

Question: How do you think KU can best utilize or optimize the SSC model?

Responses

Don't try to do too much at once. It may take some time and experience to figure out what works and what doesn't. Be open to making changes if things aren't working.

Keep the SSC count to a minimum to force centralization and get away from our sprawling silo model.

Target staff who show an interest in changing positions first. Assess where they would be a good fit and assure them that they will have support during the transition. Then move to recruiting (internally first) for remaining positions.

Implement it only where it makes sense. A global mandate that all areas convert to SSC models fails to address many of the nuanced ways that things need to be handled in academic environments. There are certainly benefits to more "business like" models, and there are parallels between the operation of a university and a business, but there are key differences. The business models claim to streamline efficiencies, but efficiency isn't always the end goal in education.

Put smart people in the SCCs and pay them well.

As stated previously - making sure the SSC staff are trained and knowledgeable about their duties.

Keep doing what you are doing...sending out information. Providing opportunities for staff to come together and ask questions and provide input. Updating the SSC website. As it gets closer to the time when new SSCs will "open" and positions outside the SSC may be restructured, find ways to support the changes faced by individual employees. Recognize our "fear" of this process. There may also be some worry or anticipation over how to "quietly" apply for a SSC position if you don't want your department to know that you are interested! It is difficult for us to say to a person of authority in our department "You know, I think I might be interested in applying for a position in one of the new SSCs. "We just aren't sure how well that will go over!

Learn from other universities that have already gone through the transition.

Keep staff informed.

Be consistent in policies and procedures and when obstinate faculty try to work around said policies and procedures, give the employees working in the SSCs the ability to fight back and force the faculty to follow the rules. And then, make sure said staff are backed up by people who will enforce the rules should a faculty go over the staff person's head. That is one of the biggest problems in my department. A few particularly challenging faculty continually get their way because nobody stands up to them (and when they are stood up to, said faculty go over heads where the supervisor doesn't back the staff up on the policy). In fact, one faculty kept an HR staff on the phone for over two hours one time just to keep from having to raise the rate of pay for a postdoctoral researcher up to the level that was proscribed by the Federal government Prevailing Wage Determination. This makes our department look bad in the eyes of other campus entities and makes it harder to do business in an efficient and positive way.

Yes

Not familiar with what will be involved so no way to comment

Make its location convenient for everyone.

Be very very careful about what staff are moved over into these positions. If the staff are all competent with strong work ethics and good people skills; and they not only have excellent training and opportunities for continuing training, but are encouraged to engage in such training, the result should be a highly effective set of units that will, after the initial adjustment period serve the university well. If the slackers who went to sleep on the University's payroll years ago and have been allowed to get away with under performance for years through poor leadership or lack of supervisor will to do what needs to be done to be fair to ALL the workers are simply moved over, nothing will change in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, or "customer" satisfaction. Or, we will be worse off with a bigger set of problems. The supervisors have to be selected the most carefully of all, because if they don't know how to manage people, this will be a disaster.

Share, share, share. I know people will gripe about meetings, meetings, meetings. But well run meetings of the right content, with the right people, make things work.

I can certainly understand the need to reduce redundancy, but I think this should be initially implemented using only duties that by centralizing benefit the employee, the department, and the University.

Feedback, feedback, feedback.

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Limiting expectations to the model being presented. Try the proposed model and if "work arounds" are necessary, then make the changes. Change should not be implemented because someone doesn't like the system, etc.

Not sure.

Try it then adapt as necessary

It makes sense to have specialized personnel performing the same service for several groups, but they will need to be aware of different ways the groups work and try to address issues as efficiently as possible--at least acknowledge when issues come up and schedule a time to address them.

Test it out, if it doesn't work, do something different.

Do not know.

Find an SSC university that has a good balance of education and research focus. Seek their input and share with all levels of staff, not just higher admin.

Careful roll-out decisions. One size does *not* fit all.

Keep it focused on academic and research units to help minimize unnecessary administrative positions in those areas.

I feel that in order for SCCs to operate at an optimal level, all positions should be opened to all employees. An employee may have a skill set from previous job experience that is not currently being utilized at KU may wish to make a career change to utilize another skill set during this time of transition. An employee in this situation

Look at the different ways people are doing things now and don't be afraid to pull bits and pieces from here or there to get the best system. Special procedures for certain departments or tasks aren't necessarily bad if it's clear that they are more efficient and there are specific circumstances for when to use them.

It would be great to have a very simple website that has all business areas mapped and clickable on one screen - not just for business that takes place in SSCs, but also business that is conducted elsewhere (payroll, scheduling, admissions, etc.)

Listen to employees --that task seems almost impossible to me... a lot of changes ... I think it will present many many challenges.

allow for more autonomy in those taking position in the SSC - allow them to physically remain with their units

Implement it in those areas that need improved services - such as post awards and human resources - and let the services remain at the department/unit level that are working.

Sub groups for specializations.

COMMUNICATION! COMMUNICATION! COMMUNICATION!

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By not doing it, or at least limiting it to smaller departments.

Communication is key. Most faculty and staff on the research side that are not part of an administrative staff know very little if nothing about how the new SSC model will function or how they will be expected to use one. Very rarely do they receive informational emails regarding these specific changes within the University. Emails about these changes should be campus wide.

