

**SUNY Cobleskill • SUNY Delhi**

**Shared Services Report  
to  
Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher  
State University of New York**

**Submitted By:  
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July 15, 2012**

**TO:** Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor, State University of New York

**FROM:** Candace S. Vancko  
President, SUNY Delhi  
Officer in Charge, SUNY Cobleskill

**RE:** Shared Services

**DATE:** July 16, 2012

In keeping with the Resolution on Shared Services approved by the Board of Trustees on December 9, 2011, I am pleased to submit my report on shared services between SUNY Cobleskill and SUNY Delhi. Attached please find an executive summary and the report which provides greater detail.

Writing this report has been helpful in that it forced reflection on the past year's efforts on behalf of the shared services initiative. "Beginning with the end in mind," as advocated by Stephen Covey, compelled me to start by seeking input at a joint retreat of senior administrators from both campuses, asking them to develop an organizational structure that would best serve the goals of shared services. The outcomes in this report are the result of the leadership provided by an experienced team with a strong commitment to implementing shared services initiatives across both institutions.

It's important to bear in mind that at the time shared services were initiated, the SUNY Cobleskill campus environment was unique; it had experienced a history of weak leadership characterized by frequent turnover, was losing enrollment which negatively impacted the campus's fiscal wellbeing, had a "run down" physical plant, faced faculty governance issues (as identified by the State University Faculty Senate Visitation Team) and failed Standard 7, "Institutional Assessment," during its spring 2011 Middle States accreditation visit. Cobleskill was facing significant challenges and much of the work conducted this past year focused on remediating these through administrative shared services. I am pleased to report our efforts were successful—the "revisit team" from Middle States "found evidence that SUNY Cobleskill meets this Standard" and enrollment for fall 2012 looks promising (a modest overall increase is projected). We have made progress in resolving faculty governance issues and very significant capital improvements are underway this summer that will dramatically improve the campus's appearance by the opening of fall semester. That said, we also accomplished a great deal in terms of shared services, including savings at both campuses, refocusing savings on academic investments at both campuses, and "setting the table" for significant shared services initiatives over the next several years.

Making a recommendation regarding a presidency model is very difficult. I believe in the value of shared services and also believe that without shared leadership accomplishing shared services and the expected savings would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. SUNY's experience with the UCT model is the best proof of that. I also understand why each campus needs its own president—a president is the public face and identity of the institution, the campus's chief friend and fund raiser and the single voice of the college to the greater community. I believe it is in the best interests of Cobleskill and Delhi for each to have its own president. The Middle States Commission found Delhi out of compliance with Standard 5: Administration, requiring evidence "that there is a chief executive officer in place whose primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals." This language was also included in Cobleskill's re-visitation report. Surveys on both campuses revealed strong support for having a president on each campus. Faculty and staff hold the perception that any gain on each campus is offset by reduced access to senior administrators. Additionally, wide-spread concern was expressed over the personal challenges to shared administrators working at two campuses an hour's drive apart.

A unified administration will, of course, depend on the needs of each respective campus president. Our shared administrative alignment is working exceptionally well and I anticipate Cobleskill and Delhi sharing a president and senior administrative staff through at least the 2012-13 academic year, while we continue to pursue additional opportunities for sharing at all levels.

## **Shared Services Executive Summary: SUNY Cobleskill and SUNY Delhi**

### **1. Show significant progress toward a 10% increase in direct instructional budget from each campus's current base.**

Shared services will realize approximately \$700,000 in administrative savings for the two campuses overall. To date, a shared president's salary, shared Cabinet salaries, several shared positions and other shared initiatives have generated \$286,000 in savings for Cobleskill and \$433,000 in savings for Delhi. These savings are being invested in support of instruction.

### **2. Include a plan for the full alignment of administrative functions with the eventual goal of a single unified administration**

A full alignment of administrative functions was developed at a joint cabinet retreat in October, 2011. Each campus has a Provost and Vice President for Student Life. Shared cabinet positions include: VP for Business & Finance, VP for Operations (HR, IT and Facilities), VP for College Advancement (Development, Alumni, Grants) and VP for College Relations (Communications, PR). Over the long term, a unified administration will depend on the needs of each campus. Our shared administrative alignment is highly effective and I expect Cobleskill and Delhi will continue to share a president and senior administrative staff through at least the 2012-13 academic year.

### **3. Show significant progress towards full consolidation of all information systems and services**

We have made significant progress towards full consolidation of all information systems and services. Initiatives include: Delhi hosting Moodle for both campuses, hiring of a shared webmaster and an IT procurement specialist, shared best Banner practices including advancement training and "Degreeworks," redundant internet connections, proposed sharing of an instructional designer and joint procurement of electronic medical record software for student health centers.

