UNIVERSITY BUSINESS INSTITUTE REPORT

Introduction:
In order to respond to the increasing complexity of managing the University’s financial resources, the Vice President of Administration and Finance convened a University Business Institute Committee to develop and recommend a comprehensive University Business Institute (UBI) training program for seasoned and novice Finance managers and professional staff, University employees whose job duties include financial management, or University employees who wish to gain financial knowledge and expertise in order to serve the University in those positions.

The committee was charged with developing the curriculum and format for a training program that will prepare financial managers and professional staff to be successful in their roles in support of the University’s mission and goals through:

- the application of efficient, effective and relevant fiscal policies and procedures
- the development of skills utilizing technical financial tools and resources
- the knowledge and expertise to make sound fiscal decisions
- the understanding of broad financial implications
- organizational and cultural understanding of the complex environment of public higher education
- the improvement of personal and professional skills

Committee members:
John Beisner, Director, Risk Management
Paulette Blumberg, Associate Director, Parking and Transportation
Welson Badal, Interim Director of Finance Systems
Roy Gonzales, Manager, Human Resources and Organizational Dev., Physical Plant
Naomi Goodwin, Assistant VP, Administration and Finance
Debbie Hagman, Accounts Payable/Travel Specialist
Robin Innes, Director, Employee Training & Development
Lisa Kopecky, Budget Director, Academic Affairs
Carmen Peak, Procurement Operations Manager
Cheryl Perreira, Director, Business Planning & Improvement (Chair)

Focus Groups:
In March 2006, the UBI Committee conducted 9 focus groups of staff and managers in the university’s financial organization as well as those responsible for financial functions on the campus. Participants were selected based on their financial management role as follows:

1. Financial Services Department Staff – Staff
2. Financial Services Department Staff – Staff
3. Financial Services Department Staff – Manager
4. Division Level Financial & HR Managers & College Level Financial & HR Coordinators
5. College Level Financial & HR Coordinators
6. Department Managers/Chairs – Account Responsible Persons
7. Department Managers/Chairs – Account Responsible Persons
8. Department Level Financial & HR Staff – Identified by Division Financial Manager
9. Department Level Financial & HR Staff – Identified by Division Financial Manager

A total of 98 individuals participated in the focus groups. At the conclusion of the focus group, participants completed an online survey regarding their financial training needs.
Survey responses revealed that the five financial topics with the least understanding are:
- Risk Management and University Insurance Programs
- Audits and the Control Environment
- Fiscal and Operational Impacts of Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Troubleshooting Fiscal Issues
- Leaves

Survey respondents indicated the following when asked to specify their top five fiscal training needs:
- Financial Reporting and Reconciliation
- Budget and Expense Management
- Interpretation and Application of CSUF Policies and Procedures
- CSU and University Budget Process
- Budget, Benefits and Salary Forecasting
- Interpretation and Application of State and CSU Policies and Procedures

Other topics that survey respondents felt could be included in the University Business Institute included:
- Administration and Finance Processes
- HR issues
- General Resources
- Leadership Institute
- Soft Skills
- Career Development
- Admissions and Records Issues
- General Processes
- IT
- Accounting Basics
- Responsibilities
- Position Management
- Facilities
- Partnerships

Survey respondents felt that ongoing resources that should be provided by the University Business Institute include:
- Whom to Contact list
- Quick Reference Guide
- Web Page
- Online Forms Directory
- Online Tutorials
- Periodic Refresher Meetings
- Mentoring Opportunities
- Direct Notifications from Process Owners
- Networking Events
- Portal Community

Survey respondents quoted the following as the potential benefits of a University Business Institute:
- Better qualified, more efficient employees
- Better understanding
- Makes job easier
- Improved communication between units/divisions and offices
Better work environment  
Knowledge sharing  
Reduced turnover  
Fewer mistakes  
Better customer service  
Frees up management time  
Cross training/back up  
Cheaper than outside training  
Certificate can support promotion/in-range progression  
Tangible support from Vice President’s Office  
Positive return on investment  
Better access to information

Survey respondents were asked how much time they felt they could devote to such training and the responses ranged from less than 4 hours more than 5 times per year (82%) to one day 3-5 times a year (31%) to 2 days 1-2 times a year (46%).

The survey data was compiled and analyzed and posted to the Administration and Finance webpage in easy to view graphs.

**UBI Committee Recommendations:**

Based on the survey and focus group responses and feedback, the UBI Committee believes that there is a need for a core training program, modeled after the University of California’s Business Officer Institute, to provide the higher level conceptual knowledge needed for success in financial management. In addition, it was clear that there was strong need for operational “tracks” to offer more practical “how-to” training on specific functions. Accordingly, the UBI Committee recommends that the division:

- Develop a core UBI program and several financial management “tracks” covering a variety of topics.
- Implement the core UBI program first, possibly in January 2007, to provide training in conceptual financial management skills as well as to demonstrate the benefits of such a financial training program to management and decision makers so that they will be more inclined to encourage and support their staff’s attendance at the tracks training.
- Continue working on developing the content and format of the tracks, which are expected to be ready for implementation approximately 3 months after the core program.
- Appoint a program administrator to implement the program.
- Retain the UBI committee as an advisory group that can offer advice and guidance on curriculum and format of the Institute as well as ensure that quality remains high and that training objectives are achieved.
- Seek feedback from the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs as well as the Faculty Development Center director regarding the format and content of the core program and the tracks.
- Find ways to address the obstacles to participation expressed by the survey respondents.

