

Root-Cause Analysis of Enrollment Process Challenges

Final Report and Recommendations

Prepared by Huron Consulting Services LLC for
The University of Arkansas at Little Rock

August 13, 2014



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Executive Summary

Huron would like to thank the Chancellor's Office, the Vice Chancellors, and all of the faculty and staff for this opportunity to get to know the University of Arkansas at Little Rock ("UALR") and to interact with its generous and thoughtful stakeholders. We feel privileged to offer our insights and recommendations at this critical juncture in UALR's history, and we look forward to the possibility of working closely with you again in the future.

Engagement Overview

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock invited Huron to conduct a process re-engineering analysis of the enrollment process and of the records and registration process in late April 2014. Our early findings revealed that UALR continues to be at a point of deep transition at nearly all levels of the organization. In our process analysis phase, we discovered that many of the process gaps we had identified were known issues that either had resolutions in progress or required senior leadership to address the most common process gap drivers: IT infrastructure challenges, inconsistently applied strategy and prioritization of initiatives, and a lack of clarity around roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. In order to assist UALR with addressing these process gap drivers and their root causes, we worked with the Project Sponsor to amend the scope of our engagement to provide the highest possible value.

Current State Assessment

Among UALR's many strengths are:

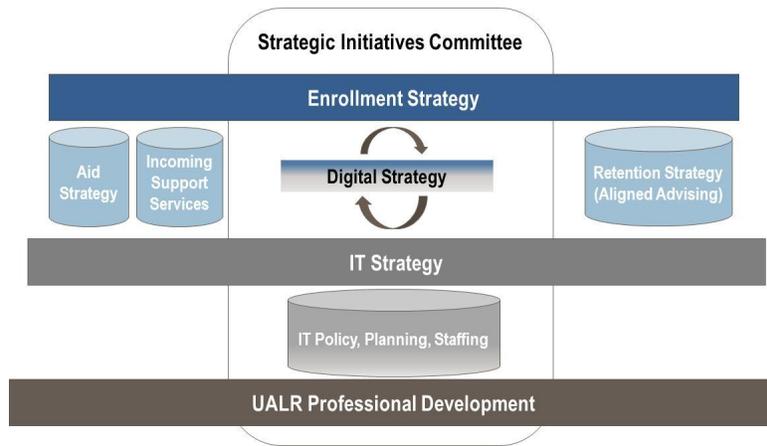
- Talented and caring faculty, staff, and leadership
- Strategic new hires and a streamlined, restructured organizational design
- Location in a vibrant metropolitan area
- Accessible academic programs in traditional classroom, evening/weekend, and online environments
- Convenient and accessible student services centers (e.g., Student Services, Student Center) and centers for specialized populations (e.g., Office of Transfer Student Services, Office of Concurrent Enrollment)
- Growing practice of outreach and relationship-building with prospective students, organizational partners, and the community at large

These strengths position UALR well to answer the needs of a complex postsecondary market and to take advantage of opportunities ahead. However, in order to claim a leadership position in UALR's highly competitive market, we recommend that senior leaders address the following drivers of inefficiencies and process gaps:

- Inconsistently applied strategy
- Lack of clarity around roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities
- Insufficient communication and knowledge management
- Insufficient technology infrastructure, support, and training
- Insufficient oversight of IT solutions campus-wide at the point of selection, installation, and maintenance
- Inefficient use of staff resources and coordination of third-party solutions
- Opaque decision-making processes

By addressing these fundamentals, UALR can realize significant improvements in the quality of its customer service and in the resolution of those process gaps that have evolved as creative workaround solutions or in response to a lack of decision-making authority at the front-line staff level.

Recommendations



We provide eight primary recommendations:

Recommendation	Benefit to UALR
UALR-Wide Enrollment Strategy	Institutional-level enrollment strategy aligns resources and guides selection and prioritization of initiatives.
Budget/Staff for Digital Strategy	Digital Strategy serves as the online student engagement engine between enrollment strategy and IT strategy. Critical to provision of seamless, integrated web services.
IT Strategic Alignment: Purchasing, Staffing, Planning	Stronger procurement policies enhance coordination and cost efficiencies; aligned IT talent strengthens understanding of business requirements at UALR; and investments in IT strategic planning supports alignment with enrollment strategy and student focus.
Campaign for Incoming Student Scholarships (e.g., Need-Based)	Closing the gap in need-based aid will enhance the application of EM strategy, create an opportunity for alumni impact and engagement, and offer students greater access.
Recruitment Council: Align Incoming Student Support Services	A cross-trained, empowered staff across EM functions reduces process workarounds and duplication, increases coordination, and improves the student experience.
Blended Academic Advising Model; Jointly-Managed NSO	Blended academic advising model (professionals and faculty) and student onboarding leverages deep subject matter expertise with accessibility, consistency, and accountability.
UALR Professional Development Initiative	A tiered, targeted professional development plan will support improved efficiencies and effectiveness, and strengthen an institutional culture of student-centric customer-service.
Strategic Initiatives Committee	Data-driven, objective, transparent process for opportunity identification, due diligence, selection, and prioritization

We believe these recommendations can be implemented within the 2014/15 academic year by following an ambitious but achievable action plan and timeline (included in the report and summarized as Appendix A). The commitment, collaboration, and coordination of the Chancellor’s Office, Vice Chancellors, Deans, leadership of the Faculty Senate, and key faculty and staff who directly support the enrollment process are critical to successful implementation.

UALR is poised to be a leader in academic innovation and community engagement in the University of Arkansas System and among its peers. Through the alignment of resources toward an overarching enrollment strategy, UALR can achieve its vision that was so passionately described to us during our conversations with you.

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Engagement Overview and Summary

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (“UALR”) invited Huron to conduct a re-engineering of the enrollment process (i.e., enrollment management and records) in late April 2014. UALR described its major concern as inconsistency in the level of the quality of its customer service resulting in an uneven student experience at the institution. UALR leadership hypothesized that unnecessarily complex processes in enrollment services prevented front-line staff from providing effective or efficient customer service. We conducted more than 40 interviews with key stakeholders and enrollment process owners in order to conduct a strategic enrollment diagnostic and to gain insight into enrollment policies, processes, and organizational context pre-and post-restructuring. We then analyzed more than a dozen separate enrollment processes to gauge administrative efficiency and the quality of the student experience across the institution.

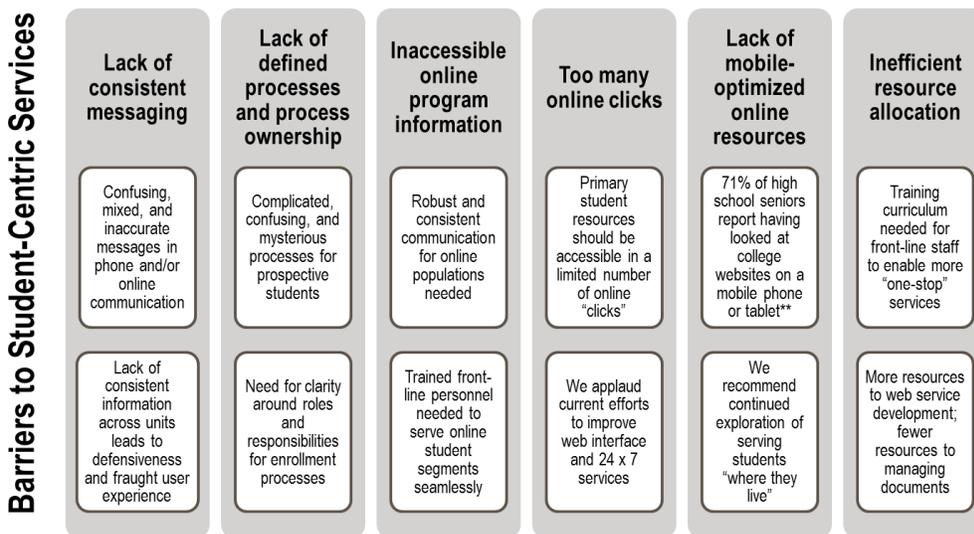
Our initial assessments confirmed that students do experience inconsistent service and support. For example, a review of responses across a number of student services surveys yielded the following student comments:

“...there are lots of gaps in the system and it is similar to **chasing wild geese around campus** trying to actually accomplish anything or fix unknown errors that prevent enrolling in classes. Also prerequisites not being recognized in the system **prevent enrolling in classes when there should be no problem.**”

“**Making it easier for students to enroll** in classes of different departments would open up way more possibilities and class enrollment numbers.”

“...Providing a better, more **comprehensive link between the technology and staff** would greatly improve the services provided. **Training the staff on the systems and procedures being offered online** would make these transactions flow more quickly and efficiently. Also providing an easier link between admissions/student services and the classes and departments would be less frustrating on the student end.”

Our secret shopping exercises further supported the claims of these student respondents, especially when we adopted the personas of specialized student populations (e.g., online students, transfer students). For example, our secret shopping findings and observations from the perspective of a prospective online student include:



** <https://www.noellevitz.com/about-noel-levitz/press-releases/2014-e-recruitment-practices-report>

However, our findings also revealed UALR to be at a point of deep transition at nearly all levels of the organization, juggling both deeply-entrenched and swiftly-shifting institutional culture, managing the business impact of recent restructuring and unit transition, and designing mechanisms for meeting the demands of launching a number of new enrollment initiatives at once. Many of the process gaps we identified as part of our process analysis research were known issues that either had resolutions in progress or required senior leadership to address higher-level process gap drivers such as:

- Institution-wide IT infrastructure challenges;
- Inconsistently applied strategy and prioritization of initiatives; or
- A lack of clarity around roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

In light of these findings, we shifted our level of analysis from measuring processes-in-transition to identifying the root causes underlying these pervasive process gap drivers.

Measuring process gaps is not the highest value we can offer UALR at this time

We offer an example of one of our process analyses to illustrate the pitfalls of attempting to capture process gaps during this time of transition:

- **Recruitment and Admissions Process Gaps:**
 1. **Gap:** Underperforming high school recruitment practices
 - **Observation:** Regular visits to local/target high schools are underway as of 2013
 - **Observation:** The low conversion rate of high school students who participate in UALR's concurrent enrollment program could be due to the lack of a dedicated manager for the program (which has been resolved as of 2013) and/or due to a poor first impression of UALR resulting from frustrating fee collection/parent communication issues (which are being addressed as of Summer 2014 with an online FERPA release form)
 - **Observation:** Consistent and targeted high school recruitment practices are too recent to have yielded measureable results
 2. **Gap:** Lack of consistency in capturing leads/inquiries
 - **Observation:** Difficulties in the implementation of Talisma are beginning to lessen as of June 2014
 - **Observation:** Recruitment and Admissions have recently experienced significant staff turnover. Several new hires were still in process as of early June 2014. Onboarding of recent hires is in process
 3. **Gap:** More staff time and attention are paid to processing daily "exception reports" from the student information system than to managing the development of relationships with prospective students
 - **Observation:** Challenging IT infrastructure leads to a high degree of time-consuming customization and workarounds to perform "business as usual;" staff are forced to manage the exceptions rather than the masses in order to ensure that prospects do not fall through the cracks
 - **Observation:** Rationalization of the 60 daily reports managed by Admissions is in process with a project request submitted to ITS as of June 2014
 4. **Gap:** UALR website landing pages for enrollment service units lack consistency and are built to accommodate silos of functions (institution-centric) rather than to accommodate a "one-stop shop" online experience that is student-centric

- **Observation:** Huron performed secret shopping exercises that included an in-depth assessment of the user experience in terms of navigating web-based enrollment services. After detailing a number of issues and concerns, we learned that new unit-level landing pages and online services had been launched as recently as mid-June 2014 and that even more enrollment services improvements were underway

We concluded that newly-hired and promoted unit leaders and managers in Recruitment and Admissions, and supporting business units, have not had enough time to implement plans, fully absorb the impact of recent restructuring and transition on day-to-day processes, support myriad new initiatives, and resolve a significant backlog of known problems. Many process gaps had not only already been identified, but were also being addressed simultaneously with our process assessment. [Please note: we selected Recruitment and Admissions as our example in order to showcase the robust and internally-identified solutions to process gaps already in progress, even during our small window of analysis. However, examples of this level of process problem-solving exist in each of the enrollment areas we reviewed.]

Yet, fundamental issues regarding the quality of student services provision remained across all of the enrollment units. For example, in the areas of Recruitment and Admissions, remaining process gaps include:

- The determination of who provides knowledgeable customer service across major student segments at what points in the recruitment, admissions, and enrollment processes
- Enhanced coordination across functional units regarding hand-off points from generalists to specialists
- “Requirements-gathering” style communication training for front-line staff
- The translation of unit-level business requirements from Recruitment and Admissions for ITS and Digital Strategy to enable effective planning and prioritization of projects
- The use of third-party solutions to focus professional talent on highest value-add services rather than on tasks that can be automated

As we adjusted our level of analysis from process gaps to process gap drivers and their root causes, we discovered a set of common themes across the enrollment process. We then worked with the Project Sponsor to adjust the scope of our engagement to directly address root causes. As a result, remaining process gaps are addressed in our recommendations either explicitly, or as the desired outcome of the implementation of a strategy, structural enhancement, or tool. For a more detailed overview of this engagement, please refer to Appendix D.

Current State Assessment

UALR has experienced an enrollment decline of nearly 7% percent in the past five years. UALR is a tuition-dependent institution situated in a competitive market for both traditional and non-traditional student populations. UALR has an opportunity at this moment to assess how to improve recruitment and retention outcomes and realign institutional strategies to answer both market forces and market opportunities. In sum, UALR’s next steps may be its most critical.

