

South Carolina State University

Office of Internal Audit and Process Improvement

Process
Improvement
Plan

2016 - 17

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
2016-17 PROCESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The University currently faces many challenges such as low enrollment, diminishing state appropriations, reduction in workforce, furloughs, along with higher expectations from stakeholders for service excellence and accountability. As a result, the senior administration is looking for ways to improve and transform the way the University operates and improve the “brand of South Carolina State University.

There are many opportunities for process improvement at the University that will lead to efficiency and effectiveness on both the academic and administrative side that will result in improved customer satisfaction. Process Improvement is about making things better, rather than maintaining the status quo. It is not about just finding a ‘fix’ to a problem, but about learning what causes things to happen in a process and using that knowledge to remove activities that do not contribute value. Business Process Improvement is defined as “improving quality, productivity, and response time of a business process, by removing non-value adding activities and costs through incremental enhancements.”¹ In our case, this will include academic and administrative processes.

The objectives for any BPI initiative are:

- Effectiveness – Does the process produce the desired results and meet the customer’s/client’s needs? Does the process lead to effective student outcomes? Effectiveness focuses on the customers/clients and whether the process delivers what they want.
- Efficiency – Does the process minimize the use of resources and eliminate bureaucracy? Efficiency focuses on the employees responsible for the overall process, the workers in an Agency and how easily they can use the business process.
- Adaptability – Is the process flexible in the face of changing needs? Adaptability evaluates how easily you can modify the business process on the basis of changing business requirements.²

This document provides the 2016-17 Process Improvement Plan and describes the methodology that will be used to examine key processes in specific areas. The Plan is designed to provide coverage of the highest ranking risk areas that have a significant impact as identified by the Office of Internal Audit and Process Improvement; however, changes may be made to the

¹ BusinessDictionary.com definition

² Susan Page, The Power of Business Process Improvement,, American Management Association, 2010, Page, p. 7

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Process Improvement Plan subsequent to approval due to changes in business risks, timing of University initiatives, and staff availability.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT 2016-17 WORK PLAN

The mission of the Office of Internal Audit and Process Improvement is to assist the Board of Trustees and University management in the discharge of their oversight, management and operating responsibilities. To that extent, process improvement, with a focus on improving customer relations, will be the primary role of this office for 2016-17.

A process may be defined as a series of steps and decisions involved in carrying out a work function. All processes are vital to the functioning of an office or division; however, some are more important than others. Priority will be given to those processes that if the process is functioning poorly, students will become frustrated and the University will not be able to fulfill its mission. During the 2016-17 fiscal period, our mission will be accomplished by:

- a. Reviewing key processes at the University, with a focus on eliminating waste of money, people, time, and opportunities and improving customer relations.
- b. Using the Basic Process Improvement Model to identify deficiencies in key processes that significantly impact students and the University and make recommendations for improvement to optimize the use of resources and identify where technology solutions may support the process.
- c. Creating an environment in which a process improvement mentality permeates throughout all levels at the University on a regular basis resulting in more efficient and effective operations and improve the experiences of students who engage in those processes.
- d. Reviewing and appraising the soundness of internal controls and the reliability and integrity of financial, managerial and operating data.
- e. Providing independent and objective assurance and consulting services, where needed, that are designed to add value and improve organizational efficiencies and effectiveness and customer relations.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic and accelerated approach will be used to quickly review and improve key processes at the University. As a preliminary step, each division and units within the University have been asked to conduct a self-assessment of risk factors perceived in their units. This was reviewed by the Process Improvement Team to identify and prioritize processes for review during 2016-17. Based on the team's review and assessment of significant risk factors for the University, the following processes have been identified for review:

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1. Financial Aid Award/Verification/ and Notification Process
2. Housing Assignment Process
3. Marketing and Communication Process
4. Student Recruitment Process
5. Admission and Registration Processes
6. Advising and Retention Process
7. Course Scheduling Process
8. Hiring/Human Resource Process

Each of the above processes will be examined from the viewpoint of all participants and stakeholders, internally as well as externally, who engage in or is impacted by the process. The approach will include the following step for each process:

- Establish the process improvement objective. This will be measurable and answer the question of what improvement we want to accomplish.
- Define the scope of the process and conduct a process audit to determine what is currently being done in the process. This will entail observing what is being done and interviewing key players in the process.
- Prepare a flow chart of the process from beginning to end to understand how a process works and where it can be improved. The flow charting of a process may cross departmental lines and into other processes and will depict what is actually happening, rather than what someone thinks it should be or what a procedures manual says it should be. The flow chart will help identify internal control deficiencies, redundancy, unnecessary steps, wasted resources, and other problem areas.
- Analyze the cause of problems in the process.
- Collect data from other universities and resources to determine solutions to the problems.
- Identify and recommend solutions to address the problems. Prepare an implementation plan for improvements.
- Monitor the improvements to determine impact and assure sustained success.

For processes selected for review, the focus will be on evaluating the economy and efficiency with which inputs, controls, outputs and resources are employed and how students are impacted. Everyone at the University has a stake in one or more process, but the immediate supervisor who has control over the process from beginning to end is considered the process owner and will be involved in the process review.

Process Improvement Model

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WORKPLAN

The table below provides a tentative guide for completion of the process improvement plan for 2016-17.

PROCESS	PROCESS OWNER(S)	TIMEFRAME
Financial Aid Award/Verification and Notification Process	VP Enrollment Management Financial Aid Director/Assistant Financial Aid Director	September 26 – October 14
Housing Process	VP Student Affairs/Director of Housing	October 17– October 31
Marketing and Communication	Associate VP Institutional Advancement/Director of Public Relations	November 7 – November 11
Student Recruitment Process	Recruitment Coordinator/VP Enrollment Management	November 14 – December 2
Admission Process	Director of Admission/VP Enrollment Management	November 14 – December 2
Advising and Retention Process	VP Enrollment Management/Director of Student Success and Retention	November 14 – December 2
Course Scheduling Process	VP Academic	November 14 – December 2

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	Affairs/Deans/Chairs	
Registration Process	Registrar	December 5 – December 16
Financial Reporting Process	VP Finance	December 5 – January 31
Hiring/Human Resources Process	VP Finance/Director of Human Resources	December 5 – December 16
Procurement Process	Director of Procurement/VP Finance	January 16 – January 31

The work plan will be modified as needed.

Submitted by:

Internal Audit and Process Improvement Team

September 16, 2016