

UNIVERSITY BUSINESS EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE



Considerations for Organizing Senior Administration and Reporting Departments at Public Universities

Custom Research Brief

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I. Research Methodology

Project Challenge *Leadership at a member institution approached the Roundtable with the following questions:*

- What similarities and differences exist between organization charts of peer institutions?
- What is the rationale behind the organizational structure of senior administrators other institutions?
- What factors were considered when determining the organizational structure? Did personalities of individual administrators play a role in organizational structure?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages to various organizational structures?
- How have organization charts at other institutions changed over time? What drove these changes and what outcomes have been witnessed?

Project Sources

- Education Advisory Board's internal and online (www.educationadvisoryboard.com) research libraries
- Institutional web sites
- National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (<http://nces.ed.gov>)



Research Parameters

The Roundtable interviewed senior administrators at select public institutions.

A Guide to the Institutions Profiled in this Brief

| Institution | Region | Carnegie Classification | Approximate Enrollment (Total/Undergraduate) | Type |
|--------------|-----------|--|--|--------|
| University A | South | Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields | 6,600/6,400 | Public |
| College B | Northeast | Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields | 6,900 (all undergraduate) | Public |
| College C | South | Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields | 6,200 (all undergraduate) | Public |
| University D | Midwest | Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields | 6,100/6,000 | Public |
| University E | South | Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs) | 7,100/6,400 | Public |
| University F | South | Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs) | 5,500/4,800 | Public |
| University G | South | Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields | 5,500/5,400 | Public |

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

II. Executive Overview

Key Observations

Each contact institution organizes the senior administration and reporting departments differently. All contact institutions maintain a separate division for finance and operations, academic affairs, and student affairs. However, differences occur among the organization of information technology, institutional advancement, and enrollment management divisions.

Contacts describe several factors that determine the organization of senior administrators and departments at their institutions, including institutional history, budget concerns, senior leader preferences, and administrator expertise or personality.

All contact institutions employ a vice president for finance and operations who is responsible for all university administrative services. Contacts explain that a combined division allows the vice president to focus on customer service in all support services provided to university constituents. However, contacts at two institutions caution that a combined finance and operations division places an overwhelming responsibility on the vice president to oversee all departments and personnel.

While all contact institutions maintain a single division for business and finance, three institutions employ a separate vice president or chief officer for information technology. Contacts report that a separate vice president for information technology provides more attention to strategically planned services and future initiatives. In contrast, contacts at one institution suggest that information technology should be housed with the administrative and business division because the function supports all of the university's operations. Additionally, contacts suggest the information technology department report to the vice president for finance and operations to ensure oversight of the department's increasingly expensive costs.

Four contact institutions include development and university relations departments in a single division of institutional advancement; an integrated fundraising and marketing system creates a robust fundraising effort that increases revenue for the institution. However, contacts at two institutions emphasize the importance of a separate vice president or director for external relations, with a direct reporting line to the President, to maintain community relations and support.

Four contact institutions house enrollment services within student affairs, one contact institution houses enrollment services within academic affairs, one contact institution houses enrollment services within institutional advancement, and one contact institution maintains a separate enrollment services division. Contacts organize enrollment management within the division of student affairs in order to align the department's goals with student recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation. One institution separated enrollment services into a single division as a result of decreased state funding, which has led the university to depend on tuition as a primary funding source.

III. Overview of Senior Administration Organizational Structures at Contact Institutions

Organizational Structures for Senior Administration

Contacts describe several factors that determine the organization of senior administrators and departments at their institutions, including institutional history, budget concerns, senior leader preferences, and administrator expertise or personality. However, most contacts emphasize that an institution's organizational structure must reflect its primary mission to support students and enhance student success. Contacts at **College C** suggest that senior leaders begin reorganization by considering the mission of the university and functions of each division. After determining the changes necessary to achieve these goals, senior administrators can consider the capabilities of the person in each position, and reorganize if necessary. The following table outlines the current senior administrators with a direct reporting line to the president or chancellor across contact institutions.

"You can have the best model in the world, but if you don't have the right people in the right slots, it's not going to work."