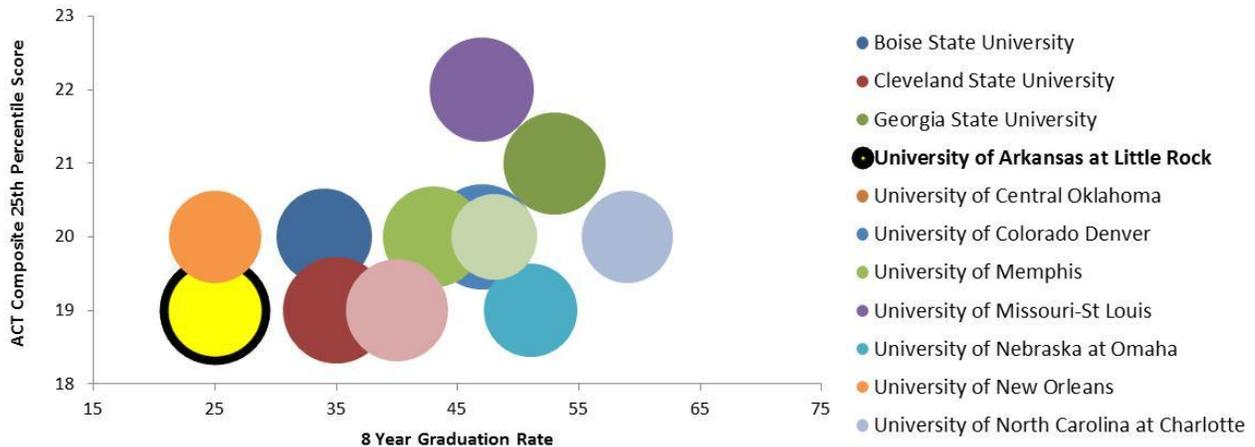
Among UALR’s many strengths are:

- Talented and caring faculty, staff, and leadership
- Strategic new hires and a streamlined, restructured organizational design
- Location in a vibrant metropolitan area
- Accessible academic programs in traditional classroom, evening/weekend, and online environments
- Convenient and accessible student services centers (e.g., Student Services, Student Center) and centers for specialized populations (e.g., Office of Transfer Student Services, Office of Concurrent Enrollment)
- Growing practice of outreach and relationship-building with prospective students, organizational partners, and the community at large

Yet, despite these significant advantages, UALR’s market position and brand awareness – even within the state of Arkansas – has room for improvement. UALR’s own stakeholders say this most succinctly: “UALR is a seventh choice school in Arkansas when it should be the second choice school.”

We believe this brand gap has roots in a conflicted internal view of the institution’s enrollment philosophy (who are we serving and how), and in a potentially unflattering external view of UALR “quality” (how well are we serving). Internally, stakeholders at UALR agree that the institution is “metropolitan,” meaning that it serves both traditional and non-traditional (e.g., adult, part-time, specialized needs) student populations. However, the degree to which the institution serves any one particular student segment is variable, which is reflected in its sometimes conflicting enrollment initiatives and services. Externally, prospective students, their influencers (e.g., family, friends, counselors, employers), and community members at large, who rely on word of mouth or on publically-available data to discern the quality of the UALR experience might encounter the following picture:

Potential Perceptions of UALR Value Based on Quality and Outcomes



The X-axis measures the 8-year graduation rate of students across the peer set. The Y-axis measures the ACT Composite 25th Percentile Score (i.e., at UALR 25% of enrolled students have an ACT Composite Score of approximately 19). The size of the “bubble” represents the relative size of tuition charges for the peer set (which is relative similar in this sample). When UALR is compared against this peer set that it has chosen for federal reporting purposes, the institution is behind its peers on measures of both perceived quality (e.g., admissions standards) and perceived outcomes (e.g., 8-year graduation rate) despite having a relatively similar tuition rate. We are careful to say “perceived” as the challenges are significant regarding Federal data-collection and interpretation in measuring the quality and effectiveness of postsecondary institutions that largely serve non-traditional students. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement at UALR in the eyes of a prospective student.

How can UALR proceed most effectively to address conflicting internal perspectives on enrollment strategy and strengthen perceived and actual enrollment and completion outcomes?

As we adjusted our field of analysis from process gaps to root causes of process gap drivers, we noted a number of common themes across the interviews we conducted:

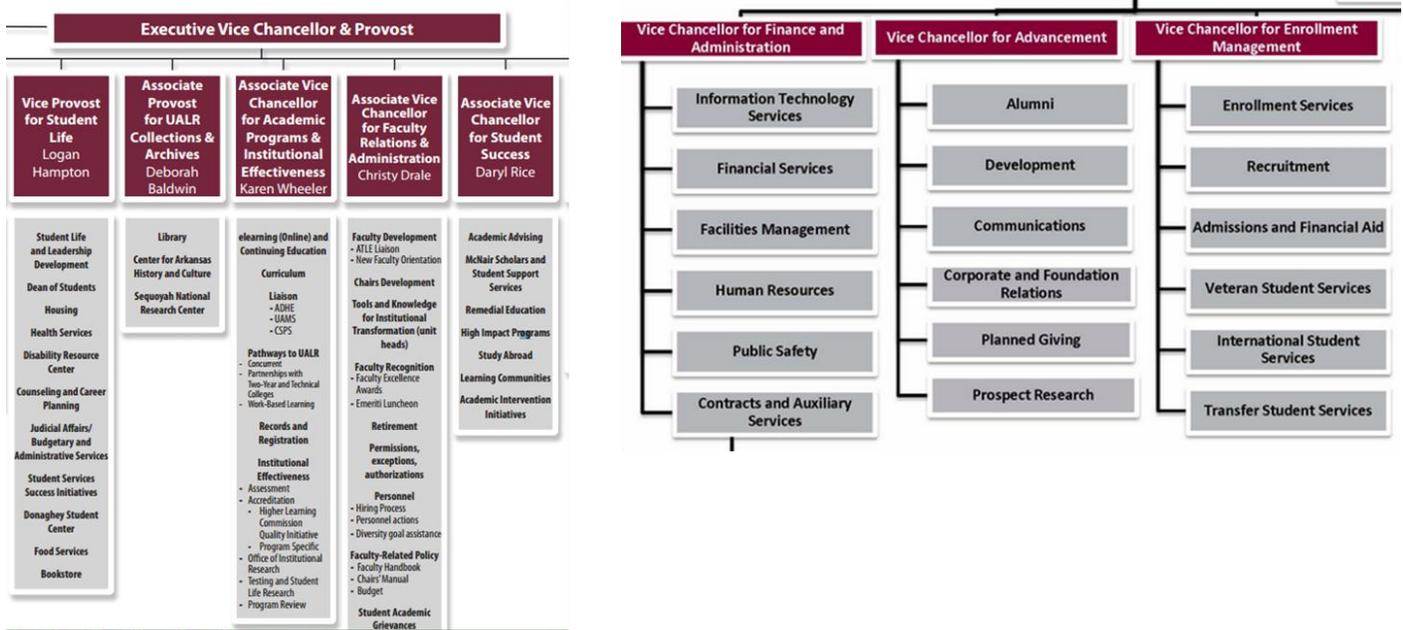
Stakeholder Interviews	Root Cause Themes
“UALR is run like a family business”	Opaque decision-making processes
“We are working on so many new initiatives at once with no sense of priority that we feel we can’t do any one thing well enough”	Inconsistent strategy; Lack of clarity of roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities
“Every day I ask myself who must I go to lunch with today to know what’s going on”	Insufficient communication and knowledge management
“I don’t even use Banner any more because it’s just easier to pick up the phone and call the one or two people who can actually help”	Insufficient technology infrastructure, support, and/or training
“My system goes down two or three times a day and I am stuck between ITS and the vendor telling me it isn’t a problem on their side”	Insufficient oversight of IT solutions at selection, procurement, installation, or maintenance
“If my staff had more time, we could spend it converting paper files to electronic files”	Inefficient use of staff resources and/or coordination of third-party solutions

To illustrate the impact of our root cause analysis, we discuss our findings regarding our evaluation of one of these process gap drivers: inconsistently understood and applied enrollment strategy.

UALR Restructuring Outcomes

UALR saw significant and strategic administrative and academic restructuring in 2013 and 2014 in order to enhance alignment, collaboration, resource efficiency and effectiveness, and market position. The choices and progress made in terms of consolidation of units and positions, reconfiguration of services, construction of scaffolding and reinforcing structures, and expansion of scope are to be commended. There are many models for how to effectively organize the administrative and academic structures of a university. Each of them can succeed or fail depending on the context. We see no inherent reason why the restructured model at UALR cannot succeed; however, tension exists in the newly-restructured institution, and we believe its root cause includes a lack of agreement on enrollment strategy.

The new structure of UALR is organized in the following way:



For a complete and more detailed view, please see: <http://ualr.edu/www/2013/10/17/academic-restructuring-information-released/>

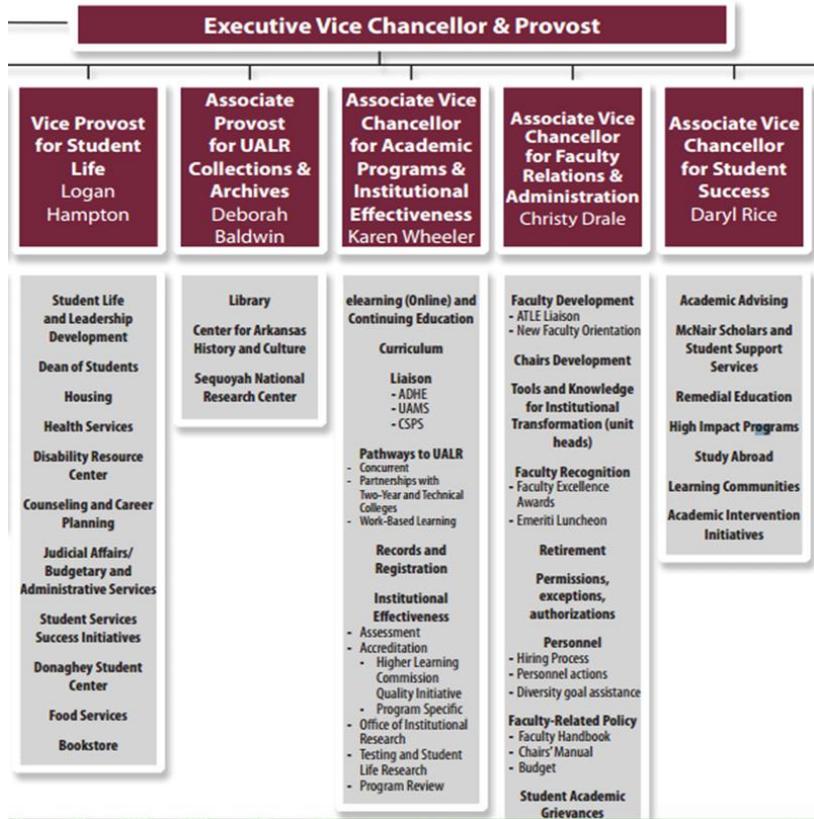
The graphic shows how the particular units and operations of the university are distributed among, in this view, four Vice Chancellors (three Vice Chancellors and the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost). In particular, we note how the units that directly support the enrollment/student lifecycle function of the institution are assigned.

In order to analyze the impact of restructuring in this example, we consider the major components of the “enrollment function,” or the impact of enrollment on tuition revenue.

f (Enrollment, Attrition, Tuition)

The “enrollment function” is comprised of an institution’s enrollment number or population (i.e., headcount), its attrition rate (or what portion of that enrollment number, once obtained, will not persist), and the value of tuition dollars secured (e.g., net tuition revenue, or that revenue that is a net gain to the institution). To maximize the value of its enrollment (once obtained), an institution can reduce attrition (to keep all possible tuition dollars) and optimize net tuition revenue so that, for example, there are enough students paying the full tuition rate to more than offset those students who require institutional aid or discounts to enroll.

The portion of the enrollment/student lifecycle process that falls under the purview of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost is retention and student success. As approximately 70% of the current ULAR student population is comprised of non-traditional students (e.g., transfer students, adult learners, etc.), the Executive Vice Chancellor may choose to focus resources, initiatives, and efforts on how to reduce attrition in order to positively impact the enrollment function. To make the biggest impact, she may choose to focus specifically on how to reduce attrition among non-traditional student populations:



f (Enrollment, **Attrition**, Tuition)

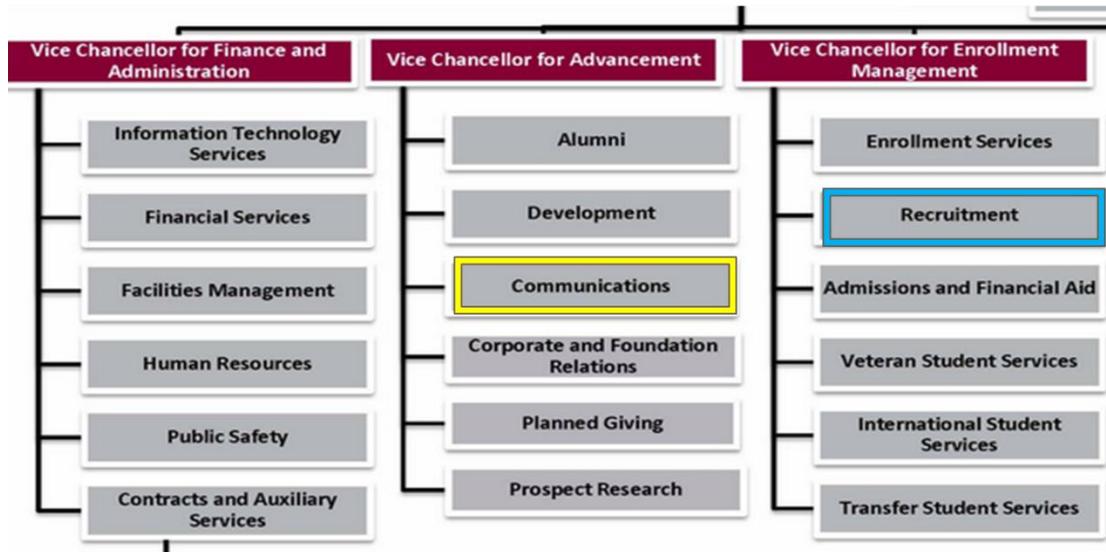
Priority = Retention of Students in Current UALR Enrollment Profile

The portion of the enrollment/student lifecycle process that falls under the purview of the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management is recruitment. The Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management may choose to focus resources, initiatives, and efforts on how to increase net tuition revenue in order to positively impact the enrollment function (especially in a saturated market where “green-field” enrollment growth is challenging). To increase net tuition revenue, the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management may choose to aggressively recruit students likely to be able to pay full tuition rates. These student populations include traditional first-time, full time first-year students, as well as out-of-state students and international students who pay non-resident tuition rates.

Further, we can see that the resources for recruitment are split across more than one Vice Chancellor such that there is a budget for “Recruitment” (e.g., open houses, information fairs, etc.) under the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and for “Communications” (e.g., brochures, advertising, social media campaigns and digital outreach) under the Vice Chancellor for Advancement:

f(Enrollment, Attrition, Tuition)

Priority = Recruitment of Students Paying Full Freight



These structural complexities do not necessitate tension in the system; however, they can be exacerbated by inconsistently applied enrollment strategy, which we identified at UALR. Without an agreed-upon institutional-level strategy, prioritization of initiatives, effective resource allocation, and transparency around accountabilities may be stymied. Instead, stakeholders may perceive a “zero-sum” quality to resource allocation, a sense that there are “winners” and “losers” regarding how initiatives are prioritized, and a proliferation of the unproductive “hero model,” in which functional- and unit-level managers strive for excellence in their specific areas but may not effectively coordinate or collaborate with other units across the enrollment/student lifecycle process.

