Analysis and Prioritization of the Director of Administration

Program
SOEST Administrative Services.

Category
Program is essential to the operations of any university.

Review and Analysis of Program
Goals and Objectives:
To provide administrative support to facilitate both research and academic operations with efficiency, accountability, and accuracy in a timely manner.

Services Provided:
To provide administrative support services, problem solving, and technical advice on project administration related matters. Services include, but are not limited to overseeing and approving purchases, payments, travel, verifying and annotating full-time equivalency and cost sharing reports, inventory management, personnel transactions, developing/administering budgets, and providing grants management to various departments within the School.

Services Received:
Field departmental/program unit administrators initiate and feed documents to the administrative services unit; the unit reviews and approves these documents; and in turn rely on central administrative offices for processing and for advisement to increase efficiencies. As a result of the low clerical/faculty support ratio of the School, additional workload is pushed to the administrative unit to ensure proper documentation are processed and completed.

On what tasks/services does this unit collaborate with other units?
All aspects of the unit rely on collaboration and coordination with internal and/or external offices. The various Administrative Services sections of SOEST are all encouraged to collaborate with other units outside of the School. The personnel office works with OHR on special review committees and on various policy making committees. The budget office works with Manoa budget office and also participates in various committees. The fiscal office works closely with the Director of ORS and her various sections in order to provide feedback and/or review of new policies and procedures. Because of the administrative unit’s sound reputation and the large size of extramural funds the School brings into the University (33%), the administrative staff is often called upon by VCRGE and OVCAFO to participate on review committees and act as pilot groups for various initiatives. Despite having an unfavorable faculty to staff ratio of 17:1, the School has taken on fiscal management leadership to multi-disciplined, cross-campus collaborations programs such as CMMED, MARBEC, PRCMB, and EPSCOR where the home base is not necessarily SOEST.
Services Available Elsewhere?
Similar units exist throughout the University of Hawaii system; however these services are decentralized and each School is responsible for their own administrative operations.

Funding Source:
Funding for administrative operations is provided through general, tuition, and RTRF funds. Major programs such as centers and institutes requiring specialized administrative needs are funded directly by extramural awards.

Needs/Demands the Unit Cannot Meet?
Continuous growth of the School’s extramural funding requires continuing efforts to recruit experienced personnel. In addition, there is demand from field units for personalized program assistance. However the unit is limited by operational funding resources and lack of qualified employee pools. The unit is also experiencing increased responsibilities as central offices continue to pass down and delegate responsibilities to the field level.

Staffing:
The School currently employs 32 administrative staff consisting of fiscal officers, administrative officers, personnel officers, and a budget officer.

Basic Responsibilities:
Staff is expected to stay abreast of emerging concepts and policy revisions, and also required to interact with, communicate with, and provide services to a wide variety of personnel such as students, administrative staff, principal investigators, outside sponsoring agencies, outside auditors, and other University officials. Staff must be knowledgeable in the principles, theories, and rules and regulations related to sponsored project administration. Staff is required to interpret relevant regulations, guidelines, and standards in order to identify potential administrative problems and implementing internal policies to ensure good fiscal management and compliance.

Staff works in a high stress, high demand environment dealing with a variety of users on all levels from sponsors to PIs to other administrators. They work with hard deadlines requiring quick turnarounds. Responsibilities deal with all aspects of institutional and extramural funding, from pre-award proposal review, awarding, account set-up, grants monitoring of accounts, FTE certification, cost sharing reports, and close outs of awards. Staff is expected to have expertise in dealing with all types of grants, RCUH direct and service ordered projects, and other sponsored activities and all the various types of funding: federal, state, private, general, RTRF, and tuition funds.

Due to the size and volume of our School, the divisions of the units tend to be centralized and there is little or no cross training between the units. However within each subunit staff is cross trained, i.e. any fiscal officer from the fiscal office can provide coverage for another fiscal officer within the School but not a personnel officer.
Technologies:
UH/RCUH accounting, procurement, personnel, budget systems. UH financial and personnel data warehouse. Microsoft Office: Excel, Access, Word. Basic internet access and access to server. Technical support received from SOEST research computer facility or UH/RCUH centralized IT office.

Success Reviewed?
The unit is reportable to the Dean’s office, central offices, funding agencies, and internal and external auditors. Customer satisfaction is another indicator.

Evidence of Performance:
- Meeting reporting deadlines and requirements.
- Good financial management; maximizing use of funds within budget.
- Avoiding audit findings and questioned/disallowed costs.
- Avoiding union grievances.

The growth in extramural awards received is a reflection of sound administrative management. If the School was not successful in its administrative management practices, funding agencies would not continue to fund the School’s programs.

Peer Units:
There are other units that are similar; however each School or Department has differing needs and requirements based on the discipline of science, type of research being performed, sources of funding, size, volume, etc.

Efficiency and effectiveness:
The administrative organizational structure has been established in order to maximize limited resources to improve efficiencies. The administrative cost funded by institutional sources (G, S, R funds) is $1.7 million, or 6.5%, of total School institutional allocation. The administrative staff supported by this amount manages a total of approximately $114 million of institutional, extramural and RCUH revolving funds. The personnel office processes over 500 UH employee positions per year.

Outcome of Program Review
Growth and investment is necessary in order to meet increasing workload as evidenced by continuous award funding growth of the School and additional delegated responsibilities from central offices. There is a need to improve the low clerical ratio and increase the number of administrative support at the departmental/program level. Increasing the number of competent and knowledgeable staff providing direct support to the programs/departments would reduce the administrative burden to the PIs/researchers and help improve the efficiency of the administrative process.