-Roundtable interview

Organization of Senior Administrators at Contact Institutions

| Senior Administration | University A | College B | College C | University D | University E | University F | University G |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Provost, VP for Academic Affairs* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| VP for Student Affairs* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| VP for Finance and Operations* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| VP for Information Technology* | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| VP for Institutional Advancement* | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| VP for External Relations* | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Director for Development* | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| VP for Enrollment Services* | | | | | | | ✓ |

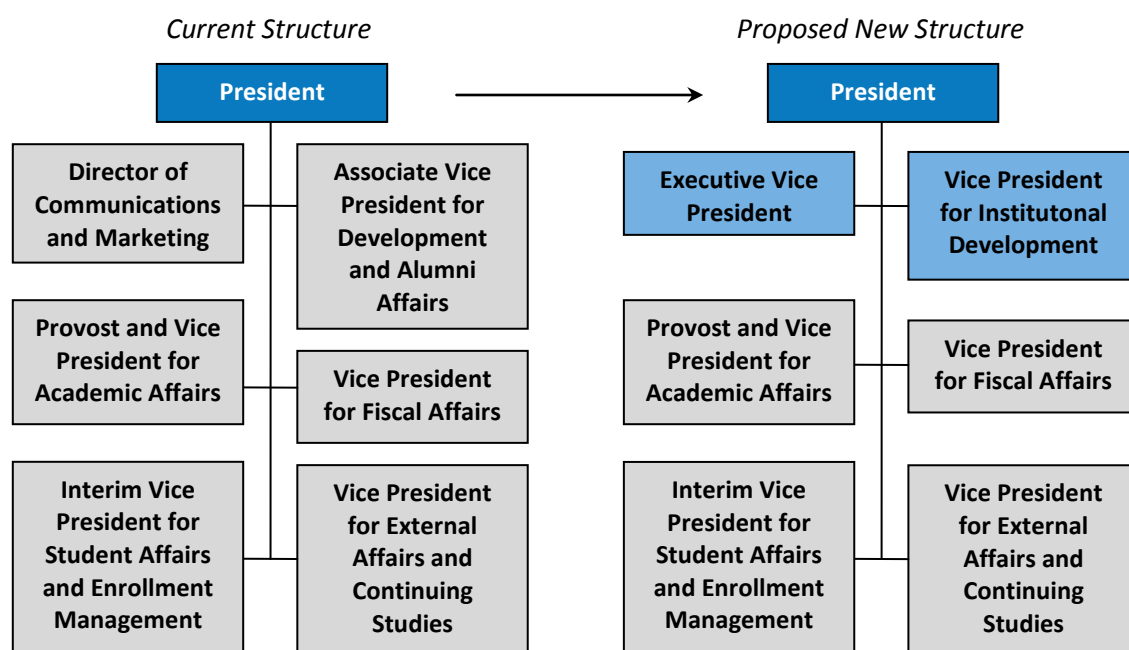
* Title of position may vary across contact institutions.

Spotlight: Planned Reorganization at College C

The new President of **College C**, who began at the institution in July 2011, immediately reorganized the direct reporting lines for some senior administrators and plans to reorganize other reporting lines next year. Prior to implementing these changes, the President met with senior administrators, direct reports to the senior administrators, and other constituents during campus-wide meetings to gain feedback about advantages and disadvantages of the institution's previous organizational structure. According to contacts, the President focused position realignment on both the productivity of each department and the personalities and expertise of senior administrators. Contacts report that the President communicated the structure change to the campus community after gaining widespread support from the majority of constituencies.

The immediate reorganization included relocating management responsibilities for the information technology department to the Provost's portfolio and creating a Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. The planned reorganization for next year includes a consolidation of duties for the communication, marketing, and development departments into a single Division of Institutional Development managed by a single vice president. In addition, the new structure will include an executive vice president position, though contacts are currently uncertain about the exact roles and responsibilities of that position. If approved, the reorganization will take effect in January 2013.

Reorganization of Senior Administrators at *College C*



IV. Factors Influencing Organizational Structures

Contacts describe the following factors that influence the organization of senior administrators and departments at their institutions.

Institutional Context

Institutional History

Often an institution's history or tradition determines the organization of senior administrators or departments; many contacts cannot explain the rationale for certain elements of an institution's organizational structure because they were determined many years ago, often when the institution was founded. Organizational structures can also be influenced by local or state culture; contacts at **University A** explain that their organizational structure is typical among universities in their state.

Budgetary Concerns or Reductions

Across contact institutions, budgetary reductions lead to consolidation of vice presidential responsibilities to cut costs. Contacts at **University G** suggest utilizing the expertise of other institutions within the university system when budget concerns prevent the hiring of additional personnel. Due to decreased budgets, **University D** employs only four vice presidents; however, contacts explain that increased funding would most likely expand the organizational structure to include an additional senior leader.

Senior Leader and Administrator Influences

Preferences of Current President

Reorganization typically occurs when a newly hired president or chancellor prefers a different senior leadership and departmental structure. Contacts explain that preferences are often based on the perceived functions of a department. For example, the previous Chancellor transferred the responsibility of residential life to the Vice Chancellor for Administrative and Business Affairs at the **University G** due to financial and operational concerns. However, the newly hired Chancellor moved residential life under the division of student affairs because the function of the department aligns with others in the division of student affairs (i.e., to serve students).

