

New Mexico State University
College of Arts and Sciences
Shared Service Center
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Outline

- New Mexico State University and the College of Arts and Sciences
- Shared Service Center Concepts
- Negotiations
- Outcome?

New Mexico State University

- As we know, many universities are adopting shared service centers of one kind or another. They may seek efficiency, and in a time of declining budgets or Responsibility Centered Management, there are additional reasons to reduce the number of staff.
- New Mexico State University has taken to some degree its own path.
- We are not an RCM school, except that our office for instructional technology can dictate its own fees to colleges. But we do have budget issues and efficiency concerns.
- A little about NMSU and A&S.

New Mexico State University

- NMSU is a land grant university with 16,300 main campus students. We have six colleges, extension offices, and a well-funded Physical Sciences Lab. Four NMSU branch community colleges also receive federal grants.
- The state does not take our IDC. It also does not fund research costs (with exceptions for agriculture and some line items). Most research administration, start-up and cost shares are funded by central and college IDC.
- Each major grant-receiving college has an internal Research Center. They try to help PIs locate grants and build grant teams.

New Mexico State University

- Engineering and Agriculture have pre-award and post-award staff, and Agriculture has a research-HR person.
- A&S has only post-award staff now who are paid through IDC. We handle grant accounting for most departments in our college, but Astronomy historically handles its own accounting. We handle accounting for about \$15,000,000 in expenditures per year for most departments, and an Astronomy person handles their \$4,000,000 per year.
- NMSU's OGC under the VPR reviews and sends out awards, and it contacts agencies. SPA under the VPFA conducts grant expenditure reviews, as we do, and invoices agencies. HR reports to the Provost.

Our Version: National Movement

- There are duplication and interface issues. Engineering and Agriculture pre-award staff shape proposals, but OGC then also reviews and submits them under tight deadlines. The work done by college post-award staff is reviewed by college center leaders, by SPA, and by Auditing.
- Recent declines in F&A have led to staff reductions at all levels. Efficiency could help the remaining staff to handle all awards. Freeing up IDC could allow larger start-ups.
- Our Provost decided to begin with research administration SSCs at NMSU. Most universities have SSCs for general business practices. A few such as Emory have had an early research or partial research focus, and the research focus is growing now.

Provost's Goals

- Our Provost, PIs, and associate deans wanted efficiency and a simpler system for PIs so they can focus on submitting proposals and carrying out awards.
- The Provost hoped to achieve efficiency and free up IDC. He had a separate goal of reducing I&G (state-tuition funded) staff to free state funds and hire more faculty.
- His research-SSC model: create Shared Services Centers in each major grant-recipient college to combine pre-award, post-award, and HR research processes. In a second phase, add travel and purchasing.
- In effect, decentralization. OGC, SPA, HR disapproved.

A&S Center

- At first the Provost discussed starting with an Agriculture SSC. That college already had pre-award, post-award, and HR staff.
- He then shifted to starting with an A&S Center. Adding pre-award and HR staff to us would be relatively straightforward. Combining post-award would be more complex.
- He originally thought that an A&S Center could also service all \$5,000,000+ per year in community college grants, while the future Engineering and Agriculture Centers could service other colleges. The Physical Sciences Lab might get its own Center.

CCs, Three Task Forces

- We objected to handling the community colleges, especially since HR wanted our research Center to originate all hires, not just research hires.
- The Provost decided to include the community colleges in a potential College of Education center.
- He created three research task forces.
- Force One recommended streamlining. Their report called for revamping a central computing system to tell PIs about their available grant funds. It emphasized using Shared Service Centers to streamline service.
- Force Two: to revamp the central computing system for PIs.

Forces, Central Model?

- We thought that our own PI grant “shadow books” are more up-to-date and precise. The VPR also urged adopting his own grant reporting system. It is unclear what will be adopted, but all agree that our shadow books will continue for at least a year after a new system begins.
- Force Three: to review current staff roles for OGC, SPA, A&S and HR staff, recommend training and shape an A&S Center reporting structure. Astronomy would remain separate.
- Force Three meetings included central office leaders, an AVPFA and myself. They pushed for centralization, not a college-based Center, with our staff absorbed into SPA, and our Center housed at OGC, SPA and HR sites.

Others' SSC Models

- The SPA rep thought the number of our staff moved to SPA and paid by A&S might expand if portfolio review indicated that more were needed.
- The group said that I could contact OGC, SPA and HR team leaders or supervisors if our PIs had any concerns.
- They saw our SSC as a template for all other colleges.
- The Force visited Emory University. It has teams/team leaders taken from schools, with central control through AVPs for Research Administration and for Shared Service Centers.
- Vastly more funding; Emory spent \$1,750,000 for PWC study, and will end up adding staff.

Others' SSC Model

- The NMSU central offices liked the Emory model.
- The AVPFA developed a chart listing Astronomy's post-award person and our post-award leader as remaining in A&S for "orphan duties." While the Provost had said that I would be the A&S SSC day-to-day director, the chart had a dotted-line SSC relationship for the Dean and myself.
- HR agreed to provide one person to give advice about research positions and process HR steps, but their Task Force rep asked for a second position funded by someone else (suggesting A&S) to originate all hires and thus allow efficiency and attrition in A&S department staff.

Our SSC Model

- Much of Spring-Summer 2014 was spent reviewing all roles, debating reporting lines, debating Center locations.
- We insisted that the A&S Center be located near our Dean's Office and other support staff. I would be day-to-day director and work with SSC team leaders. Our Dean and I would meet monthly with PIs. She would meet quarterly with VPs, AVPs. I would take part in joint staff evaluations for OGC, SPA and HR staff.
- I worked with departments for extensive office moves in our building to open space for the A&S SSC. The Dean re-assigned some of my roles (graduate programs, building projects) to others so I could focus on the Center.

A&S Model

- We eventually had productive meetings with the OGC and HR staff who would come into the Center. The post-award process remained under discussion.
- We wanted our A&S Research Center associate director to lead our post-award staff, with the SPA person in the Center providing advice/training and handling SPA-related functions.
- Task Force members proposed giving our staff more training and possible promotions, and giving them more final signature authority, as if they were in SPA. They continued to insist on the SPA person leading our staff.

A&S Model

- The Provost became concerned about delays. He began monthly meetings with VPs, our Dean and I to speed up discussions and begin training.
- Our Dean and I, plus a staff member, held meetings with the VPFA and SPA director.
- Compromises emerged.
- Post-award signature authority for our Dean will go to our post-award staff, not to either our associate director or a SPA person.
- Our associate director will create a unified training manual for present/future staff, work on effort reports, etc.
- The SPA person would handle SPA-specific duties, train our staff, and distribute award handling among them.

A&S Model

- I would be day-by-day director and share in staff evaluations for staff from OGC, SPA and HR.
- We must still weave in OGC and HR staff; develop timetables for cross-training and office moves to our building; find funding for furniture and equipment; discuss support staff; carry out training; publicize the Center; and adapt to the new Uniform Guidance requirements.
- We also need approval from NMSU Audit Services and from HR to allow our staff signatory authority and semi-promotions.
- The process continues to unfold towards a March 2015 start date – we hope!