Opportunities for UALR

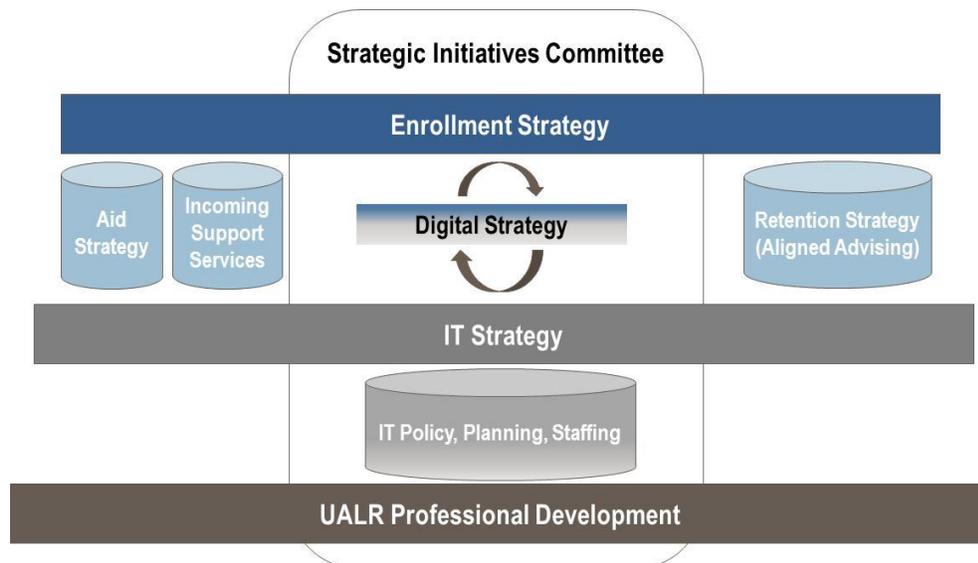
- Opportunity to augment university-wide strategy**
 Significant and resource-intensive efforts are underway to achieve disparate objectives. Crafting institutional-level strategy supports alignment of budgetary and human resources, and guides prioritization of potentially competing initiatives.
- Opportunity to create clarity around roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities**
 A number of cultural norms exist, driving process gaps and creating fractured power among faculty and staff leaders. Clarity around roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities, and transparent and data-driven decision-making aligns efforts and fosters trust across the institution.
- Opportunity to invest in and signal commitment to staff and faculty**
 Professional development and training, including customer service training, is a gap identified by faculty and staff managing and measuring complex systems, situations, and services.
- Opportunity to address drivers of the processes that have evolved as defensive reactions to a lack of authority or alignment**
 Examples include redundancies in the graduation checkout process, the yellow-card process, and the degree audit and transfer credit articulation processes. A lack of front-line authority and a lack of guiding strategy lead to unnecessary duplication and managing to the exceptions instead of to the masses.

Recommendations

Based on our interviews, process analyses, current state assessment, and our experience in prior engagements, we have developed eight primary recommendations for UALR. We believe these recommended solutions can be implemented and/or accomplished in the near-term (within 12 months) for significant benefit to the institution and its enrollment processes. The eight recommendations are:

1. Develop Institutional-Level Enrollment Strategy
2. Grow Budget and Staff for Digital Strategy
3. Enhance IT Strategic Alignment: Policy, Staffing, and Planning
4. Launch Fundraising Campaign for Incoming Student Scholarships (including Need-Based)
5. Create a “Recruitment Council” and Align Recruitment Council with Student Success
6. Strengthen Student Onboarding and Retention through Blended Academic Advising Model
7. Launch UALR Professional Development Initiative
8. Develop Institutional-Level Strategic Initiatives Committee

Interdependency of Recommendations for UALR



The graphic illustrates how the eight recommendations work together for strategic fit for UALR. We begin with the development of UALR enrollment strategy. Enrollment strategy drives UALR planning and serves as the reference point for resource allocation decisions and prioritization of initiatives. Next, we address the pivotal position of Digital Strategy and its operating and staffing requirements. Digital Strategy at UALR serves as the “engine” that converts IT capability into web-based enrollment services and outreach through online student engagement design, development, and delivery. The right IT capabilities and capacity will enable both the enrollment strategic plan and Digital Strategy to perform at speed. UALR can ensure alignment of IT strategy with enrollment strategy in order to support the tools, applications, and systems that are used in student outreach and engagement, student and faculty services, and enrollment and outcomes analytics.

We then move from the alignment of strategies to the development of tactical support for the enrollment strategy. To enhance recruitment capabilities, we recommend launching a fundraising campaign for incoming student scholarships, including need-based aid, to help in the targeted recruiting of talented and diverse incoming

cohorts. To support and enhance recruitment outcomes, we recommend developing formal coordination among Recruitment and Admissions, and the units that represent specialized student populations (e.g., transfers, online, military, and international) to allow for stronger definitions of roles and responsibilities in student support, greater scaffolding of generalists who must represent specialized knowledge. We also recommend the alignment of Recruitment and Admissions with student onboarding and student success. To enhance retention capabilities, we recommend proceeding with the recommendations of the Task Force on Academic Advising to move to a blended academic advising model in the academic units. We recommend that professional advisors have the access to and authority in student information systems to reduce the number of manual and redundant processes in place (e.g., yellow-card process, redundant graduation checkout reviews).

Although it is important for UALR to align strategies, tactics, and organizational support structures in order to achieve its enrollment strategy, the development of human resources may be the most critical need. Huron agrees with the recommendations of the Chancellor’s Cabinet to launch a customer service perspective and development program for UALR. Furthermore, we recommend that UALR adopt a more holistic approach to be more effective in identifying the University’s training and development needs and to define better the appropriate *delivery* of service (e.g., technology systems and tools; management and use of analytics; effective deployment of educational technology; and alignment of business process with new technology infrastructure)

Finally, just as the accountability for the development and stewardship of the enrollment strategy does not rest within a single unit or position, the accountability for the identification, evaluation, and selection of strategic initiatives does not rest within a single unit or position. A Strategic Initiatives Committee can serve to balance diverse perspectives on academic and business requirements across functional and academic units through data-driven, objective, and transparent decision-making processes. A Strategic Initiatives Committee can foster the cultural norm at UALR that everyone is on the same team, responsible and accountable to each other.

Recommendation	Benefit to UALR
UALR-Wide Enrollment Strategy	Institutional-level enrollment strategy aligns resources and guides selection and prioritization of initiatives.
Budget/Staff for Digital Strategy	Digital Strategy serves as the online student engagement engine between enrollment strategy and IT strategy. Critical to provision of seamless, integrated web services.
IT Strategic Alignment: Purchasing, Staffing, Planning	Stronger procurement policies enhance coordination and cost efficiencies; aligned IT talent strengthens understanding of business requirements at UALR; and investments in IT strategic planning supports alignment with enrollment strategy and student focus.
Campaign for Incoming Student Scholarships (e.g., Need-Based)	Closing the gap in need-based aid will enhance the application of EM strategy, create an opportunity for alumni impact and engagement, and offer students greater access.
Recruitment Council: Align Incoming Student Support Services	A cross-trained, empowered staff across EM functions reduces process workarounds and duplication, increases coordination, and improves the student experience.
Blended Academic Advising Model; Jointly-Managed NSO	Blended academic advising model (professionals and faculty) and student onboarding leverages deep subject matter expertise with accessibility, consistency, and accountability.
UALR Professional Development Initiative	A tiered, targeted professional development plan will support improved efficiencies and effectiveness, and strengthen an institutional culture of student-centric customer-service.
Strategic Initiatives Committee	Data-driven, objective, transparent process for opportunity identification, due diligence, selection, and prioritization

Our detailed description of each recommendation follows.

Recommendation #1: Develop Institutional-Level Enrollment Strategy

Enrollment strategy does not belong to a single unit or person; rather, the development of an enrollment strategy is the responsibility of the senior leadership of the institution. Enrollment strategy is derived from the articulation of an institutional-level enrollment philosophy and an operating framework that aligns with the institution's mission and identity (current and/or aspirational). By crafting a shared enrollment philosophy and vision, UALR's leadership can then develop strategy and tactics such that enrollment initiatives, activities, and resources may be aligned and prioritized. This also enables communication planning for internal and external stakeholders, the development of targeted professional development and training for those executing against the plan, the development of performance metrics and incentives in support of the plan, and an understanding of how each professional and process fits into the overall enrollment vision.

We recommend that UALR's Vice Chancellors develop, refine, and steward the enrollment strategy.

We recommend that the Vice Chancellors, with support from the Chancellor's Office and select functional leaders (e.g., ITS, Communications, Digital Strategy, and Governmental Affairs), craft an enrollment philosophy and framework to guide the development of institutional enrollment strategy. We recommend that this core group discuss current institutional identity and brand; desired institutional identity and brand; current strengths and weaknesses; areas for strategic growth; enrollment goals; current capabilities and capacity to reach those goals; and the impact on the institution to support the achievement of these goals. We recommend that the Vice Chancellors translate the enrollment philosophy into the enrollment operating framework for presentation to the broader UALR community at the Chancellor's Leadership Group Retreat on July 30 and 31, 2014.

To support implementation, Huron facilitated a Strategic Enrollment Alignment Retreat for the Chancellor's Office, the Vice Chancellors, and select leaders on July 10, 2014. During this retreat, the participants engaged in the development and articulation of the enrollment philosophy and guiding framework. This work can be found in Appendix D and will be presented to the Chancellor's Leadership Group Retreat on July 30, 2014.

After the presentation of the enrollment philosophy and operating framework on July 30, we recommend that the Vice Chancellors discuss how best to formulate the UALR enrollment strategy. Topics to address include:

1. The development of an Enrollment Management Calendar for AY 2014/15 to serve as a guide until the enrollment strategy is in place:
 - Major recruitment activities – both currently planned activities and desired projects and activities. These activities should be grouped according to those that are implemented entirely with Recruitment and Admissions staff; those that require college/program/faculty participation (in design, participation, etc.); and those that require cross-unit participation (e.g., OTSS, Concurrent and Dual Enrollment, Online, Military, etc.). What are the resources necessary (beyond “more data” and “more money”) for the planned activities? What are the resources necessary for the desired (but not currently planned) activities? What are the specific requirements for data points, budget, technology tools, services, etc.?
 - Major retention activities – both currently planned and desired projects and activities, grouped again by which belong to a single unit, which require cross-unit coordination, and which require college/program/faculty involvement. What are the investments and required resources needed to support this?

- P-20 connection and outreach activities (that have not already been discussed as part of recruitment activities) – both currently planned and desired, grouped by which units (business units, colleges, programs, faculty) should be involved, with resources required.
 - Community connection and outreach activities, including those with corporations, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, etc. that are planned or desired, with resources required.
 - Student engagement ideas – for example, what are some ideas that Digital Strategy might work on to support recruitment; enrollment decision-making; networking with current students, faculty, and alumni; and capturing and measuring interests, concerns, and obstacles for prospects?
 - Constituent research needs – from which audiences does UALR require more input (e.g., alumni, prospective students, graduating students, parents, high school guidance counselors, support staff, etc.) to hone enrollment strategy? How can we collect and share this information as part of “business as usual,” and which kinds of input require more dedicated data-gathering support?
2. Resource and data requirements for initiatives in AY 2014/15. Guiding questions might include:
- What top three problems do each of you most want to solve in order to be able to support the UALR enrollment vision and strategy?
 - What are the top three solutions you can imagine for each problem?
 - What ten data points do you need most urgently (and do not currently have) to begin to solve your top three problems?
 - What three resources (that you do not currently have) are required to achieve a solution to your top problem? (e.g., capital resources, human resources, permissions, expertise, structures)
 - Who else (other unit or units) feels the “pain” of the problems you have identified and may be willing to invest (time, resources, connections) in a solution?
3. The development of the major strategic questions you must answer in order to develop an enrollment strategy. For example:
- Should UALR focus on growing total enrollment numbers or on maintaining the current enrollment level but growing student quality and the quality of the student experience?

We recommend that the Vice Chancellors then determine who should be involved in the development of UALR’s answers to these strategic questions (e.g., Deans, Program Chairs, Faculty Senate representatives, front-line staff, and process managers). Once the input has been collected, the Vice Chancellors can review current initiatives, committee recommendations, and additional opportunities in light of these strategic questions and answers in order to develop a draft strategy with a timeline for prioritization, sequencing, and resource allocation decisions.

Once UALR leadership agrees on enrollment strategy, leadership of the units implementing the plan can define the unit- and staff-level roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. We recommend that every business process have an owner responsible for measuring its effectiveness and continuous improvement. We recommend that leaders determine draft performance metrics for staff responsibilities in discussions with staff. Draft metrics and performance incentives can then be refined in collaboration with Human Resources. These enrollment-aligned performance expectations and incentives can be presented as part of the UALR Professional Development Initiative in spring 2015. This allows for communication planning and discussion throughout the fall term.

Expected Outcomes:

- Enrollment philosophy and guiding framework that represents a collaboration across Vice Chancellors
- Enrollment strategy that is vetted across the UALR community and supported by senior leadership
- Enrollment strategy implementation roadmap with anticipated necessary investments
- Fully described roles and responsibilities of those who will execute against this plan
- Development of performance metrics with incentives

Anticipated Business Impact*

	One Time Costs	Recurring Costs	Gross Annual Cost Savings	Risk to University	Difficulty to Implement
Development of an enrollment philosophy, framework and strategy	1	1	4*	2	3

4*: Enrollment growth +1500 students at \$7600 in-state tuition results in \$11.4M in revenue (\$9.7M tuition revenue based on current institutional merit/grant aid awards)

*Anticipated business impact represents Huron’s assessment of cost, benefit, and risk for the major components of each recommendation.

Anticipated Quality Impact**

Score for Recommendation 1: Enrollment Strategy

Criteria: ☑	UALR Desired Outcomes	Score (1-10)
Customer Service	Quality of experience - (prompt, courteous, consistent)	5
	Accuracy of information	5
	Supports expansion of services	8
	Enhances efficiency of services	10
Convenience	Available online	3
	Integrated/seamless process	8
	User-friendly (student-centric)	7
Admin Efficiency and/or Effectiveness	Empowers front-line staff	9
	Enhances cross-functionality or coordination	10
	Improves internal relationships	10
TOTAL SCORE		75

** Quality impact criteria are taken from the UALR Request for Proposals desired outcomes for this engagement.

Implementation Plan and Timeline***

Action Items	Owner(s)	Timeline
1. Shared enrollment planning calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Enrollment 	Late Aug.
2. Strategic needs and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Vice Chancellor 	Early Sept.
3. Strategic questions and discussions with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Enrollment 	Sept. – Oct.
4. Draft enrollment strategy and implementation timeline formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCs 	Nov.
5. Presentation of draft strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCs 	Early Dec.
6. Roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of units and staff with discussions of performance metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCs for discussion with HR and the Chancellor’s Office; VCs for communication planning; VCs, Deans, academic and functional area managers to develop details 	Dec. – Feb.
7. Stewardship of the enrollment strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCs 	Ongoing

*** For a master implementation plan across all recommendations, please see Appendix A.

Recommendation #2: Grow Budget and Staff for Digital Strategy

Despite its recent origin date, Digital Strategy has added value to UALR through sophisticated lead generation, knowledge management, and web services development. For example, the office has enhanced UALR website functionality, design, content management support, inbound and marketing strategy, and analytical capability. It has also developed robust social media campaigns from which leads are captured and delivered to Talisma; led training for the management of unit-level web content; deployed innovative engagement tools for alumni and UALR supporters; and constructed a prototype of the UALR intranet.