### **4. Recommend a presidency model, whether that is a shared presidency or one president for each campus**

Making a recommendation regarding a presidency model is very difficult. I believe in the value of shared services and also believe that without shared leadership, accomplishing shared services and the expected resultant savings, would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. SUNY's experience with the UCT model is the best proof of that. I also understand why each campus needs its own president—a president is the public face and identity of the institution, the campus's chief friend and fund raiser and the single voice of the college to the greater community. I believe it is in the best interests of Cobleskill and Delhi for each to have its own president. The Middle States Commission found Delhi out of compliance with Standard 5: Administration, requiring evidence "that there is a chief executive officer in place whose primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals." This language was also included in Cobleskill's re-visitation report. Surveys on both campuses revealed strong support for having a president on each campus. Faculty and staff hold the perception that any gain on each campus is offset by reduced access to senior administrators. Additionally, wide-spread concern was expressed over the personal challenges to shared administrators working at two campuses an hour's drive apart.

A unified administration will, of course, depend on the needs of each respective campus president. Our shared administrative alignment is working exceptionally well and I anticipate Cobleskill and Delhi sharing a president and senior administrative staff through at least the 2012-13 academic year, while we continue to pursue additional opportunities for sharing at all levels.

## **Shared Services Report: SUNY Cobleskill and SUNY Delhi**

### **1. Show significant progress toward a 10% increase in direct instructional budget from each campus's current base.**

Shared services will realize approximately \$700,000 in administrative savings for Cobleskill and Delhi combined. On a campus-by-campus basis, the savings totals are:

Cobleskill: \$286,000.

Delhi: \$433,000.

Beyond shared administrative positions, both campuses reduced the number of full time academic deans from three to two. At Cobleskill the number of department chairs was reduced from thirteen to eight with chairs receiving a two course (six contact hours) load reduction/semester. Reducing the number of chairs resulted in moving resources from administration to teaching (approximately two full time faculty positions). Savings at Cobleskill for the 2012-13 academic year will reduce the campus's operating deficit and will be invested in priority academic programs (as defined by the recently completed academic prioritization plan) starting in the 2013-14 academic year. Savings at Delhi are supporting nine new full time instructional positions for fall 2012.

We identified best practices at each campus to be replicated at the other campus and assessed functional units for additional savings/operational efficiencies:

- Closing Delhi's print shop/outsourcing print services to Cobleskill, providing savings to Delhi and revenue for Cobleskill
- Consulting services – EOP, financial aid, townhouse development, student activities, auxiliary services, community service
- Sharing content management system
- Creating an in-house capital crew at Cobleskill
- Sharing vehicles, tools, and equipment in emergencies
- Instituting joint contracts for health, safety inspections, hazardous waste disposal
- Securing local agreement allowing Cobleskill employees to work after hours on capital projects, resulting in an average savings of 25 percent per job
- Centralizing administration of employee recruitment and criminal background checks
- Developing workplace violence prevention program to be implemented at both campuses
- Adopting some of Delhi's HR procedures and staff development programs for Cobleskill
- Collaborating on internship and student employment programs
- Piloting joint accounts payable initiative
- Supporting new procurement staff at Delhi by Cobleskill
- Sharing administrative functions for international student employment
- Participating in joint legal training

It is not possible to document the exact dollar amounts moved from administration to the instructional budget until completion of this budget year. Moreover, currently a mechanism to designate shared salaries and travel expenses across two campuses does not exist.

## **2. Include a plan for the full alignment of administrative functions with the eventual goal of a single unified administration**

The Joint Cabinet Team is comprised of the Provost & Student Life VP at each campus, and shared VPs for: Business & Finance, College Advancement, College Relations and Operations (HR, Facilities, IT). These shared VPs split their time between the two campuses. Each campus cabinet meets weekly and as a joint cabinet at least once/semester. We engage in frequent needs assessments to ensure that support at each campus is backfilled as necessary and analyze respective workloads. Campus-based initiatives such as Cobleskill's academic prioritization task force (comprised of faculty members across campus) played a key role in providing direction and priorities for academic resource reallocation.

In addition to shared administrative positions, both campuses reduced the number of full time deans from three to two. At Cobleskill the number of department chairs was reduced from thirteen to eight with chairs receiving a two course (six contact hours) load reduction/semester; reducing the number of chairs resulted in a movement of resources from administration to teaching (approximately two full time faculty positions). Savings at Cobleskill will be used to invest in top priority academic programs (as defined by the recently completed academic prioritization plan) in the 2013-14 academic year. Savings at Delhi will be invested to support nine new full time instructional positions.