**The Core University Business Institute Program:**

The recommended format of the core University Business Institute program is a three day training event with a mix of internal and external presenters.

The UBI committee believes that the following topics would be responsive to needs and comprise a strong core program that will provide a conceptual understanding of a variety of financial topics as well as underlying values and principles that support the university’s mission. The core program includes the following sessions:

- Purpose of the Institute
University Resources: Planning and Budgeting  
Fiduciary Roles and Responsibilities  
The Control and Audit Environment (including a hands-on exercise)  
Understanding Working Styles  
Making Connections (networking)  
University Stewardship and Ethical Decision-Making (including an exercise)  
Panel Discussion: Academic Perspective on Business “Officers”  
Human Resource Management within the Changing Business Environment  
Legal Issues in HR Management  
Risk Management, Whistleblower Complaints and the Business “Officer”  
Human Resource Case Study: Workplace Scenarios  
Auxiliary Funds  
Sponsored Programs  
Managing Information Assets  
Lunch: Business “Officer” Resources – Navigating University Waters  
Personal Action Plan: How do I use this Information? What else do I need to know?

Each workshop session will tie back to “fitting the pieces together” and how this information can be applied in the work environment. A draft of the proposed first University Business Institute program is attached.

The Functional Tracks:
Functional tracks are designed to target specific audiences and offer practical, hands-on operational knowledge and resources that will support and assist those who are responsible for overseeing or performing financial functions outside the Finance area within the Division of Administration and Finance.

- Functional Track 1 (the “overseers”) is designed for deans, academic department chairs, account responsible persons.
- Functional Track 2 (the “doers”) is designed for department, college, and division financial staff, managers or directors.
- Both tracks include a financial series and a human resources series of topics designed to provide information and resources from the perspective of the target audience.
- In addition to training courses on these topics, other resources such as a web repository of information covered in the classes will be available to assist staff and managers.

A working draft outline of the proposed tracks is attached.

Budget:
The University’s expectation regarding these types of training programs is that they will be offered free to participants. Thus, the cost of the program will be borne by the Division of Administration and Finance.

- Program Administrator: A program administrator needs to be assigned who can devote 20 hours/week to oversee/manage the development phase, work with presenters on content, and supervise implementation. Once the core program is developed and implemented, the program administrator will provide oversight of the development of content for the functional tracks.
- Staff Support
- External presenters: An estimate for the Understanding Working Styles presentation is $3,000-5,000 if an external presenter is engaged. All other sessions could be offered by internal presenters.
- Room rentals/food – Will vary depending on the location. It was felt that an off-campus location was preferable to the TSU or the Marriott to allow participants the opportunity to focus on the program without work distractions. Some suggestions: Kellogg West, Los Coyotes Country Club.
For comparison purposes, it was noted that the Chairs Series of monthly luncheons is budgeted at $10,000 annually.

**Timing:**
Following approval by the Vice President for Administration and Finance, it is estimated that it will take 4 months to complete the development of the content for the core program, make logistical arrangements, and get the word out on campus. If approval is obtained by the end of October 2006, that would mean the earliest the program could be implemented would be the end of February. It was felt that the proposed presenters should be made aware as soon as possible of their involvement in the program. The timing of the program implementation will also depend on when the program administrator is identified.

**Issues:**
In discussions and analysis of survey responses and information reviewed in connection with development of the UBI, several issues emerged that should be addressed either in the UBI curriculum or separately.

- There is a strong need for training, information or facilitation of business processes to assist campus staff in “navigating the waters at CSUF.” While there will always be an informal network that operates independently of formal organizational structures and is often used to get things done, perhaps this is an indication that business processes need to be reviewed and streamlined.
- There was consensus among committee members that ethics training and awareness should run through the entire UBI curriculum and be reflected in all topics.
- All topics must include reference to the “big picture” or how the pieces fit together as well as the impact or why the information is important and relevant to participants.
- An “owner” of the UBI program needs to be identified to take responsibility for implementation of the format and curriculum ultimately approved. In addition to the “owner” adequate staff resources must be devoted to the program to provide support to program development and to take care of logistics and coordination with presenters.
- The committee felt that a comprehensive assessment of all training offered on campus (ETD, Leadership Institute, supervisory training, Faculty Development Center, Environmental Health and Safety) should be undertaken so that the UBI can complement or incorporate such training and duplication can be avoided.
- Work with the Academic Senate and Faculty Development Center on a collaborate approach to developing training for academic department chairs.
- Adequate resources must be identified to support the development and ongoing operation of the University Business Institute.
- Communication and support across the University will be necessary to allow staff to participate in this training.

**Appendices:**
- Focus Group Results Report presented May 26, 2006 by Roy Gonzales, Robin Innes and Carmen Peak
- Survey Response Graphs – May 2006
- Working Draft of University Business Institute program
- Working Draft of Functional Tracks