Administrator Expertise

During reorganization, administrators must balance departmental functions with the expertise, experience, and workload capacity of vice presidents.

Administrator Personalities

When necessary, senior leaders at contact institutions transfer responsibilities between vice presidents due to personality conflicts. In addition, vice presidents with long-term experience at the institution and a collaborative attitude may gain extra responsibilities. For example, at **University F**, the Vice President for Student Affairs gained responsibility for enrollment services due to his long tenure and ability to collaborate with others across the institution.

V. Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Organizational Structures

Finance and Operations *All Contact Institutions Combine Finance and Operations in a Single Division*

Contacts describe both advantages and disadvantages of employing a vice president for finance and operations who is responsible for all university administrative services.

Advantages

- ✓ **Customer Service:** A combined division allows the vice president to focus on customer service in all support services provided to the university.
- ✓ **Communication and Collaboration:** A combined division leads to increased collaboration and communication among departments, thus increasing efficiency in all processes.
- ✓ **Fewer Senior Administrators:** Contacts at **University F** find that adding another layer of administration by separating finance and operations into two divisions is unnecessary at an institution of their relatively small size.

Disadvantages

- ✗ **Overwhelming Portfolio:** Contacts at two institutions explain that a combined finance and operations division places an overwhelming responsibility on the vice president to oversee all departments and personnel. Contacts suggest either separating the functions into two divisions in order to reduce each vice president's portfolio or hiring staff with additional expertise to help manage daily responsibilities.

Information Technology *Three Contact Institutions Employ a Separate Vice President for Information Technology*

Contacts at **University A** and **University F** report that a separate vice president for information technology provides more attention to strategic planning and future initiatives. In contrast, contacts at the **University G** suggest that their information technology division should instead be housed with their administrative and business affairs division because the function supports all of the university's operations.

Reorganization of Information Technology at *University F*

After the Chief Information Officer (CIO) retired three years ago, the President of **University F** added the information technology division to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services' portfolio due to his long tenure at the university and effective communication skills. Last year, the President hired a new CIO and once again created a separate division of information technology; the newly hired CIO can pay strategic attention to technology as the university continues to grow in enrollment.

Three Contact Institutions House Information Technology within the Division of Finance and Operations

Contacts provide the following reasons for organizing information technology within the Division of Finance and Operations:

- 1 **Management of Funds for Technology:** Contacts at **College B** suggest the information technology department report to the vice president for finance and operations to ensure oversight of the department's budget. Due to the rising cost of software and equipment, contacts emphasize the importance of organizing information technology within the portfolio of a senior administrator with finance expertise.
- 2 **Budget Concerns:** Budget reductions at **University D** currently prevent the employment of a separate vice president for information technology; contacts suggest that increased funding could lead to an additional vice presidential hire. An additional vice president would primarily benefit the finance and operations department by removing several responsibilities from the vice president for finance and operation's portfolio.
- 3 **Administrator Expertise:** The Executive Vice President at **University E** is responsible for finance and operations, as well as information technology, due to his expertise and experience; previously, he held a position as director of institutional research and computer services.

One Contact Institution Houses Information Technology within the Division of Academic Affairs

The President of **College C**, who began at the institution in July 2011, added information technology into the Provost's portfolio because he felt the work of both departments is closely aligned, and information technology supports all academic departments.

Institutional Advancement

Four Contact Institutions Combine Development and University Relations into a Single Division of Institutional Advancement

Contacts at **University A** explain that an integrated fundraising and marketing function creates a robust fundraising effort that increases revenue for the institution.

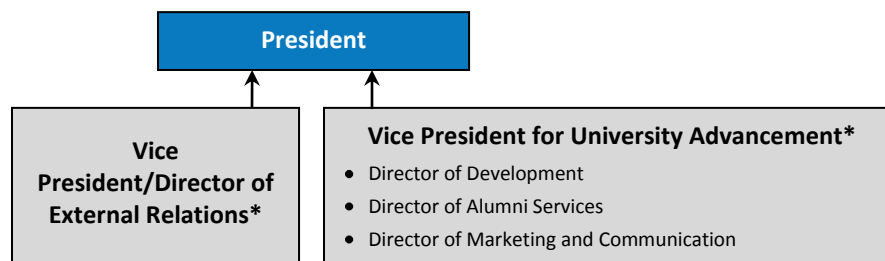
Athletics Department at University E

Previously, the athletics department at **University E** was organized within the Division of Student Affairs. Due to personality conflicts, the President relocated athletics to the Division of Institutional Advancement; while solving a staffing issue, the university can also increase fundraising efforts for athletics. Contacts explain that student athletes do not receive special treatment at University E, allowing the athletics department to focus on administrative duties and public relations, instead of student athlete support and development.