We recommend that UALR support the current momentum and capability of Digital Strategy with dedicated budget.

We strongly recommend that the institution commit resources to Digital Strategy in terms of dedicated budget for operating expenses. This will allow for enhanced planning capability for the team and for greater accountability of the team to the units served. Without a specific mandate backed by UALR resources, there can be difficulty in establishing and protecting priorities within Digital Strategy that align with overarching enrollment strategy and planning. For example, how does Digital Strategy apportion its time currently between projects for Advancement, Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, and academic programs? With budget stability, Digital Strategy can make transparent and necessary choices about how best to support and prioritize needs and requests. For example, Digital Strategy can dedicate certain percentages of time to the support of specific initiatives (e.g., enrollment services), to ad hoc needs by specific units, and to “innovation” or “exploratory time,” which may lead to unanticipated but vital new ideas and solutions. We recommend that the Vice Chancellors and the Director of Digital Strategy determine an initial plan for how to apportion time (e.g., dedicated two-week “sprints” for each major area or other project management model) and then refine that plan through the fall term as institutional strategy develops.

If no dedicated funding can be identified in the current budget, we offer the following possibilities:

- **Reconsider student technology fees**

Currently many UALR undergraduate students pay \$8.10 per credit for technology fees. Science and engineering students pay between \$11.90 and \$12.30 in technology fees (given greater need for support in those subjects). Distance students pay \$25 in technology fees. The EDUCAUSE median spend annually by students on technology fees is \$300.

We recommend that UALR raise the student technology fee to a minimum of \$12.50 per credit for all students (assuming an average of 12 credits per term and 2 terms per year: $\$12.50 \times 12 \times 2 = \300). A portion of these extra dollars can go toward funding Digital Strategy operating expenses, which is returned, in part, to students in the form of greatly enhanced UALR web services. As student technology fee raises must have Board approval, the CIO and the Director of Digital Strategy can use AY 2014/15 to begin to sensitize students to the potential fee increase, and to answer stakeholder questions.

- **Consider an annual “Digital Services Fee” for support of unit-level initiatives from business and academic units**

General operating expenses for continuous enhancement of the website and of web services for faculty, staff, and students can be offset by a Digital Services Fee, which is collected from those units with unit- or program-specific projects. Examples might include the development of a particular specialized feature or web tool for a specific

academic program; an additional social media or lead generation campaign above and beyond those planned as part of enrollment strategy; or a project to crowdsource funds to support a “proof of concept” pilot of a new student program. We recommend that Digital Strategy track labor as well as operating expenses to reflect the true cost of projects. We also recommend that ITS grant Digital Strategy access to necessary data and systems for at least a trial period to track the impact of the project. If access cannot be granted, we recommend that Digital Strategy work with the partner unit to develop a plan for collecting data to measure project-level ROI.

We recommend growing Digital Strategy’s capacity to support enrollment strategy, to build seamless and integrated student-centric web services, and to engage prospective students, current students, and alumni.

We recommend the addition of at least one developer in fall 2014 to support and maximize the UALR enrollment strategy that emerges. This allows the Director of Digital Strategy to actively participate in cross-functional team and leadership conversations, learn more about the business requirements of UALR enrollment and academic units, and recruit, gain buy-in from, and advise units in the participation of digital strategy initiatives.

As Digital Strategy identifies needs for additional staff due to increased visibility and demand for services at UALR, we suggest that UALR consider repurposing underutilized members of the IT talent pool who may be currently embedded in other units. We address the potential for a staffing redesign for ITS at UALR in the next recommendation.

Expected Outcomes

- Sustainable, effective, and differentiating lead generation for UALR through inbound/content strategy, digital marketing strategy, and social media campaigns
- Efficient support for the continuous improvement of an contemporary, user-centric, and functional UALR website for faculty, students, and the community based on sophisticated tracking and analytics regarding user behavior and attributes
- Deeper student engagement with UALR through highly interactive and personalized website, greater access to faculty and staff, and enhanced web-based services
- Enhanced functionality for faculty and staff that everyone can understand and use to its full potential (e.g., intranet with the ability to manage internal and external groups, communications and interactions, and resource-sharing)

Anticipated Business Impact

	One Time Costs	Recurring Costs	Gross Annual Cost Savings	Risk to University	Difficulty to Implement
Dedicated Digital Strategy Budget	\$200K	\$150K*	TBD	2	4
Add 1 FTE Developer	1	\$75K	TBD	2	4

* Costs offset by chargeback via increased student fee or departmental chargebacks
 TBD depends on impact to enrollment based on project-level ROI and extra capacity for initiatives

Anticipated Quality Impact

Score for Recommendation 2: Budget/Staff for Digital Strategy

Criteria: ☐	UALR Desired Outcomes	Score (1-10)
Customer Service	Quality of experience - (prompt, courteous, consistent)	5
	Accuracy of information	5
	Supports expansion of services	10
	Enhances efficiency of services	10
Convenience	Available online	10
	Integrated/seamless process	9
	User-friendly (student-centric)	9
Admin Efficiency and/or Effectiveness	Empowers front-line staff	7
	Enhances cross-functionality or coordination	8
	Improves internal relationships	7
TOTAL SCORE		80

Implementation Plan and Timeline

Action Items	Owner(s)	Timeline
1. Operating budget for Digital Strategy identified for FY 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget 	Late Aug.
2. Discussion of ongoing budget plan for Digital Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCs and the Chancellor's Office 	Sept.
3. Communication planning if ongoing budget requires technology fee increase and/or Digital Strategy Special Projects Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCs and ITS 	Oct.
4. Position description and recruitment of Digital Strategy Developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Strategy and HR 	Aug. – Oct.

Recommendation #3: Enhance IT Strategic Alignment: Policy, Staffing, and Planning

Under new leadership, ITS is in the process of positioning itself as a strategic partner to UALR academic and business units. To realize this vision and to fully empower emerging enrollment strategy and Digital Strategy, ITS requires a number of institutional investments in purchasing and IT support policy-making, in pilot staffing initiatives, and in strategically addressing the significant number of backlog infrastructure and systems challenges simultaneously with the increasing demands on ITS services both internally and across the UA System.

We recommend the development of a formal and transparent IT purchasing and support policy.

Currently, strategic sourcing and contracting efforts for IT solutions are ad-hoc or nascent, and ITS services and support are assumed for purchases of any IT solution or software. The result is that any unit with budget can purchase hardware, software or IT solutions and install without oversight or coordination with others. This can lead to inefficiencies in managing costs, negotiating and managing vendor relationships and service level agreements, and managing ITS staff and support time with any predictability. A formal and transparent IT purchasing policy and a policy that defines the parameters of what ITS will support and service can help to manage expectations and to provide opportunities for coordination, continuous improvement, and cost savings across campus.

We recommend that policy design for purchasing and IT support begins with commoditized hardware and software (beyond state-level contracts in place) in order to start the transition to a broader policy while opening up a dialogue on campus regarding unit-level purchasing expectations. As part of this campus dialogue and as part of an internal audit and strategic planning process, ITS can discuss with key stakeholders the anticipated impact on units under proposed new purchasing and support policies in order to determine how to transition the campus effectively. ITS can work with Procurement, the Vice Provost for Research, and other key stakeholders as appropriate to define/identify those purchases for which it may be strategic *not* to fall under new policies (e.g., purchases that are deemed exploratory for research or innovation purposes). The policies can be designed to support campus-wide coordination, efficient use of resources, and flexibility for rather than an over-simplified “one size fits all” approach. Finally, we recommend that the current practice of flagging IT purchase requests in Procurement continue in the interim so that ITS has the option of responding before the purchase is finalized.

We recommend conducting an integrated IT staffing pilot initiative.

Currently, at UALR, centralized ITS staff report to the CIO but embedded IT staff in functional and academic units do not report to the CIO. While there are coordinating councils across these units that may meet as needed and some informal processes that support coordination, a gap remains between how unit-level business requirements are understood and processed through ITS. This gap may manifest as incomplete beta-testing prior to a software update, as a lack of opportunity for input regarding the timeframe for disruption of services, or as difficulty in the communication of which service needs are truly urgent. We recommend a six-month pilot initiative in which those staff with heavy IT responsibilities who are embedded in Admissions, Records, and Financial Aid remain physically embedded in these units but have reporting lines moved to ITS (i.e., have budget for their lines moved to ITS). The Directors and Vice Chancellors of the functional units in which they are embedded can have input into the performance review of these individuals.

The embedded staff can maintain current job responsibilities for the functional units but can allocate a designated timeframe (e.g., a half-day per week) to serve as an “Administrative Services Team” in ITS, providing insight and visibility into the business requirements of these critical enrollment units, coordinating solutions, enhancing communication and understanding between the business units and ITS, and recommending ways to streamline

reporting, strengthen data transfer across units (including Institutional Effectiveness), and mitigate the impact of upgrades and testing.

This integrated model also allows for increased redundancy across the embedded IT staff, most of whom do not have a counterpart who can provide sufficient support in their absence. And this model can support the development of full career paths for these embedded staff along ITS and functional unit trajectories. Affected positions should be reviewed for updated position description requirements, performance expectations, and career path opportunities.

At the start of this pilot initiative, the leaders of Admissions, Financial Aid, and Records; HR; and ITS can jointly determine what “success” and “failure” look like according to observable and specific measures. For example, functional leaders currently describe a “one-day turnaround” on requests by embedded staff with heavy IT responsibilities. Stronger definitions regarding the kinds of projects that require a one-day turnaround versus those projects that do not may be a good starting point in the development of success metrics (e.g., “of the project types defined as requiring a one-day turnaround, 90% of the time or more the embedded staff achieved this turnaround time during the pilot initiative”). Other success metrics can address the experience of installing and launching upgrades to systems that affect these functional units (e.g., “unit leadership was notified of upgrade schedule with a minimum one-month horizon;” “beta-testing window was sufficiently long to test impact of upgrade to satisfaction”). Still other success metrics can address efficiencies gained through streamlined reporting across the affected units, such as reduced processing time for “exceptions.”

We strongly encourage regular communication between the functional unit leaders and the CIO throughout the pilot initiative so that concerns may be addressed in real time, rather than after the fact. We also recommend regular communication with the embedded IT staff by HR, the functional unit leaders, and the CIO regarding their experiences and observations throughout the pilot phase.

After six months, the leaders of the affected functional units, ITS, and HR, can review the pilot against the success metrics and against the interim check-in conversations to determine the size of the benefits of this model.

Business risks exist with the implementation of this pilot initiative, including:

- Admissions, Financial Aid, and Records could experience severe disruption to business due to the inability of the embedded staff to continue to support their current responsibilities to a meaningful degree. This could result from pressure from the CIO to support ITS responsibilities significantly beyond the intended level. This could also result from confusion around job duties and performance expectations by embedded staff and/or their former support staff. Severe disruption to business could lead to further declines in enrollment as a result of poor service to students and faculty from an inability to leverage information systems and reporting tools, meet regulatory standards in a timely manner, manage staff and processes effectively, and more.
- Embedded staff could find the pilot initiative threatening to their job security or satisfaction and depart the institution before redundancies have been achieved, causing the very gaps this initiative is intended to help UALR avoid.
- If the pilot initiative is a failure, the option for embedded staff to return to “business as usual” may be complicated by policies, practices, and staffing decisions that have been made in the interim by functional leaders.

- If the pilot initiative is a success, the risk remains that over time the functional units experience insidious loss of the embedded staff members' time and attention such that business disruptions are gradual but significant.

In order to mitigate these risks, we strongly encourage the functional unit leaders, ITS, the embedded staff members, and HR to discuss each (and more that may become apparent) to the reasonable satisfaction of all stakeholders, and to identify formal "check-in" points through the initiative to reassess these risks. We recommend that these stakeholders also specify the accountabilities of each other to communicate prior to the "point of no return" any concerns, dissatisfactions, questions, and business/professional decisions that may affect those involved in the pilot initiative.

If successful, UALR can apply the pilot model to the academic units. Much like the "administrative services team" facilitates coordination and business requirements-gathering for enrollment units, the embedded academic unit IT staff could form an "academic services team" with the similar task of coordination and requirements-gathering from the colleges. This holistic model could allow for the greatest visibility across campus into business needs and context, and inform strategic planning and continuous performance improvement processes.

We recommend providing ITS with strategic planning support. We recommend this include a formal IT audit, and the provision of resources/time for the development of a strategic plan that explicitly aligns with enrollment strategy.

We agree with many of the points highlighted in *IT Operations: Initial Impressions, Vision, and Implementation*, a presentation by Thomas Wolfe. Most striking in terms of implications for the enrollment process are these suggestions for ITS:

"We have a clear understanding and catalogue of who 'owns' a particular service, its performance and availability requirements, and how it is supported – including any third-party support elements or contracts, along with an escalation path. We hold ourselves accountable to our stakeholders, and we hold vendors accountable to their SLAs with us..." (pg. 24)

"We additionally accept cost control as being integral to our role as stewards of University resources, and introduce financial modeling more completely into the ITS organization, including make-or-buy analysis, insource vs. outsource analysis, opportunity cost analysis, and cost / benefit / ROI analysis. We negotiate from a portfolio of vendors to obtain the best pricing, and focus as much on contract terms..." (pg. 28)

We are aware that ITS has begun an internal strategic planning process. To ensure this process can meet the time-sensitive demands on the unit, we recommend that UALR authorize funding for:

- A formal audit including IT hardware, software, systems, applications, staffing, organizational structures, and policies
- Strategic planning consultation and advisory support

As part of the strategic planning process, we recommend that UALR conduct a cost-benefit analysis of remaining with the current instance of Banner with all of the maintenance and customization requirements, impact on staff productivity, and continuous training requirements versus transitioning to a more standard version.

We recommend that in the interim ITS support a visit(s) from Ellucian professionals who can sit desk-side with key functional leaders to determine process enhancements based on the suite of applications currently in place, as well as provide intensive training for new staff and for others who require it.

