities, including the Northern Sport Centre.
• Place the CFO’s ancillaries under common management. This size of this job requires a manager with sufficient seniority that it would permit meaningful delegation by the CFO. It would also create some important synergies, in particular between the Northern Sport Centre and Events Planning/Conference Services.

F. NEXT STEPS

UNBC is relying heavily on new organizational arrangements to realize its longer term, strategic objectives and at the same time deal with its immediate budget crisis. Without underestimating the challenges posed by the recommendations in this report, Leading by Design is confident that UNBC enjoys the leadership commitment and strength to be successful. To fully enable the new structure and its leadership, however, work needs to continue on integrated planning and budgeting. Leadership responsibility for the task falls to the Provost, working closely with the rest of the Executive Team.

Recalling Section D, "Recommendations on Budgeting, it is critical that future budget decisions be driven by ECPE plans and priorities, and that academic and service objectives be realized through effective implementation processes and practices. This requires UNBC to design a complete workflow for the annual cycle that would specify (a) activities and outcomes for each step in the process, (b) major decision points and (c) responsibilities and accountabilities of all key participants. Such a framework addresses the main goals of empowerment, integration and accountability.

The budget strategy approved by the Board of Governors on January 27 calls for significant expenditure reductions, budget reallocations and modest income improvements over the next few years. Leading by Design was extensively involved in the strategy’s development, and considers it to be a responsible and feasible response to the problem. It is entirely consistent with the definition of a balanced, sustainable budget contained in Section D. Some expenditure reductions flow directly from the recommendations for organizational change in this report. Implementation of the biggest parts of the budget strategy, however, needs to be placed in the hands of the new structure and its leadership teams, and success will depend on the same workflow process.
Appendix 1

Interviews

The following is a list of those interviewed individually and in groups. Many were consulted several times between October and January.

Executive
1. Don Cozzetto, President
2. Howard Brunt, Provost and Vice President Academic
3. Sharon Cochran, Vice President Administration and Finance
4. Max Blouw, Vice President Research
5. Tom Berekoff, Executive Director, University Advancement
6. Rob Van Adrichem, Director, Media and Public Relations
7. Shannon Barber, Executive Assistant to PEC
8. John DeGrace, University Secretary
9. Dave Snadden, AVP Medicine

IT and related Services
10. Patrick Mann, Director CTS
11. Lynda Pattie, Director ACIS
12. Winnie Fok, NorthLink consultant
13. Andrew Snih, EMS
14. Heather Smith, CTL
15. Lynda Williams, CTL
16. Group meetings with:
   a. All ACIS, CTS and EMS unit heads
   b. ACIS and CTS staff without heads
   c. All ACIS, CTS and EMS staff

Deans, Directors, Coordinators
17. Paul Madak, Dean, Enrolment Management
18. Bill McGill, Dean, CSAM
19. Jim Randall, Dean, CASHS
20. Bob Tait, Dean, Graduate Studies
21. Alison Nussbaumer, University Librarian
22. Dennis Macknak, Director, Regional Operations
23. Peter Rans, Director, Coop Education
24. Susan McIntyre, Director, Student Services
25. Carolyn Russell, Director, International Operations
26. Kathy Kielly, Administrative Registrar
27. Paul Michel, Director, First Nations Centre
28. Tamsin Miley, Research Services Manager
29. Godfrey Medhurst, Director, Campus Planning and Capital Projects
30. Shelley Rennick, Director Facilities Management
31. Colleen Smith, Director, Finance and Budgets
32. Mike Knudson, Director, Human Resources
33. Donna Plourde, HR Advisor, VP Academic
34. Sheila Keith, Director, Purchasing, Contract and Risk Management
35. Bernadette Patenaude, Operations Coordinator
36. Jennifer Studney, Conference and Events Coordinator
37. Len McNamara, Athletic Director
38. Davida Stafford, Development Officer
39. Jennifer Meade, Development Officer

**Group Meetings:**
40. Group meeting with Student Services leadership team
41. Group Meeting with Lorne MacGregor, Director, University Industry Liaison Office, Peter Jackson, Research Office and Research Project Officers
42. 6 meetings with ECPE group leaders.
43. 2 open meetings with Faculty and Program chairs
44. PEC Meeting

**Interview Questions**

**Organizational Review**

These questions are intended to provide you with a framework for our meeting.

1. What are the priority goals for your area of responsibility for the next five years?
   - With which Embracing Change, Promoting Excellence (ECPE) priority area do these goals fit most closely?
   - Which other ECPE priority areas are important to your area’s success?

2. What are the barriers to achieving your area’s goals? Are there other barriers to achieving the objectives in the 6 ECPE priority areas?

3. When you look at the current structure and functions, do you anticipate the need for changes, especially in light of pressures to increase enrolment, address budget problems, adapt to changes in student demographics and expectations, and increase service to the regions?
   - In particular:
     - What are the current strengths? What new needs are evident?
     - How do you see the NorthLink initiative affecting UNBC’s current structures and plans?
     - Are there organizational models in other institutions that warrant examination and possibly emulation?

4. The University has cultivated a positive culture and approach to collegial relationships.
   - How effective are internal communications?
   - What opportunities exist to debate pan-institutional goals and plans?
   - How effective are the university’s planning and decision making processes?
   - Are planning and implementation mechanisms sufficiently integrated?

5. The quality of the total student experience has profound implications for UNBC’s recruitment and retention success and meeting the enrolment targets established by the province.
• How should the quality of the learning experience and student success be enhanced in a research university like UNBC?
• Can you suggest ways the leadership and management structures and associated processes should develop to meet this challenge?
• How do you see the Northern Sports Centre and new opportunities for recreation and athletics contributing to meeting that challenge?
• Do you see the Campus 2020 review and its reflection on the priorities of the Ministry of Advanced Education exerting any influence on UNBC’s opportunities to expand enrollment?

IT Review

These questions are intended to provide you with a framework for our meeting.

1. What are the priority goals for your area of responsibility for the next five years?
   • With which Embracing Change, Promoting Excellence priority area do these goals fit most closely?
   • Which other Embracing Change, Promoting Excellence priority areas are important to your area’s success?

2. What are the barriers to achieving your area’s goals? What are the barriers to achieving the objectives in the 6 ECPE priority areas?

3. Describe the NorthLink project in your own words, as it affects UNBC and the wider communities UNBC serves.

4. How do you see the NorthLink initiative affecting UNBC’s current structures and priority plans in the short term and in the longer term?

5. How will your department need to change to meet the NorthLink challenge:
   • in the next year?
   • 3-5 years out?

6. Are there models in other institutions/regions for building the infrastructure and capacity NorthLink requires that warrant examination and possibly emulation?

7. The quality of the total student experience has profound implications for meeting the university’s enrolment goals set by the province and satisfying its growth ambitions. NorthLink and an enhanced IT service structure will be key parts of this effort.
   • How can your area enhance the quality of the learning experience and student success?
   • Can you suggest how structures and associated processes should develop to meet that challenge?
   • How should your department contribute to providing more extensive research and learning services in the regions?
   • Who do you need to work with more closely?