Two Contact Institutions Employ a Separate Vice President or Director for External Relations

Contacts at **College C** and **University D** emphasize the importance of a separate vice president or director for external relations, with a direct reporting line to the President, to maintain community relations and support. Contacts at University D explain that strong connections with the community and local legislative bodies are paramount for an institution that recently transitioned from a community college to a four-year institution.

Organization of the External Relations Division at Two Contact Institutions

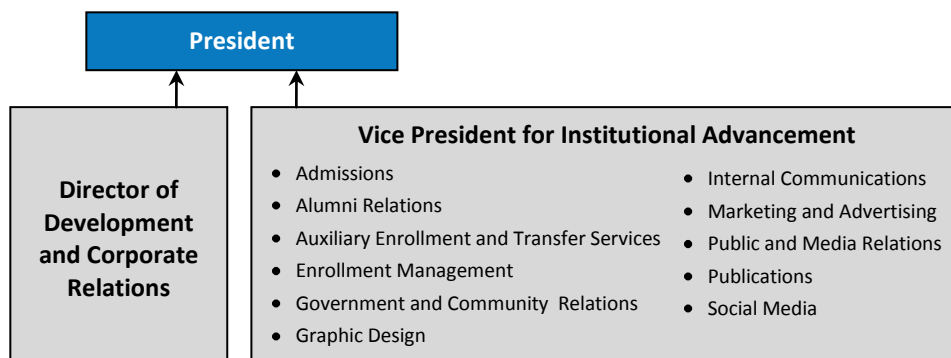


* Title of position may vary across contact institutions.

One Contact Institution Employs a Separate Chief Development Officer

The Development Director at **College B** oversees all fundraising activities for the institution and maintains a direct reporting line to the President. Contacts explain that the organization of the Development office as a separate division is a result of institutional history.

Organization of the Development Division at College B



Student Affairs *All Contact Institutions Maintain a Separate Division for Student Affairs*

The responsibility for managing Student Affairs at **University G** falls to the Dean of Students instead of a separate vice president position.

Contacts emphasize the importance of maintaining a vice president for student affairs with a direct reporting line to the president in order to align student services with the institution's mission of student success. However, contacts at **University G** find that student affairs should be housed under the division of academic affairs in order to align the mission of academic departments with supporting students outside of the classroom.

Two contact institutions report that all student services, including auxiliaries such as food services, the bookstore, ID cards, and the student union, should be managed by the vice president for student affairs instead of the vice president for finance and operations in order to create a "one-stop shop" for students. For example, the Vice President for Student Affairs and

Enrollment Services at **University E** oversees the university police because they provide a safety and development function for students on campus.

Enrollment Management

Most Contact Institutions House Enrollment Management within ...

Contacts at **College C** experience difficulty hiring a senior administrator with expertise in both student affairs and enrollment management.

...the Division of Student Affairs at Four Institutions

Contacts organize enrollment management within the division of student affairs in order to align the department's goals with student recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation. In addition, **University E** houses enrollment services within student affairs to provide students with a "one-stop shop" for all student services. In contrast, **University F** previously separated enrollment services into a single division, but after the vice president retired, administrators transferred responsibilities to the Vice President for Student Services; his long-time service with the university and effective communication skills encouraged administrators to add enrollment services to his portfolio.

...the Division of Academic Affairs at One Institution

At **University A**, the department of enrollment management is housed within the division of academic affairs and reports to the Provost.

...the Division of Institutional Advancement at One Institution

Earlier this year, the enrollment management department at **College B** was housed within the division of academic affairs and reported to the Provost. As a result of health issues, the Provost could no longer manage the additional responsibilities in her portfolio. The Vice President for Institutional Advancement volunteered to supervise enrollment management because those services closely align with marketing and advertising. However, contacts express concern about the Vice President of Institutional Advancement's relative inexperience with student admissions processes.

One Contact Institution Employs a Separate Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services

Previously, the enrollment services department at **University G** was housed within the Division of Academic Affairs. However, due to budget concerns and decreased state funding, administrators must depend on student tuition as a primary funding source. As a result, the Chancellor created a separate division of enrollment services in order to devote more resources and staff to managing and increasing student enrollment.

Contacts at **University E** report a similar rationale (i.e., decreased state funding) for housing enrollment management within student affairs. To combat budgetary concerns and increase student enrollment, administrators can strategically organize enrollment management in a division with either student development or marketing expertise.