Executive Summary

Five-Year Reviews of University of Missouri-St. Louis Administrative Units

Unit: Managerial and Technological Services (MTS)

Review Date: July 13, 2006

Review Team Members
External Reviewer – Cuba Plain, Director, Budget Development and Planning, UM System
Campus Review Team Chair – Teresa Thiel, Associate Dean, Arts & Sciences
Campus Review Team Faculty Member – James Richards, Professor & Dept. Chair Music
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Campus Review Team Student Member – Maria Curtis, Student Rep., Board of Curators

For purposes of the current five-year review, MTS included the following units/activities: the Vice Chancellor; Budget and Planning; Business Services (including Mail Services); Procurement Services (unit officially reports to the UM System); Finance (Accounting Services and Cashier's); and Institutional Research. Information Technology Services (ITS), an MTS unit, prepared its own five-year self-study.

Mission and major activities that meet that mission:
MTS provides various direct and indirect services that support all members of the UMSL community as faculty, staff and students engage in teaching and learning, research, service and economic development activities.

MTS activities, excluding ITS, include, but are not limited to:

- Implementing new or revised UM System policies and procedures.
- Calculating plant, maintenance, and operation (PM&O) and institutional support (IS) charges for auxiliary and service operations units.
- Reviewing and monitoring all internal audit recommendations.
- Computing and/or reporting financial measures required by the Higher Learning Commission and those listed in the UMSL Action Plan.
- Developing, maintaining, and monitoring, in conjunction with unit budget officers, the campus budget.
- Training new unit budget officers as well as educating all budget officers about new and revised policies and procedures.
- Preparing alternative scenarios for budget changes for consideration by campus administration and appropriate committees.
- Negotiating contracts on behalf of the University.
- Ensuring contracts protect the University, conform to existing policies, and are processed in a timely manner.
- Dealing with all aspects of insurance-related issues including available coverages and claims.
- Processing mail efficiently and effectively for the campus.
- Educating units about postal regulations, complying with these regulations, and the options for reducing mailing costs.
- Assisting campus units in acquiring the highest quality goods and services that meet their needs in the most cost-effective manner possible.
- Collecting surplus property, organizing public auctions, and disposing of such property.
- Tracking the capital assets of the University.
- Administering and monitoring Procurement Card activities.

- Collecting funds due the University from students and other organizations.
- Disbursing funds due students, vendors, and others in a timely manner.
- Verifying compliance with applicable policies, procedures, and laws governing financial transactions.
- Ensuring the tables necessary to properly charge students are accurate and available in a timely manner so as to not delay registration activities.
- Maintaining a dialogue with Senior Fiscal Officers by listening to their concerns, examining opportunities to improve and streamline processes, and describe new and revised policies and procedures.
- Providing data and analytical services to the campus to inform the decision-making process.

Strengths and distinguishing characteristics of the Unit's activities:
MTS units are service oriented. Personnel in the division accept the core values of integrity, objectivity, reliability, and trust and teamwork. One of the hallmarks of MTS is its ability to work in collaboration with units and individuals on-campus, at the UM System level, and with individuals in businesses, not-for-profit organizations and state and federal government. MTS is generally successful in its communication efforts.

Many activities performed by MTS units are behind the scenes. The most noticeable point of contact with students occurs with the Cashier's Office.

Assessment of the effectiveness of the Unit's activities overall:
Both the external reviewer report and the campus review team report were extremely positive regarding MTS. However, based on the concept of continuous quality improvement, the reports included recommendations for improvement. The major broad recommendations have been categorized as follows:

Communications and related issues: Communications should be improved and ties should be strengthened between the Cashier's Office and Student Services, Student Affairs, the Student Financial Aid Office, the Student Government Association and other student leaders. The Cashier's Office should evaluate the costs vs. benefits of installing a kiosk dedicated to bill paying in the registration area and re-evaluate its hours of operation. Improved communications between Business Services and its customers was also listed, as was a recommendation that Procurement Services should improve and expand their written documentation of policies and procedures for end users. There is a need for more information about the implementation and impact of eProcurement. More frequent meetings should be held with senior fiscal officers and they should be provided with a matrix of responsibilities and financial items for which the various functions are accountable. Finally, communication of UM System decisions should be improved and MTS personnel should provide more input to the UM System, when the opportunity for input is available.

Organizational issues: The reporting structure for Mail Services should remain in MTS. Evaluate the reporting structure of senior collegiate fiscal officers that would include a dotted line reporting relationship to the Vice Chancellor of MTS or the Director of Finance, in combination with a whistleblower policy.

Budget issues: MTS personnel should provide open sessions on budget and financial information, including fee-based budgets. MTS personnel may need to provide additional contextual information to individuals involved in the campus governance structure, e.g., the Budget & Planning Committee. Larger tutoring sessions should be held in computer classrooms. Explanations of institutional support and full costing should be provided to personnel in units that are impacted by these charges. Students would like an easier to understand fee structure.

Resource staffing issues: Although the topic was not supposed to be addressed in the reports, both the external reviewer and the campus review team felt compelled to mention the need for additional resources, especially in the areas of finance, budget services and business services. The addition of 1.0 FTE in Institutional Research doubled the size of that unit. An additional 2.0 to 4.0 FTEs strategically distributed within MTS would result in service improvements. Without such resources, unit managers may be forced to

set priorities that reduce the level of service in some functions. MTS personnel may not be able to meet UM System or external mandates.

Long-range goals and strategies:
In addition to a continuing review of its current processes and activities, MTS will:

Adapt to its environment: MTS personnel will continue to adapt to changes in the environment in which they operate. To the extent that they can influence or provide input regarding UM System or external mandates, they will do so. However, in many cases, they are required to help implement unfunded mandates from governmental agencies, professional standards setting bodies and the UM System.

Help implement PeopleSoft (PS) student modules: A major, mission critical project for UMSL during the next two or more years will be the implementation of the PS student modules. The Cashier's Office will be the MTS unit most involved in this project. However, the student modules must interface with the PS general ledger module. This will affect Finance and Accounting Services. Although not included as part of this review, ITS will play a major role in the configuration, deployment, and training of the various PS student modules.

Review and implement recommendations from MTS five-year review: MTS personnel will review all recommendations received as part of its five-year review. MTS will review and evaluate each of the recommendations made by the review team, determine which are feasible to implement, set priorities for implementation of those recommendations deemed viable, and implement as many as possible. Recommendations not currently viewed as feasible will be reconsidered on a periodic basis. Given the collaborative and cooperative nature of MTS, varying levels of support will be required from other units. Regarding additional resources for MTS units, the Vice Chancellor will work with the Chancellor to review possible funding sources.

Develop additional benchmarks and metrics: Although not specifically mentioned in the review reports, MTS personnel understand that they have to work to gather additional benchmarks and metrics for their services. This will be an ongoing project.

Other comments:
The participation of MTS units in the five-year review process provided employees with the opportunity to reflect on what the division does, how its does it, and what outcomes the division desires to achieve. MTS personnel will continue to improve collaboration, cooperation and partnerships with stakeholders and customers.