We also developing shared positions in grants (taking advantage of Cobleskill's record of success), shared technical expertise (gasifier) across campuses and employed best practices in reorganizing Delhi's Alumni Association. Residential life staff from both campuses participated in joint training and students from both campuses participated in a conference on volunteerism and diversity. Cobleskill is modeling Delhi's established community service best practices and participated in Delhi's "Best Teaching Practices," among other professional development programs. Likewise, Delhi faculty and staff have been invited to Cobleskill's fall 2012 professional development workshops.

Because Cobleskill faced a number of challenges, the shared Cabinet focused efforts for the 2011-12 academic year on:

### **1. Middle States' Decennial Visit (Spring 2011)**

Cobleskill's initial Middle States visit occurred during spring 2011. That visit resulted in a warning issued by the Commission on Standard 7, Institutional Assessment, and requiring a "small team" visit within twelve months. Successfully meeting the requirements of Standard 7 and earning full accreditation was the highest priority. The shared administrative team did everything possible to support Cobleskill's efforts to fulfill the requirements of Standard 7.

### **2. Enrollment**

Years of inadequate enrollment management had put Cobleskill at a serious disadvantage with declining numbers of freshmen and transfer applicants. Prior to the initiation of shared services, Cobleskill had taken significant steps to reverse their downward enrollment trend. The Joint Cabinet affirmed this strategy and dedicated resources in support of a short-term enrollment plan (fall 2012). Additionally, a revised organizational structure for enrollment management and the development of long-term strategies for recruitment and retention were approved.

### **3. Campus Appearance**

Despite a significant reserve fund, Cobleskill faced numerous infrastructure and aesthetic problems. Most notably, the main entrance to several buildings—where most prospective students and faculty form their first impression of the campus—featured crumbling concrete and neglected landscaping. We determined that this needed to be addressed immediately, and I authorized the use of capital plan funds to begin repairs and improvements. Again, this was an

area in which senior staff at Delhi had experience, and we were able to leverage this expertise to help Cobleskill.

It's clear that without the attention and guidance of our experienced shared administrative team, Cobleskill would not have been able to resolve these critical challenges let alone in such a short period of time.

Full alignment of administrative functions will depend upon the presidency model, the needs of each campus and perhaps most importantly, the individuals serving in a shared capacity. I have been exceptionally fortunate in working with individuals both at Cobleskill and Delhi who have willingly and energetically embraced shared services.

### **3. Show significant progress toward full consolidation of all information systems and services**

We have made significant progress towards full consolidation of all information systems and services. To date we have:

- Created shared webmaster position – filled in spring 2012
- Created shared IT procurement position – search underway
- Developed e-marketing for Cobleskill admissions
- Shared Banner best practices including advancement training and Degreeworks
- Shared SUNY records management training
- Centralized web content management training and internal communication

Additional potential for savings include:

- Delhi hosting Moodle for both campuses
- Sharing instructional designer
- Sharing procurement of electronic medical record software for student health centers
- Enhancing access to IT resources at both campuses
- Implementing VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) traffic between campuses
- Increasing use of video conferencing
- Providing redundant internet connection
- Sharing Server backup
- Linking 1 GB network
- Sharing “Footprints” service center software

The items listed above demonstrate significant progress toward consolidating information systems and services. I believe, however, that full consolidation may best be achieved through significant centralized “systemness.” Areas for SUNY to explore might include: a common platform for SUNY online courses, a common Banner format and professional development and training. In addition, I would hope that SUNY would provide enhanced IR reporting services to campuses. While campuses may initially resist such moves, in the long term it is to both the campuses’ and SUNY’s advantage in terms of significant projected savings. Certainly, in the age where students shop for courses and colleges, having a SUNY system benefits us all.

## **Shared Services Priorities for the 2012-13 Academic Year**

Academics hold the greatest potential for sharing services, offering many opportunities to share faculty, courses, students and facilities. Unfortunately, because Cobleskill faced challenges on many fronts during the 2011-12 year, shared administrators were forced to focus on resolving those challenges and were unable to initiate shared services within academics. During the joint cabinet retreat in July, we agreed that exploring opportunities for sharing within academics would be our highest priority for the upcoming academic year. The Provosts at Cobleskill and Delhi will co-chair a task force comprised of faculty representing each campus charged with making recommendations regarding the best opportunities for sharing. We also believe it would be beneficial to invite SUNY Morrisville to participate in this task force. Cobleskill, Delhi and Morrisville have much in common--their rural upstate locations, size, student populations and program offerings. This is an excellent opportunity to explore and potentially expand shared services. We will continue to develop alliances within our libraries, international offices and veterans' services among others. Additionally, we will be conducting internal assessments on academic support services and administrative functions to determine other opportunities for shared services, efficiencies and savings.