With these overlapping and reinforcing changes (purchasing policy, embedded staff, aligned planning), ITS can move closer to a desired state that avoids the rigidity of centralization, the chaos of decentralization, and the gaps that can occur in the compartmentalized state:

	Desired State ↓	Current State ↓	
	Centralized	Institutionalized	Decentralized
Summary:	All or most IT services are consolidated and controlled by a central campus organization. The prototype is the Computer Center with control over computing through a mainframe computing environment.	All or most IT services are coordinated through a comprehensive information technology organization with a mission of aligning its services with campus-wide academic, student services, administrative, and infrastructure planning.	All or most IT services are controlled by individual sub-units of the campus. Key shared infrastructure may be controlled by a central IT unit (e.g., networking) but that unit has little direct control over campus-wide use of IT.
Leadership:	IT leadership tends to be computer and technology centric, with minimal coordination or planning to meet needs outside the central IT organization.	IT services are coordinated centrally by a Chief Information Officer, who's primary responsibility is to work with other campus leaders to advance the institutional mission and priorities through technology.	IT leadership is diffuse. Numerous IT sub-units have independent and uncoordinated leadership. Influence of central IT leadership is limited to immediate central IT organization, if such a unit exists.
Strategic Alignment:	Focus is on the IT unit. The IT unit may have a strategic plan, but outcomes are focused on IT-centric issues. Alignment with academic and student strategic needs may be particularly weak.	Focus is on institutional strategic needs. IT planning is integrated into the institutional planning process, with coordination of sub-unit needs occurring at the institutional level.	Focus is on needs of sub-units of the campus.

Expected Outcomes

- Cost efficiency, enhanced coordination, and greater accountability by business and academic units through policies that provide for more actively managed IT procurement
- Expedited cultural shift within ITS away from silos and toward active partnership with business and academic units through the tighter alignment of IT resources across campus
- Enhanced communication through embedded staff regarding business requirements between business units and ITS
- Aligned planning and coordination of resources to support enrollment strategy directly and through Digital Strategy

Anticipated Business Impact

	One Time Costs	Recurring Costs	Gross Annual Cost Savings	Risk to University	Difficulty to Implement
Rationalize IT Service - Purchasing	1	1	\$200K - \$400K**	2	4
Rationalize IT Service - Staffing	1	1	3	3	4
Rationalize IT Service - Planning	5	1	4	2	4

** Based on Huron experience per commodity area covered

Anticipated Quality Impact

Score for Recommendation 3: IT Policy, Planning, Staffing Model

Criteria: ☒	UALR Desired Outcomes	Score (1-10)
Customer Service	Quality of experience - (prompt, courteous, consistent)	8
	Accuracy of information	7
	Supports expansion of services	7
	Enhances efficiency of services	10
Convenience	Available online	3
	Integrated/seamless process	10
	User-friendly (student-centric)	9
Admin Efficiency and/or Effectiveness	Empowers front-line staff	6
	Enhances cross-functionality or coordination	10
	Improves internal relationships	9
TOTAL SCORE		79

Implementation Plan and Timeline

Action Items	Owner(s)	Timeline
1. ITS and Procurement to develop a draft phased procurement policy that describes IT purchasing policy, implementation time, noted exceptions to the policy, and communication plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITS and Procurement 	Aug. – Sept.
2. Discussion of draft policy with key stakeholders (e.g., Deans, VCs, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITS 	Oct.
3. Refinements to policy and approval process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITS and Procurement 	Oct. – Dec.
4. Launch of IT Procurement Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement 	Jan. 2015
5. ITS, VCs (Executive and Enrollment), and HR to discuss staffing pilot initiative, including how to mitigate risks and concerns, how to define and measure success, expectations for access to staff, and communication protocol throughout the pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITS, Executive Vice Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, and HR 	Aug. – Mid-Sept.
6. VCs to discuss pilot initiative with affected staff to collect questions, concerns, and contributions to metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITS, Executive Vice Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, and HR 	Aug. – Mid-Sept.
7. Refinements to the pilot initiative success metrics, communication norms, and list of expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITS, Executive Vice Chancellor, and Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, and HR 	Mid. - Sept. – Oct.
8. Staffing pilot initiative go live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITS, Executive Vice Chancellor, and Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management 	Oct.
9. ITS submits proposal to support IT audit and strategic planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITS 	Sept.
10. ITS audit and strategic plan completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITS 	Jan. 2015

Recommendation #3a: Regular review of third-party solutions for enhanced outcomes in enrollment units

We recommend an annual committee evaluation of third-party solutions that can create economies of scale or cross-functional efficiencies in the enrollment process.

This committee can include representation from enrollment units (Admissions, OTSS, Financial Aid, Bursar, Records, Academic Advising, Concurrent/Dual Enrollment, Online, International, and Military), Procurement, Digital Strategy, and ITS (e.g., members of the Administrative Services Team). The committee members can identify enrollment services business requirements, perform research on third-party providers, discuss the specific impact of the solution (e.g., savings of staff time and how that time can be better used, cost efficiencies, space efficiencies, addressing opportunity cost, etc.), and determine a weighting or scoring system to assist leadership (i.e., the Vice Chancellors) with purchasing and prioritization decisions. Opportunities with a zero or positive score can qualify for additional research or consideration. For example, the committee might score each of the following and refine with further research:

Benefit	Score	Cost	Score
FTE savings		One-time cost	
Cost savings		Recurring cost	
Impact to quality of customer experience		Risk to university	
Convenience to customer		Difficulty to implement/use	
TOTAL BENEFIT		TOTAL COST	
Final score: TOTAL BENEFIT – TOTAL COST			

Score: 1 = None 2 = Minor 3 = Moderate 4 = Material 5 = Substantial

As part of our stakeholder interviews and process analysis, we identified three third-party solutions that we recommend to enhance enrollment processes directly, save staff time for use in providing high value-add support services, and reclaim valuable physical space:

1. Perceptive Software’s Intelligent Capture for Transcripts

- Accelerates transcript processing by automatically sorting incoming transcripts, capturing and validating specific student and coursework information, and passing the information directly to Banner. Implementation time requires three months. Cost is approximately \$75,000 per year inclusive of professional services and training. Conversations with both Records and OTSS provided a rough estimate of FTE time savings (up to 2 FTE) in processing time and redundancy of tasks.

Benefit	Score	Cost	Score
FTE savings	4	One-time cost	1
Cost savings	1	Recurring cost	3
Impact to quality of customer experience	3	Risk to university	2
Convenience to customer	3	Difficulty to implement/use	3
TOTAL BENEFIT	11	TOTAL COST	9
SCORE: (11 – 9) = 2			

Score: 1 = None 2 = Minor 3 = Moderate 4 = Material 5 = Substantial

2. Credentials Solutions Outsourced Transcript Processing

- Transcript processing can be outsourced in order to save staff time and attention for higher value-add services, and to avoid the complexity of providing e-transcript processing, which can be time-consuming to manage. After an initial review of two providers, National Student Clearinghouse and Credentials Solutions, we believe Credentials Solutions offers the most comprehensive suite of services for UALR. The per-transcript fee is approximately \$2.75, plus \$1.75 and postage for mailed transcripts. This roughly equates to the current \$5 processing fee for UALR, which would result in a net loss for the institution in auxiliary revenue. We recommend increasing your transcript processing fee to \$7 for mailed transcripts and keeping your e-transcript processing fee at \$5 (to pass on mailing and postage savings to students) so that UALR receives some net profit while realizing the FTE time saved.

Benefit	Score	Cost	Score
FTE savings	3	One-time cost	2
Cost savings	2	Recurring cost	1
Impact to quality of customer experience	5	Risk to university	3
Convenience to customer	5	Difficulty to implement/use	3
TOTAL BENEFIT	15	TOTAL COST	9
SCORE: (15 – 9) = 6			

Score: 1 = None 2 = Minor 3 = Moderate 4 = Material 5 = Substantial

3. American Imaging/Xerox-Provided Document Scanning Services for Backlog Files

- Records and Registration has sacrificed a significant amount of office space for an ad-hoc file room that holds decades' worth of student records. While there are additional storage rooms full of Records and Registration files, the presence of this file room in the main business office of the unit creates an uncomfortable environment for staff and visitors. We recommend one-time spending on scanning services to reclaim this office space for the unit. Both Xerox and American Imaging (local provider) quoted a \$.05 - \$.15 per page image fee depending on document quality (which equates to \$50,000 to \$150,000 for 1 million pages). If after a vendor consultation and formal fee estimate it is determined that these services are too costly in the short term, we recommend either reducing the space taken up by these files by half through scanning services or seeking external storage solutions for the interim.

Benefit	Score	Cost	Score
FTE savings	2	One-time cost	5
Cost savings (opportunity cost of space)	4	Recurring cost	1
Impact to quality of customer experience	3	Risk to university	2
Convenience to customer	2	Difficulty to implement/use	2
TOTAL BENEFIT	11	TOTAL COST	10
SCORE: (11 – 10) = 1			

Score: 1 = None 2 = Minor 3 = Moderate 4 = Material 5 = Substantial

Implementation Plan and Timeline

Action Items	Owner(s)	Timeline
1. Presentation of proposal to purchase Intelligent Capture to Executive Vice Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, and CIO (includes benefits, estimated time and process savings, plan for use of staff time that is reclaimed); implementation of approved plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records and OTSS 	Mid-Aug. to present; Sept. to purchase; Dec. to go live
2. Presentation of outsourcing transcript processing services to Executive Vice Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, and CIO (includes estimate of staff time saved, customer satisfaction, and business impact on general fund transcript fee collection); implementation of approved plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assoc. Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs and Records 	Sept. to present; Oct. to purchase; Dec. to go live
3. Presentation of document scanning and services findings from vendor consultation and estimated fees to Executive Vice Chancellor (includes description of opportunities for reclaimed physical space); implementation of approved plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assoc. Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs and Records 	Sept. – Oct. to present; Jan. for scanning services

Recommendation #4: Launch Fundraising Campaign for Incoming Student Scholarships (Including Need-Based)

UALR data shows estimated family contribution of *admitted enrolled students* is 98% higher than *admitted non-enrolled students*. Data also show:

- Enrolled students also received 47% more scholarship funding than non-enrolled students
- Retained students also received 37% more scholarship money than non-retained students

As UALR is currently between campaigns, we recommend that the Vice Chancellor for Advancement design a fundraising campaign with a primary objective of growing funding for incoming students including need-based aid and other student scholarships.

UALR currently offers a mix of private and departmental scholarships for continuing students and merit-based aid for incoming students (e.g., ACT). However, scholarship funds that can be used strategically in the recruitment process for incoming students are constrained. Given the current price sensitivity of students regarding higher education and the relative ease of comparing institutions on cost and award packages, even modest amounts of aid (e.g., \$1,000) can make a difference in the student selection process. Additionally, this type of campaign can significantly enhance engagement with alumni. For example, a restricted gift campaign focused on establishing a need-based scholarship fund offers alumni an opportunity to help shape the diversity of a talented incoming cohort at UALR. In our experience with clients and based on data we have collected from many alumni engagement surveys, we can report that the majority of alumni claim that demonstrated impact on beneficiaries is a primary motivator for giving.

The Vice Chancellors and the faculty and staff they select to participate can discuss campaign goals, messaging, and priorities. Members from the academic colleges can assist with any targeted messaging for particular disciplinary, programmatic, or multi-disciplinary aspects to the campaign's objectives.

We recommend the consideration of innovative possibilities in raising support for initiatives for students with need.

Digital Strategy has developed the capacity of UALR to take advantage of innovations in crowdsourcing funding for specific and finite initiatives. Crowdsourced funds are not meant to replace endowments and development campaigns; however, they can serve as just-in-time funding for innovative new initiatives that may provide student scaffolding and support or experiential learning opportunities. For example, UALR could test the expansion of a currently successful program to include new student segments, such as those on need-based scholarships. Or UALR could work with current students and faculty in raising crowdsourced seed funding for the development of student projects into pilot programs for the local or state community. Engaging community members beyond traditional donor outreach may facilitate early ties with local young alumni, foster links between UALR and community organizations that benefit from student projects, and deepen a positive and personalized impression of the institution and its impact on Arkansas and beyond.

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced agility in the targeting of talented students with financial need according to strategic goals
- Deeper alumni engagement through scholarship campaign and connection with beneficiaries
- Potential for reinforcing support for need-based students through institutional aid and also crowdfunded initiatives that allow for cutting-edge programming and research on student success to be applied
- Compelling narratives from student awardees that can flow through to recruitment efforts and impact analyses

Anticipated Business Impact

	One Time Costs	Recurring Costs	Gross Annual Cost Savings	Risk to University	Difficulty to Implement
Design and launch fundraising campaign for incoming student scholarships	4	3	5*	2	4

*Metrics should be established to increase student enrollment, resulting in tuition & fee revenue

Anticipated Quality Impact

Score for Recommendation 4: Student Scholarship Campaign

Criteria: ☑	UALR Desired Outcomes	Score (1-10)
Customer Service	Quality of experience - (prompt, courteous, consistent)	3
	Accuracy of information	2
	Supports expansion of services	10
	Enhances efficiency of services	8
Convenience	Available online	8
	Integrated/seamless process	10
	User-friendly (student-centric)	10
Admin Efficiency and/or Effectiveness	Empowers front-line staff	3
	Enhances cross-functionality or coordination	8
	Improves internal relationships	8
TOTAL SCORE		70

Implementation Plan and Timeline

Action Items	Owner(s)	Timeline
1. Development of framework for fundraising campaign strategy, goals and objectives, work plan, communication plan and timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice Chancellor for Advancement and staff 	Fall 2014
2. Input-gathering from key stakeholders (VCs, Deans, other faculty and staff) regarding the plan, messaging, supportive content and data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice Chancellor for Advancement and staff 	Fall 2014
3. Back-office preparation (prospect data management, printed materials, web materials, event organization, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice Chancellor for Advancement, Communications, and Digital Strategy 	Spring - Summer 2015
4. Campaign Kick-Off and Phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice Chancellor for Advancement 	Fall 2015 – 2020*

*Estimate of campaign duration (dark phase and public phase). Time horizon may be adjusted as campaign strategy solidifies.

Recommendation #5: Create a “Recruitment Council” and Align Recruitment Council with Student Success

We recommend formalizing the coordination of roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of generalists and specialists who support recruitment across enrollment units.

Currently silos exist between Recruitment/Admissions and OTSS, Online, and others who represent specialized student populations. These silos can prevent effective coordination of service among front-line professionals. We experienced this effect as part of our secret shopping exercise. We encountered uneven customer service in addressing inquiries and capturing information, especially when we adopted the personas of students from specialized populations. Based on our conversations across all of these enrollment units, we know that front-line staff often feel overburdened: specialists say they are handling too many lower-level inquiries that generalists should be able to handle; and generalists say they are taking on greater and greater advocacy roles for students who do not experience quality or consistent customer service in specialized units.