I recommend that only a certain number of types of transactions are moved at the start. I think this would give the smoothest transition rather than trying to move all the types of transactions at once. Roll it out in stages so you can react to each resulting problem without being overloaded with the problems all at once. This would work well for units that have a more than one staff member working on these transactions, but might be problematic is a unit has lost its sole person to a SSC.

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As painful as it may be, I think having some departments keep their individuals and some departments switch to the SSC model will only lead to poor service in the SSCs. For example, some of the engineering departments are centralized in their IT functions, but some have IT people on their staff. If the departments with IT individuals on their staff weren't receiving the service that they needed from the centralized IT center, then they needed to speak up and be more vocal about what they needed, AND the centralized IT center needed to listen and flex. There has to be some sort of service agreement between the SSC and the departments AND someone/some department must be tasked with evaluating the SSCs and following up on complaints or this whole system will fall flat on its face.

n/a

Still be able to maintain a high level of customer service.

Understand the community and processes utilized/required throughout campus. Don't try to make everything vanilla.

Unsure at this time.

This whole process will go a lot better if the people doing the work are brought into the process from the very beginning. Perhaps this survey is meant to help in that respect and that's fine. However, staff need to buy-in to the new process or things will not go as smoothly as they might. Individuals need to be consulted.

Keep to accounting or HR transactions only.

I'm very much in favor of using the SSC model to increase efficiency and effectiveness across campus, in that it will alleviate the one-off tasks that departmental staff do infrequently and reduce errors on transactions that are rare and/or complex. I think that it is important to design the SSCs to provide these transactional services to units, while still allowing the units to have flexibility in their internal process. For example, the unit can approve travel funding for a faculty member going to a conference, and then the SSC can assist the faculty member with the complex arrangements and reimbursement process.

By transitioning slowly and not implementing all the changes at once.

Study what has worked and why.

Again, I think it is important that the departments form relationships and trust with the individuals in the SSC, rather than purely sending them the transactional work.

Communicating openly and honestly about what the plans are (transparency). Not hide details. Get detailed input from staff currently providing service center task, duties, etc.

I don't feel like I have enough information to answer.

I would suggest a recruitment process instead of the fear factor of staff wondering if they still have a job and is it the job they wanted to do. Maybe if KU staff were allowed to apply for the positions instead of being forced into them it might be more successful.

Very clearly defining the changes that will affect our day-to-day job

One concern I have is the location of SSCs. I am aware that space is at a premium, but I think keeping SSCs in central locations, rather than on West Campus would make them seem more accessible.

Looking at processes prior to implementation. There are so many processes that are done because it has always been done that way, that could be done differently to increase efficiency.

Get a model and share it with everyone.

I think you have chosen excellent activities (research, financial, and human resources) to focus on.

I believe for smaller departments this model will and can work rather well.

People who have been making decisions for KU community should embrace others' ideas more, and gave chances to others who haven't been recognized as "important."

I think there are good concepts that can be implemented. But I think you are going about the process with too little information to plan effectively.

Keep up the communication and dialogue. Work at restructuring to retain employees as much as possible/feasible. Increase collaborative, collegial and professional development opportunities among and between groups.

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Using this as a way to go "green" and advance ourselves technically would be great. This is the only place I've worked that I've used a paper time sheet, and I've been employed by one company or another for 15 years now! It can be used to help us "catch up" with the institutions around us, and look more attractive to prospective students.

Slowly.

We had perfectly good service centers before Central Accounting started pushing responsibilities onto academic department staff.

With adaptability & flexibility.

Use it only where needed. If a unit has something that work - leave it alone.

Would take a long time, but build SSC its own building so all the staff doing similar jobs can all be together. Don't forget extra training!

Use the people that are already doing the work for input and to carry on once the SSC model is in place.

The abbreviation SSC is not commonly known by employees.

There have been some excellent choices proposed for the SSC model. As progress develops, be clear to distinguished communicate to the university the services chosen to be centralized vs. shared.

Move slower. I am not against change, but I think it has to be well-thought out and details in place. This is a very busy campus and downtime needs to be a minimum.

It runs the risk of creating a new type of silo in the organization. Where now a staff member might know a variety of processes but only how they work in CLAS or IT or wherever, with the SSCs it seems like there's potential to narrow individuals' focus to one area--purchasing or whatever. So there should be a conscious focus on making sure things are structured and taught in a way that connects individuals working in one SSC more strongly to the larger university mission. Want to see this be a chance to people's understandings to broaden, not narrow.

Identifying two or three significant areas of emphasis where departments served are similar enough to transition more quickly and hopefully with the right mesh of existing and new staff. You'll want the first generation examples on campus w/ insights available staff and administrators.

Keep them small but interactive where each can learn from the other. Don't try to make each identical. Each needs to be able solutions best suited to the groups they support.

Consult with current staff on how this will work for them.

Get rid of the SSC model as soon as possible.

Study existing models that are NOT working as well as those that are working. Anticipate potential problem areas rather than implement and fix as you go.

Don't have suggestions --- others who have their own ideas are 'driving the bus.'

Keep the SSC as close to the customer as possible. Make sure the SSC staff understand the needs of the customers. I don't know too many people who enjoy working with call centers full of people reading from scripts. I don't know many people who enjoy working in call centers reading from scripts.