VICE PRESIDENT FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION POSITION ROLE and RESPONSIBILITY REVIEW of BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY/NORTHWEST TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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VICE PRESIDENT FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION POSITION ROLE and RESPONSIBILITY REVIEW

SCOPE OF WORK

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) consultant Kathy Mangels was commissioned by Bemidji State University/Northwest Technical College to review the effectiveness of the current organization of the Finance & Administration division and the role/responsibilities of the Vice President Finance & Administration (VP F&A) position. The goal was to gather input from campus constituents on their needs and expectations from the VP F&A position and provide recommendations on areas to realign and create efficiencies in supporting the institution’s goals. Recommendations may be used to update the position’s job description.

NOTE: In this report the term “institution” collectively refers to Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical Collage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are skills, competencies, leadership traits and expected outcomes from the VP F&A position identified by campus constituents as critical to the success of the position, division and institution:

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS:

- Strategic thinker who can lead collaborative, long term planning in partnership with institutional leadership (e.g. financial planning, facilities master planning, IT master planning, strategic enrollment planning).

- Professional who values and has an understanding of post-secondary education at all levels (technical, associate, bachelor, masters) and immerses themselves in understanding the unique and converging environments of Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College.

- Leader who understands the Finance & Administration division is a resource to support the academic and student service mission of the institution and develops a team within the division of strategic oriented and solution-oriented leaders.

- Relationship builder who forswards the mission and vision of the institution through appreciation for and valued interactions with students, faculty, and staff at BSU and NTC, leadership at the Minnesota state system, the local Bemidji community, and the Indigenous and underrepresented communities within Northern Minnesota.

- Fiscal leader who has a long-term vision, values transparency and collaboration, is growth oriented and remains focused on institutional core values when making decisions.
- Campus communicator who can deliver complex financial and administrative information in understandable formats to a wide range of audiences (e.g. students, faculty, staff, donors, state/city officials). Individual should value and practice proactive, consistent and open sharing of information.

SENIOR FINANCIAL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Lead the institution in **long term** financial planning that is aligned with the strategic planning process and results in a model that is sustainable and aligned with long term institutional goals and values.

- Initiate ideas for alternative revenue streams/funding sources and solutions that assist individual units and the institution with meeting their mission and goals. Bring together institutional leaders from both campuses to collaboratively assess ideas and ensure data is provided to make strategic decisions.

- Develop, implement and lead a budget planning process that is wholistic, transparent, and genuinely values input from all institutional constituents (faculty, students, staff, administration). Budget process should strategically consider all revenue streams available (general fund, student fees, etc.) and incorporate the unique budget needs of two campuses.

- Strategically budget resources in alignment with institutional goals, and lead ongoing review of budgets as institutional plans evolve.

- Develop/maintain accounting processes that equitably allocate shared costs and resources between campuses, divisions and departments (e.g. cost of shared staff between campuses, indirect cost allocation). Ensure dedicated resources (e.g. student fees) are allocated and used for their approved purpose and openly reported to campus constituents.

- Develop and employ tools and reports needed for institutional leaders/budget managers to track resources and perform fiscal modeling (e.g. budget to actual reports, position tracking reports, program cost analysis). Ensure data is delivered in formats that are easily accessible and easy to interpret.

- Re-evaluate business processes within the division, focusing on end-user satisfaction while maintaining compliance and fiscal accountability.

- Educate campus community on the fiscal makeup of the institution (e.g. how state support is allocated, how enrollment impacts finances, how resources are allocated between BSU and NTC). Be proactive and transparent in sharing fiscal challenges and opportunities for the institution.
FACILITIES and SPACE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Lead BSU and NTC in updating long term facility master plans for both campuses that allocates physical resources to meet the institution’s strategic plans. Incorporate resulting resource needs into the financial planning process.

- Advance institutional priorities of student success; diversity, equity, and inclusion including accessibility; and environmental sustainability in all facility related planning and work.

- Ensure proactive communication with leadership, students, faculty, staff, and community/state officials on schedules for building and grounds maintenance and planned building improvement projects.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Lead the BSU and NTC campuses in implementation of the new administrative software system.

- Lead the institution in development of a long-term Information Technology master plan that is aligned with the mission and vision of the institution. Incorporate resulting resource needs into the financial planning process.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE/SUPERVISION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consider moving the reporting line of Human Resources to the Finance & Administration division. Human capital is a major resource of the institution and the allocation of positions, salaries, and benefits, is a large component of the annual budget process. There may be efficiencies for institutional budget managers in the business processes related to allocating and filling positions, setting salaries, accounting for personnel costs, etc., if the department was within the Finance & Administration division.

- Consider consolidating Financial Aid, Accounts Receivable and Cashiering into one unit within the Finance & Administration division to streamline and enhance student services. Processes and federal regulations in these areas overlap and efficiency may be obtained from an integrated unit. A consolidation could streamline servicing student/parent questions related to aid and billing; enhance student and parent communication related to due dates, refunds, scholarship application deadlines; and provide consolidated support to other departments on campus involved with student aid such as Advancement and Athletics.