We recommend the creation of a “Recruitment Council” of select staff in each of the offices that represents major student segments (e.g., transfer, online, international, military, concurrent and dual enrollment) and from Recruitment and Admissions. The Council’s charge can include:

- The creation of descriptions of appropriate hand-off points from generalists to specialists
- The development of scripts or talking points, and resources that can guide generalists from initial contact to the established hand-off point
- Cross-training and cross-unit shadowing of each other during select phone calls and meetings with students
- Peer-to-peer coaching on how to handle certain student interactions and questions
- Joint testing of recruitment, admissions, and enrollment landing pages for usability, tone, ease of navigation, and student-centric design based on the anticipated needs of different types of students
- Joint annual planning of recruitment event attendance by Recruitment, OTSS, and others as appropriate

We recommend the Council meet monthly for AY 2014/15 to create materials and to enhance cross-training. We believe the Council can meet quarterly for ongoing coordination purposes. We recommend that this Council report progress to the directors of their units.

Unit-level directors can measure progress in customer service and processing requests that result from enhanced coordination. We recommend that directors also provide their staff training, feedback, and resources on:

- “Requirements-gathering” style communication with students who are unsure of what they need or how to ask for what they want
- Random or planned call monitoring for coaching and performance development feedback
- Written descriptions of expectations regarding prospective student information capture and data entry for all front-line staff who might encounter a prospective student
- Clarity of expectations across the directors of units around attendance at recruitment events, the contribution of recruitment support content, materials, etc.

We recommend the development of feedback mechanisms among Recruitment, Admissions, and OTSS professionals and academic advisors that are designed to strengthen the alignment of the student experience from inquiry through onboarding to continuing enrollment.

We recommend quarterly meetings between the Recruitment Council and the Advising Council (described in Recommendation #6) to support alignment among professionals who manage students from pre-enrollment to enrollment to persistence and completion. Examples of how regular contact can enhance alignment and coordination include:

- Discussion of both qualitative and quantitative indicators of “at-risk” students at UALR from a variety of perspectives in the student lifecycle
- Identification of trends regarding obstacles and success enablers for students as they proceed from “incoming” to “continuing”
- Development of refined messaging and communication about fit at UALR, about support opportunities, and about successful navigation of the system
- Capture of student anecdotes, quotes, suggestions, and recommendations for use in student outreach and support

Expected Outcomes

- Alignment of expectations for customer service levels and for appropriate hand-offs among front-line staff in Recruitment and Admissions, and OTSS and other specialized units
- Empowerment of front-line staff generalists to effectively handle student inquiries from a broad range of student segments as a result of cross-training and the development of resources and talking points
- Enhanced capability in and increased consistency of customer service as a result of training, monitoring, and coaching
- Stated expectations, training, and support for the capture of prospective student information
- Aligned expectations of participation in and preparation for recruitment events

Anticipated Business Impact

1 None/NA 2 Minor 3 Moderate	4 Material 5 Substantial	One Time Implementation Costs	Recurring Implementation Costs	Gross Annual Cost Savings	Risk to University	Difficulty to Implement
		1	1	4*	2	2
		1	1	4*	2	2

* Cost of lost tuition revenue from lack of inquiry capture, inquiry support, and management of student needs from admission to persistence

Anticipated Quality Impact

Score for Recommendation 5: Recruitment Council

Criteria: ☑	UALR Desired Outcomes	Score (1-10)
Customer Service	Quality of experience - (prompt, courteous, consistent)	10
	Accuracy of information	10
	Supports expansion of services	8
	Enhances efficiency of services	8
Convenience	Available online	8
	Integrated/seamless process	10
	User-friendly (student-centric)	10
Admin Efficiency and/or Effectiveness	Empowers front-line staff	10
	Enhances cross-functionality or coordination	10
	Improves internal relationships	10
TOTAL SCORE		94

Implementation Plan and Timeline

Action Items	Owner(s)	Timeline
1. Discussion of creation of Recruitment Council with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directors of Admissions; OTSS; Online; Military; International; Concurrent/Dual Enrollment 	Aug.
2. Creation of the Recruitment Council charge, initial agenda, meeting schedule, training schedule, and progress report cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Admissions and OTSS to lead with input from other Directors 	Sept.
3. Recruitment Council meets and continues to build out agenda for the year; determines how best to establish cross-training and shadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment staff representative to lead 	Late Sept.
4. First progress report to Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment staff representative to lead 	Early Nov.
5. First meeting with the Advising Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment staff representative to lead 	Jan. 2015

Recommendation #6: Strengthen Student Onboarding and Retention through Blended Academic Advising Model

We recommend that UALR move to a blended academic advising model (professional advisors and faculty advisors) across the institution.

We recommend the adoption of many of the recommendations made in the recent Report by the Task Force on Academic Advising and agree that a blended model would be most effective at UALR at this time. Specifically:

- **Undeclared students:** We agree that a model in which undeclared students up to 45 credits are advised at the Office of Academic Advising works well to support the need for high-touch and/or developmental advising that these students require (be they transfer, first-time freshmen, international students, online, military, or other). Additionally, we recommend that the Office of Academic Advising incorporate more robust use of web-based tools to better support those students for whom coming to campus is a burden.
- **Pre-admit and declared majors with 0 to 60 credits:** We agree that embedded professional advisors in the colleges can support the needs of these students, which include seamless onboarding for those new to UALR; smooth and consistent transition from one set of professional advisors to another for those who started out in the Office of Academic Advising; and a strong focus on the acculturation of students to the college and academic program. This model also ensures that the college-level embedded professional advisors are knowledgeable about the broad core curriculum as well as the college curricula.
- **Students with more than 60 credits:** We agree that a transition to a faculty advisor at some point between 61 and 91 credits (program-dependent) can allow both students and faculty to feel connected for a significant duration. We agree with allowing for variations by program after a student has completed 60 credits in order to recognize program-specific contexts (e.g., if there are field experiences, for example, or other licensure or program accreditation requirements that require greater faculty oversight for the final 60 credits versus the final 30 credits). Professional advisors can continue to support faculty advisors throughout the lifecycle of the student.

While the caseloads of some advisors will be very large to start (sometimes exceeding 500 students per advisor; national averages for caseloads are 250 – 300 per advisor), we agree with the recommendation to recruit four new professional advisors (as allocated in the report) in addition to formalizing the professional academic advising role of the current staff already embedded and performing many aspects of this work. This would allow for a minimum of two professional advisors in each college. We recognize that in some cases physical buildings are not proximate (e.g., Arts, Letters, and Sciences), which may complicate some of the initial faculty oversight and management processes with advisors. However, we believe that complexity can be mitigated by:

- Having multiple advisors per college
- Requiring each college-level advisor to have programmatic areas of specialty for managerial efficiency
- Requiring cross-training and coordination of academic advisors at the college level and between the college and the Office of Academic Advising
- Asking college-level professional advisors to hold office hours in other buildings as appropriate to facilitate access to faculty mentors, program meetings, etc.

We agree with the recommendation to develop an Advising Council to coordinate information, create and share resources, articulate business requirements and needs for further support, and provide input regarding policies, processes, tools, technology, and more.

We recommend that UALR commit to a 3% increase in retention in the undergraduate continuing student population for FY 15 and FY 16 to recoup investments in additional advising staff. For simplicity's sake, if we consider the case of students paying full tuition (\$7600 per year), a 3% increase in first-year retention (e.g., from 60% to 63%) could result in retained annual tuition in excess of \$100,000.

[60% retention rate of 500 incoming first-year students is 300 students. 63% is 315 students.
15 students x \$7600 = \$114,000]

We recommend that New Student Orientation become a joint responsibility of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs in order to align accountabilities for successful student onboarding between these two areas.

New Student Orientation serves as the intersection of administrative, academic, and co-curricular support for incoming students. It is important that all enrollment areas are fully invested and accountable for this onboarding process. To this point in the enrollment process, the units under the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management have served as the bridge between the student and UALR. In order to leverage the relationships built with the incoming students, to provide personalized support based on deep knowledge of the cohort, and to oversee the formal introduction of the student to his or her broader community of supporters, we recommend that the responsibility for the design, management, and outcomes of New Student Orientation belong jointly to Student Affairs and Enrollment Management as of AY 2014/15. Joint planning and delivery of new student orientation can encourage robust consideration of the orientation needs of a wide variety of new and incoming students to UALR, including distance students, international students, military students, and more. New student orientation planning can consider innovations such as virtual orientation sessions for those who cannot be physically present, or the inclusion of financial literacy sessions for parents of a first-generation college student who attends orientation with their child. Joint responsibility for new student orientation can take full advantage of the insights gained from the Recruitment Council and the Advising Council. Finally, joint oversight can ensure that opportunities for data-gathering for each area (Enrollment Management and Student Life) are not overlooked.

Special section of commentary on specific points within the report of the Task Force on Academic Advising:

- We recommend that professional advisors are given full access to the SIS and other systems necessary to resolve student academic issues in real time. For example, if the yellow-card process starts at the academic department, then a student should not have to go to the Registrar to complete the process. The professional advisor can be empowered to enter faculty-approved late registration changes into Banner and to send notification to the appropriate business units for any updates to the student record.
- We recommend that the Recruitment Council and the Advising Council develop a written plan for appropriate hand-off points between academic and business units (e.g., college advisors and OTSS).
- We recommend a two-year transition in which the duplicative processes within Records and Registration regarding graduation checkout are phased out with the onboarding and development of professional college advisors. (estimated .5 - 1.0 FTE savings in Records & Registration)
- Given the intense scrutiny of universities regarding career placement outcomes and the support of students in aligning career goals with academic goals as early as possible in their college careers, we agree that the current UALR solution to career services provision is unsustainable. At a minimum, we recommend an additional professional career advisor be placed in the Community Connection Center as soon as possible. This professional will be dedicated to providing students with a baseline of career counseling and with identifying areas that can be outsourced to improve the ability to scale until UALR determines whether or not it should develop a dedicated Office of Career Services (as part of its emerging enrollment strategy).
- We recommend that UALR formalize the alignment among the Community Connection Center, the Vice Provost for Economic Development, the Director of Corporate Funding, and Procurement (whose relationships with vendors may overlap significantly with corporate targets in the other areas) so that information flows across campus regarding:
 - Market demand for particular skills
 - Corporate partnerships and relationships that can include corporate donors; internship, cooperative, and service learning sponsors; industry professional associations; and credentialing providers
 - Suppliers to the university
 - All other instances of a “corporate touch” at the institution

This formalization can be a working group (e.g., Working Group on Organizational Outreach) that develops and administers a shared database for corporate contacts and outreach activities. The Executive Vice Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Advancement can lead the design of this working group.

- Many professional and academic colleges/programs (Business, Education, Health Professions, Communications, Engineering, Information Technology, etc.) may track market demand for workforce skills in their disciplinary areas, and may have connections with prospective employers. We recommend these programs continue providing career advising support for their students. We also recommend that these programs align with the efforts of the Working Group on Organizational Outreach to coordinate contact information, planned activities, communication, and further outreach plans.
- We recommend the exploration of interest among UALR alumni to participate in a program in which they can provide career mentoring as an instrument of deeper engagement with current students

Special section of commentary on specific points within the report of the Strategic Planning Committee on Online Education:

- Strategic planning for online education can ideally flow from the overall institutional enrollment strategy, with resource prioritization dependent on how the strategy is finalized. This also holds for marketing and outreach planning, branding, and messaging.
- Identification of target markets and emerging audiences, provision of market research, and program opportunity identification and selection for online can ideally be part of a broader process managed by the Strategic Initiatives Committee (addressed in Recommendation #8) to allow for a broad range of perspectives across academic leaders, business unit leaders, and faculty and staff at large.
- Both the Online Education Committee and the Academic Advising Committee recommend greater need for training on web-based tools (e.g., web conferencing, desktop video production). We suggest an expanded role for STaR to support faculty and academic advisor development and training across a wide variety of academic and education technology tools and systems. Additionally, STaR could start a formal peer mentoring program for faculty regarding online course development and excellence to supplement training and to expose faculty to a wide array of styles, innovations, and practices.
- We recommend a formal IT audit rather than distract faculty with the task of cataloguing IT resources.
- We recommend a one-time “mandatory” orientation session for fully online students at the start of their program so that they can receive hands-on training on the LMS, meet with faculty and with each other face to face, feel connected to the UALR campus, and complete any administrative business prior to the start of term. Exceptions can be made as appropriate, and those students can be oriented individually online with peer mentors and with professional advisor support. We also concur with the committee that a program of paid peer mentors can provide personal outreach to newly-admitted fully online students and to check in on them throughout their first term or first year at UALR.

Expected Outcomes

- Academic advising that is accessible and consistent for all students with clear accountabilities and effective processes for transitions between advisors and among academic and enrollment units
- Enhanced retention through active and “intrusive” advising techniques, early detection of at-risk behavior and status, shared analytics, and shared communication history with students across enrollment and academic units
- Rationalized expectations for faculty workload dedicated to advising
- Data collection on academic advising quality, leading to more efficient and effective professional development and training for professional and faculty advisors

Anticipated Business Impact

	One Time Costs	Recurring Costs	Gross Annual Cost Savings	Risk to University	Difficulty to Implement
Professional Advisors – 4 FTE hires	1	\$240K-\$340K	\$114K offset with increased retention	2	4
Procure Starfish CRM	\$10K	\$70K-\$91K	1	2	4
Develop/update professional advising job descriptions	1	1	1	2	2

Anticipated Quality Impact

Score for Recommendation 6: Blended Advising Model

Criteria: ☑	UALR Desired Outcomes	Score (1-10)
Customer Service	Quality of experience - (prompt, courteous, consistent)	9
	Accuracy of information	9
	Supports expansion of services	9
	Enhances efficiency of services	8
Convenience	Available online	5
	Integrated/seamless process	9
	User-friendly (student-centric)	10
Admin Efficiency and/or Effectiveness	Empowers front-line staff	10
	Enhances cross-functionality or coordination	10
	Improves internal relationships	10
TOTAL SCORE		89

Implementation Plan and Timeline

Action Items	Owner(s)	Timeline
1. Announcement and communication around New Student Orientation jointly managed by Student Life and Enrollment Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Vice Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management 	Sept.
2. Cross-unit coordination of plans for adjusting current professional positions as needed for academic advising role and communicating with staff; for new hire recruitment timeline; for hiring committee formation and scheduling; and discussion of roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and success metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor 	Sept. – Oct.
3. Work with HR to finalize the advising job description(s) necessary for the professional academic advisors, and adjust any current professional advising titles or job descriptions as needed. Proceed with recruitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and College Deans to coordinate 	Oct. – Dec.
4. Blended advising model launches with Civitas and Starfish in place, and full access to SIS for advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor 	Jan. 2015
5. Discussions around an expanded role for STaR; the hiring of a dedicated Career Services advisor; the creation of an Office of Career Services; the creation of a Working Group on Organizational Outreach; and discussions of online education strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCs in coordination with appropriate stakeholders 	Sept. – Dec.

Recommendation #7: Launch UALR Professional Development Initiative

We recommend that UALR launch a professional development initiative with a year-long program designed to support a wide-range of professional development needs for faculty and staff.

We applaud the Chancellor’s Cabinet and its contributors for exploring the idea of a customer service development initiative for faculty and staff in the coming academic year. We agree that customer service training and development can enhance enrollment services across campus; however, in our conversations with stakeholders at all levels of UALR and in our analysis of the task force reports that were submitted in summer 2014, we recommend a more holistic professional development plan.

We recommend that instead of a singular focus on customer service, UALR align all of the major professional development needs into a coordinated year-long initiative. We recommend that UALR use the 2014 Fall Term to provide more tactical but urgently-needed professional development in order to give faculty and staff time to settle into new roles, organizational structures, and processes post-restructuring. Then in the 2015 Spring Term, UALR can offer a more targeted customer service and leadership development solution that leads to new performance expectations and metrics for the campus.

We recommend the development of a planning committee that represents both the Chancellor’s Cabinet and critical functional representatives.

The planning committee can include ITS, Digital Strategy, STaR, Online Education, the Vice Chancellors, the Chief of Staff, HR, Budget, and select faculty and staff to round out manager-level and front-line level perspectives. The committee can finalize the scope and timeline of the initiative, articulate desired outcomes, and make a determination regarding which training and development can be provided in-house and which requires a third-party solution. The planning committee can determine the communication plan around the initiative (e.g., key messaging, talking points, and answering concerns). Finally, the committee can complete research regarding third-party vendors.

Based on our stakeholder conversations and review of Task Force materials, we offer these examples of tactical areas of focus for 2014 Fall Term professional development:

- **ITC (Information Technology and Communication) Systems, Tools, and Business Processes**
 - **Training Area Leads:** ITS and the Vice Chancellors

ITC systems include Banner, BOSS, Argos, ImageNow and other common systems. UALR can provide hands-on training on the tools (through in-house training, outsourced training, or a mix). Additionally, functional and academic leaders can lead discussions with their teams on how the tools intersect with end-to-end business processes so that everyone has a full understanding of how to leverage the technology, why using the tools matters, and the impact on others when these tools are not used consistently well. We recommend the development of a certification program at UALR such that faculty and staff are placed into “levels of mastery” depending on their current understanding of the tools. As a result, more advanced users do not have to participate in training they do not need, and users with greater needs for support do not feel pressured to move too quickly through training to appease a more experienced group of colleagues.

- **Best practices in student advising/coaching/mentoring in face-to-face and mediated environments**
 - **Training Area Leads:** Offices of Academic Advising, Online, and STaR

Ensuring that professional and faculty academic advisors understand best practices and innovations in student advising, coaching, and mentoring is critical as UALR moves to a blended advising model with increased accountabilities for advising quality. Additionally, advisors can deepen skills and techniques for interacting with students in both face-to-face and mediated environments (e.g., synchronous online, asynchronous online, live phone call, web conference).

- **Management and use of analytics**
 - **Training Area Leads:** The Vice Chancellors and Institutional Effectiveness

As UALR moves to more data-driven practices, we recommend training and development for managers, directors, and senior leaders on how to develop strategic questions that data and analytics can help to answer; on how to understand and use analytics tools; and how to put the data in context for effective management and decision-making.

- **Online education development and delivery**
 - **Training Area Leads:** Online and STaR

Given the significant level of online enrollment at UALR, we recommend that faculty and adjunct faculty have access to current online pedagogical/andragogical models and innovations, assessment techniques, student engagement techniques, and educational technology tools (with both hands-on training opportunities and access to 24x7 learning resources such as Lynda.com). These training sessions and conversations can be provided with both in-house expertise and with outside speakers and practitioners (through in-person events or via synchronous and asynchronous online modules). As with ITC tools, UALR can develop a certification system so that faculty and adjunct faculty can distinguish themselves through mastery of these topics.

- **Website content management, Digital Strategy tools, the UALR Intranet**
 - **Training Area Lead:** Digital Strategy

Digital Strategy can develop both face-to-face and 24x7 resources for faculty and staff who manage web content, use communication and tracking tools in coordination with Digital Strategy, and who require onboarding and training to effectively use the emerging UALR Intranet.

Prior to the launch of the customer service development portion of the initiative, we recommend that UALR measure levels of customer service internally in academic and business units through fall 2014.

In order to realize the greatest value from a customer service development initiative, we recommend that the Chancellor's Cabinet along with other important stakeholders such as HR, define what excellence in customer service means, what it looks like, and how it is realistically measured. Once the Cabinet develops draft metrics and benchmarks, the Chancellor's Office can ask the Vice Chancellors and the Deans to discuss this definition of customer service and these metrics internally with functional managers, program chairs, front-line staff, etc. in order to create a plan for how to "sample" customer service performance for a period (e.g., three weeks) in mid-to late fall. Based on the results, the Chancellor's Office and HR can determine the level of customer service

training required. The Chancellor's Office can then work with customer service consultants on initial training design, on performance metrics development, and on ongoing training planning.

Then, in the 2015 Spring Term, UALR can proceed with its desired customer service development solution based on its research and level-setting from the fall. We agree that the Disney solution appears to be a good fit for UALR. The model allows for a small team to go through onsite training and to learn how to train others back on campus; and it provides guidance in the development of ongoing performance benchmarks and metrics. In addition to solutions for customer-facing positions, we also recommend that UALR consider mid-management and executive leadership development services, both to invest in the future leadership of UALR and to signal commitment across campus to continuous improvement at all levels of the organization.

Expected Outcomes

- A comprehensive and considered approach to professional development that is learner-centric for faculty and staff
- Heightened faculty and staff engagement in community-building, including peer learning cohorts and communities of excellence
- Tactical onboarding for new Deans and other new positions in the fall while addressing the continuous development needs of current faculty and staff
- Coordination and discussion across technology communities (ITS, Digital Strategy, STaR, and Online) concerning roles and responsibilities for providing training and development, ideas for leveraging cross-unit internal expertise, and suggestions for how to develop ongoing training in these areas
- Empowered front-line staff who know how to provide thoughtful, knowledgeable, effective, and efficient service for customers and for each other
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Satisfied and aligned middle-managers and executives who have the support they need to be effective leaders, coaches, teammates, and decision-makers

Anticipated Business Impact

	One Time Costs	Recurring Costs	Gross Annual Cost Savings	Risk to University	Difficulty to Implement
Tactical professional development initiative	3	TBD*	4	2	3
Customer Service Training	~\$70,000 for advance team training	TBD*	4	2	3

* Dependent on UALR decisions on what continuous training to provide and if in-house or outsourced

Anticipated Quality Impact

Score for Recommendation 7: Professional Development

Criteria: ☑	UALR Desired Outcomes	Score (1-10)
Customer Service	Quality of experience - (prompt, courteous, consistent)	10
	Accuracy of information	8
	Supports expansion of services	8
	Enhances efficiency of services	10
Convenience	Available online	7
	Integrated/seamless process	9
	User-friendly (student-centric)	10
Admin Efficiency and/or Effectiveness	Empowers front-line staff	10
	Enhances cross-functionality or coordination	10
	Improves internal relationships	10
TOTAL SCORE		92

Implementation Plan and Timeline

Action Items	Owner(s)	Timeline
1. Bi-weekly Planning Committee meetings (logistics, outcomes, communications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff and HR 	Aug. – Oct.
2. Communication to UALR regarding the initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chancellor 	Sept.
3. Launch and provision of tactical professional development training and discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff and HR to coordinate • Training Area Leads to implement 	Oct. – Mar.
4. Measurement of current level of customer service by customer-facing staff and faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff to coordinate • VCs and Deans to implement 	Oct. – Nov.
5. Selection of advance team for customer service training in spring 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff and HR 	Nov. – Dec.
6. Design of campus-wide customer service training and performance metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff and HR 	Mar. - May and ongoing

Recommendation #8: Develop Institutional-Level Strategic Initiatives Committee

We recommend that the identification and selection of strategic initiatives at UALR be formalized in a transparent, objective, and data-driven process.

Even nominally, the responsibility for strategic initiatives identification and selection should not reside with a single employee. The initiatives identification, selection, and prioritization process should be objective, data-driven, transparent, and inclusive of key academic and administrative perspectives. Communication planning should be included in initiatives design and implementation.

We recommend a Strategic Initiatives Committee to provide a cross-functional platform for discussion, evaluation, and debate; and to align accountabilities across the academic and administrative areas.

A number of models exist in academe for managing the identification and selection of strategic initiatives for the institution. Some universities (e.g., University of Connecticut, Arizona State University) use an “innovation incubator” model. In this model, strategic initiatives such as the development of new academic programs or delivery modalities, the development of strategic partnerships with external organizations or third-parties, and the development of strategic pricing models, are identified by a team of market-facing professionals. These professionals work closely with academic and business unit professionals and faculty to design solutions. The unit then provides project management for the implementation of initiatives. This model often arises in larger, public institutions with a formerly robust continuing education and outreach unit that has been repurposed to serve in a centralized capacity as a “tip of the spear” unit for strategic opportunities. Other universities that are part of a system use a system-level model for strategic initiatives identification and development (e.g., University of Texas System, University of Wisconsin System, University of Maryland System) where representatives from individual campuses inform strategic initiative development and serve as project leads for particular initiatives. Often these strategic initiatives concern primarily large-scale projects such as strategic transformation initiatives (e.g., system-wide selection of ERP or other infrastructure, development of competency-based education, or design of analytics dashboards). In our experience, no matter the model, the most successful examples of the management of the strategic initiative selection and implementation prioritize deep coordination and communication across academic and business units and actively nurture a culture of everyone’s “being on the same team.”

Given the size and cultural position of UALR at this time, we recommend a Strategic Initiatives Committee comprised of critical positions of faculty and staff leadership, as well as broader faculty and staff representation, to manage the identification, selection, and prioritization of opportunities.

We recommend that the Strategic Initiatives Committee focus for the first two years on opportunities to align enrollment strategy, academic programming (e.g., feasibility studies for new program ideas, consideration of academic innovation such as competency-based education), and enabling infrastructure (e.g., enterprise-level information technology tools and web services projects as they pertain to enrollment strategy; initiatives to support recruitment and retention efforts identified in the enrollment strategy; strategic partnerships; outcomes data collection, etc.).

The committee can consist of standing members who represent positions that can provide institutional-level perspectives on a variety of academic, regulatory and administrative perspectives including: current and emerging markets, market research and market sizing; financial planning; IT planning; communication planning; academic program design, assessment, quality assurance, and program-level accreditation and regulation; federal and state higher education accreditation and regulation; and UALR policy and governance procedures. In our experience, the committee is most often chaired by the Provost.

We recommend the 20 standing members to include:

- The Vice Chancellors (4)
- President of the University Assembly and Faculty Senate
- Vice President of the Faculty Senate
- College Deans (7)
- Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development
- Vice Provost for Student Life
- Chief of Staff
- Government Relations
- CIO
- Budget Director
- Communications/Digital Strategy

We recommend an additional seven rotating members to include:

- Two Chairs selected from the Chairs Council
- Two staff Directors or Managers from Enrollment Management, Advancement Affairs, or Academic Affairs
- Two faculty members at large nominated through the Faculty Senate
- One staff member at large nominated through the Staff Senate

Adjustments to the proposed membership can be addressed as needed, given the still-evolving hiring and placement at UALR. The Chancellor's Office can determine the length of service of rotating members. We recommend two year terms to allow for more than one cycle of decision-making and to minimize onboarding time.

The Chancellor's Office can determine the calendar for this committee. We recommend an early fall session for strategic initiative identification and selection of ideas for due diligence. Due diligence can be performed through the remainder of the fall semester. This can include market research, benchmarking and peer comparisons, vendor presentations, assessment of cost and alignment with overarching institutional strategy; internal polling; and more. Presentation of research and discussion can take place in early spring. We recommend final selection by mid-spring for budget and communication planning. This calendar can be accelerated as needed for special or time sensitive opportunities.

The Chancellor's Office can determine the initial process for voting, to be refined by the committee over time. We recommend the consideration of weighted voting between faculty and staff, and we recommend a minimum threshold of votes for proceeding with opportunities. Not every year will yield the same number of sufficiently compelling ideas.

The Chancellor's Office can determine an initial process for collecting strategic initiative ideas. We suggest that Ideas be institutional-level in scope. We recommend that for the first year the Strategic Initiatives Committee focus on generating ideas internally in order to allow for the committee to develop its communication and negotiation protocols. In future years, the committee can generate a list of strategic questions for the major governance bodies (e.g., Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, others as appropriate) at UALR to consider that can assist the Strategic Initiatives Committee in opportunity identification. Additional ideas can come directly from the Chancellor, from the UA System, and other stakeholders.

Opportunities should be scored in order to place them in priority order for due diligence and for further research and analysis. The Executive Vice Chancellor may have developed a worksheet or a set of criteria that can be used or repurposed for this. If this does not suffice, we recommend a set of criteria that allows for a review from multiple perspectives. An illustrative example might be:

Initial Opportunity Evaluation Criteria					
Rating by category	Conferral & Provider Trends (NCES)	Labor Demand (State)	Supply to Demand (# of projected graduates vs. jobs)	Barriers to Entry	Institutional Fit
1	Small/Declining (<1%)	Slower than Average (<6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater supply than demand or Both supply and demand are negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large investments in capital, faculty hires, and/or accreditation compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low/No current resources/assets. Does not fit with mission/goals
2	Moderate (1-3%)	Fast as Average (7-13%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply is roughly on par with demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium investments in capital, faculty hires, and accreditation compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some current resources/assets Slightly fits with mission/goals
3	Large (>3%)	Faster than Average (>14%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand is positive, and greater than supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low investments in capital, faculty hires, and accreditation compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large amounts of utilization with current resources/assets Fits meaningfully with mission/goals

In this example, we have a review of market indicators (supply, demand) alongside an assessment of required investments and fit with strategic objectives. We recommend that the Strategic Initiatives Committee construct initial opportunity evaluation criteria that, at a minimum, allows for the consideration of potential business impact (revenue, savings, one-time and recurring costs, risk to the institution), potential quality impact (institutional fit and enhancement, ability to meet desired outcomes of UALR, the enrollment strategy, reputational impact), market position impact (competitive advantage and differentiation), and barriers to entry.

Individual members of the committee can score the opportunities and scores (with appropriate weighting determined by the committee) can then be tallied and discussed.

The committee can review findings once due diligence for select opportunities is complete and re-score the opportunities based on new information. For the top three to five opportunities, committee participants can decide how they would allot investment resources to each of the opportunities in order to determine prioritization. For example, each committee member can be asked how they would spend “100 pennies” across the top opportunities. Participants can spend all “pennies” on one opportunity, or spread them out in relative amounts across any or all opportunities. Total “pennies” can be tallied for each opportunity for a rank order, and the results can be discussed.

Once the committee’s recommendations have been finalized, the committee can appoint an internal project manager for each who is accountable to the committee for implementation oversight and reporting.

Expected Outcomes:

- Development of cross-functional selection committee for strategic initiatives to balance perspectives and foster alignment across major areas in decision-making
- Design of data-driven, objective, and transparent process for initiative identification and selection
- Alignment of initiative selection with overarching strategy and with resource availability
- Assignment of internal project lead for implementation accountability
- Inclusion of communication planning as part of the process both in terms of initial feedback for top ideas and for selected ideas

Anticipated Business Impact

	One Time Costs	Recurring Costs	Gross Annual Cost Savings	Risk to University	Difficulty to Implement
Create cross-functional selection committee for strategic initiatives	1	1	2*	2	3
Internal project lead appointed for each selected initiative	1	1	2*	2	3
Communication planning for both initial feedback and selected ideas	1	1	2*	2	3

2*: Potential cost savings TBD due to more efficient implementation planning and reduced project "stop-starts"

Anticipated Quality Impact

Score for Recommendation 8: Strategic Initiatives Committee

Criteria: ☒	UALR Desired Outcomes	Score (1-10)
Customer Service	Quality of experience - (prompt, courteous, consistent)	5
	Accuracy of information	5
	Supports expansion of services	10
	Enhances efficiency of services	10
Convenience	Available online	5
	Integrated/seamless process	8
	User-friendly (student-centric)	8
Admin Efficiency and/or Effectiveness	Empowers front-line staff	5
	Enhances cross-functionality or coordination	10
	Improves internal relationships	10
TOTAL SCORE		76

Implementation Plan and Timeline

Action Items	Owner(s)	Timeline
1. Invite standing members to the Strategic Initiatives Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chancellor 	Aug.
2. First meeting of standing members of the Strategic Initiatives Committee to create charter and to invite rotating members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Vice Chancellor to lead 	Sept.
3. First meeting of the full Strategic Initiatives Committee to consider outstanding opportunities and/or to generate potential opportunities for review that align with enrollment framework and emerging strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Vice Chancellor to lead 	Oct.
4. Due diligence for opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual committee members 	Oct. – Feb.
5. Presentation of findings and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual committee members 	Mar.
6. Selection and communication planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee members Project Leads within the committee 	May

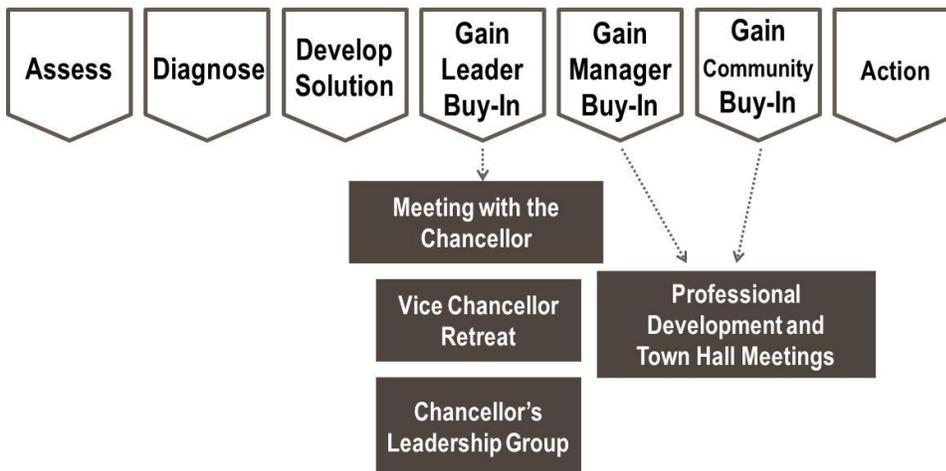
Special Note Regarding Change Management

Attempts to resolve gaps between the current state and a desired future state often meet resistance or lack of commitment due to missed steps between developing recommendations and implementing them.



Without the identification of internal champions and the engagement and buy-in of the community facing these changes, recommendations can seem to be too theoretical, impossible to do, or “somebody else’s problem.”

To assist with buy-in and implementation, we have provided the following support to change management at UALR directly or through our recommendations and action plan:



Appendix A: Master Implementation Plan and Timeline

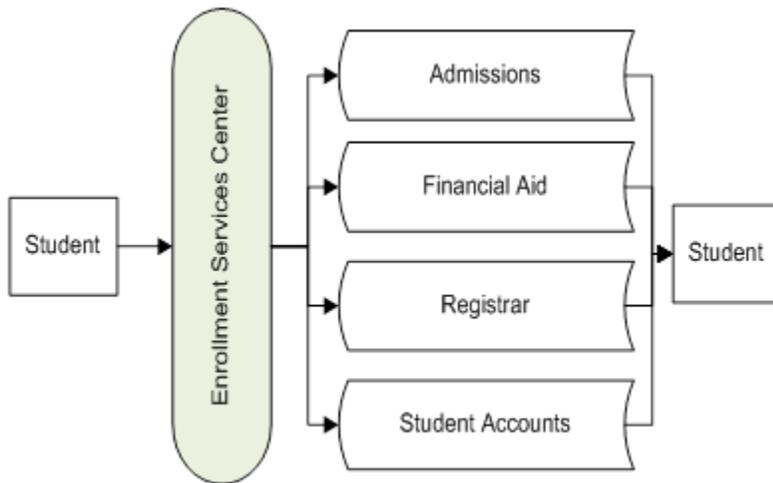
We direct you to the accompanying spreadsheet file for an interactive version of the implementation plan that can be filtered by recommendation, by action item owner, or by month. We also include in this file the summary information for the business impact and the quality impact assessments for each recommendation.

Appendix B: Additional Opportunities for Enrollment Process Reengineering

In this section, we offer additional recommendations and opportunities for enhancing enrollment processes and designs.

Cross-Trained Front-Line Student Services Staff

A current trend in the design of One Stop Shop student services centers is to provide in the public/reception area of the building full-time staff who are responsible for all student-facing communications regarding Records and Registration, Financial Aid, and Student Accounting (and sometimes Admissions as well). A director of the student services center designs and ensures the provision of intensive cross-training for the full-time professionals for a period of 10 to 12 weeks (including both classroom-style training with curriculum from each of the major enrollment functions and with lectures from specialists; and experiential training through shadowing positions in each area to observe real-time interactions and issues). The professional staff members provide in-person assistance, and manage phone and email or web-based inquiries. This model allows the specialists in the back offices of each area to focus on non-customer-facing tasks. According to those we interviewed (University of Minnesota, University of Cincinnati, and Georgia State University) the front-line generalists handle nearly all (approximately 90% on average) of student questions and requests before having to pass the student on to a specialist in the back offices.



We recommend that UALR consider a move to this model in the future especially as FTE staff time is released through the use of outsourced services, more efficient tools and processes, and enhanced IT systems interfaces. Benefits include a student-centered focus that is not distracted by normal back office processes and priorities, seamless service across enrollment units from the student perspective, and consistency in tone and accuracy of information. Student employees can continue to be in place to assist with routine tasks and communications, to help extend hours, and to provide extra capacity during peak periods.

One Stop Shop Landing Page

Based on a review of the One Stop Shops of peer institutions (e.g., Minnesota, Cincinnati, Georgia State), we recommend the consideration of a landing page for the Student Services building and offices that serves a point of orientation to individual unit-level enrollment services websites and content. We provide one example here for comparison, below. For additional comparisons, please see Appendix D.



GA State U. Competitive Advantage	Benefit to UALR
Consistency across all EM links	Addresses current inconsistencies across UALR sites that make navigation difficult and time consuming. Fosters collaborative maintenance of the landing page across all enrollment units for greater connection and consistency of information, tools, and communication style.
"Panther Predictor" online tool helps determine likelihood of admission based on test scores and GPA	Potentially reduces number of in-person and phone queries; UALR admissions standards were not readily available online at time of analysis
Comprehensive Cost Calculator includes anticipated Financial Aid and Housing, Meal Plan, and Transportation	Consistency in tools and web services - UALR utilizes a simplistic cost calculator, but it is not consistently referenced across EM functions. Additionally, there is a dead link from the Admissions and Scholarship pages for the Net Price Calculator tool
Admissions home page provides links for "traditional" high school students, transfer students, and international students, but also includes resources for 'Other Applicants' who may not fit into those groups. Step by step instructions are then provided for each student type	Allows UALR to define student types for enhanced navigation while also addressing the broad "non-traditional" student population. Also allows UALR to provide each student type with relevant instructions and steps for the student application process and to provide easy to use 'self-help' tools for applicants
All checklists and step-by-step instructions are clearly listed on relevant pages	Enhanced consistency in UALR admissions checklists and the reduction of the use of PDFs on the site, which in many cases require toggling among multiple screens for effective use
One-Stop Shop linked from all Admissions pages, and from each enrollment unit page	Allows UALR prospective and current students one-click access to information. Reduces complexity in navigation and reduces duplicative and inconsistent information
Advising information offered by year of attendance (freshman through senior), including a link especially for transfer students	Enhanced clarity for students - UALR advising offerings by 'undecided' vs. 'major declaration' provides a somewhat less straight-forward checklist for students who are still getting used to UALR

Admissions

- Act 1014 is not an admissions requirement but the presence of this on the admissions checklist can cause delays in the admissions process. We recommend removal from the Admissions checklist, and provide instead instructions on the website and from the application itself on how to navigate to the appropriate advising contact/office.

Scholarships Office

- Currently, the Coordinator spends a significant amount of time copy-editing hundreds of thank you letters to donors on behalf of beneficiaries. However, the Coordinator reported that the scholarship application essays are high quality, even from these same students. This suggests that the students are highly motivated to do their own copy-editing during the application process but not once the scholarship award has been confirmed. We recommend asking students to submit a hypothetical thank you letter during the

application process along with the essay. While letters may still require some editing post-award, the copy-editing time may be greatly reduced.

Cashier's Office

- The Cashier's Office reports that CashNet goes offline at least once, if not several times a day. This prevents students from completing payment transactions and requires them to check back later to see if the system is operational. Depending on the day, a student may be required to check back multiple times. We recommend that the CashNet contract be moved under the purview of ITS, and renegotiated to hold the vendor to specific performance metrics.
- Travel cash advances, especially for small amounts, can be time-consuming for little value-add. Eliminating cash advances reduces paper processes and back-end audit work. We recommend that UALR consider corporate cards for regular travelers and/or creating a mechanism for cash advances only above a threshold level of \$2.500.

Appendix C: For Future Considerations

Project Management Support

Huron Education offers long experience and deep capability in managing complex engagements from design through implementation. As UALR embarks on this ambitious but critical implementation plan and timeline, we offer support services for project management and assistance for specific initiatives, for peak periods in the timeline, and for specific units or offices that bear responsibility for many overlapping projects. We have provided project support, for example, as part of our engagement with the University of Wisconsin System to assist key leaders with the management of the launch of competency-based education programming in compressed timeframe.

Opportunity for Budget Process Assessment:

Public university systems have a complex set of challenges to navigate in the budgeting process due to lack of clarity from the state regarding funding, sudden changes mid-year, the need to keep a certain level of reserves, and more. Huron recommends a budget process assessment, including peer benchmarking as a critical supplement to its restructuring efforts in order to facilitate greater transparency and wider accountability across campus, and to ensure best practices are incorporated at this stage.

Potential Issue	Description
Inconsistent Accountability across Campus	End-of-year spending sprees and a system of negotiating for budget increases have created a mixed message when it comes to being accountable for a function/school's budget. From our initial observations, administrative leaders and managers are not accounting for the entirety of their unit's spending habits.
No "Bottom-Up" View of Expenses	Budgets lack detail on particular non-labor items; which prevents the easy identification of centrally-derived cost savings.
Limited Costing	Minimal use of direct costing and charge-backs limits Vice Chancellors'/Deans' incentives to reduce expenses or usage of central services.
Few Service Level Expectations	Support for regular central services, like IT, HR, and Communications, is not a part of any unit budget. Establishing service level expectations may become increasingly important. Full cost of doing business is not transparent.
Shadow Accounting Systems in Use	Many departments have a strong desire for additional insight into and control of their expenses and have thus procured or are seeking to procure shadow accounting software. This results in duplicative work across departments and additional software expenses for the University as a whole.

Potential Opportunities for HR Review

We understand the significant undertaking system upgrades and implementations present. UALR implemented the PeopleAdmin system, now fully online. However, it does not yet serve as a full and complete HR database for the institution. In light of the recent restructuring and unit transitions, Huron recommends an HR assessment in an effort to create a consistent, consolidated database of all University job descriptions and organizational charts, and to enforce streamlined hiring practices across all University functions. For example:

Potential Opportunities for HR Review

- **Implement compliance requirements for HR information:** Ensure HR maintains job descriptions and organizational charts for the entire University. With the current reorganization, the University has a unique opportunity to bring its record keeping up to date.
- **Implement streamlined, consistent hiring practices:** In order to ensure that job descriptions closely match the actual positions, Huron recommends requiring an HR interview as part of all hires. There is a belief on-campus that job descriptions may be written to gain approval, but candidates are hired with very different skill sets. This step would add rigor and consistency to the current process.
- **Draft and implement additional Human Resources policies:** Huron believes that there is significant opportunity to update records, systems and practices at UALR. In order to ensure compliance and shift previous cultural norms and attitudes, UALR must build more robust policies in conjunction with the executed changes and implement a University-wide training program.

Potential Opportunities for Procurement Review

As University resources continue to be stretched across critical initiatives, we recommend that strategic procurement practices and associated savings opportunities be reviewed on an ongoing basis. A review of the UALR procurement function can lead to a strategic implementation of an eProcurement solution and a strategic sourcing program that may provide significant cost savings to the University.

Potential Opportunities for Procurement Review

- **Implement an eProcurement solution:** eProcurement will enhance customer service and efficiencies in the procure to pay arena. Huron suggests that UALR establish a committee to select an eProcurement solution and begin pre-implementation planning for the selected solution.
- **Introduce a Strategic Sourcing Program:** Huron recommends a staged, commodity by commodity approach to tackle non-labor savings opportunities for the UALR. Based on an initial assessment of Office Supplies and IT Hardware and Software, significant savings opportunity exists for the university. In conjunction, a training and knowledge transfer program is suggested to train new and existing staff on the strategic sourcing program.
- **Draft and implement additional Procurement policies:** Huron believes that there is significant opportunity for savings in UALR's procurement, as briefly discussed above. In order to ensure compliance and shift previous cultural norms and attitudes, UALR must build more robust policies in conjunction with the executed changes and implement a University-wide training program..

Appendix D: Master PowerPoint File

We direct you to the accompanying presentation file that includes slides presented at each of the major stakeholder meetings: the Executive Presentation to the Chancellor; the Strategic Enrollment Alignment Retreat; and the Chancellor's Leadership Group Retreat.