

DESIGNING A MORE EFFICIENT RESEARCH ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT MODEL



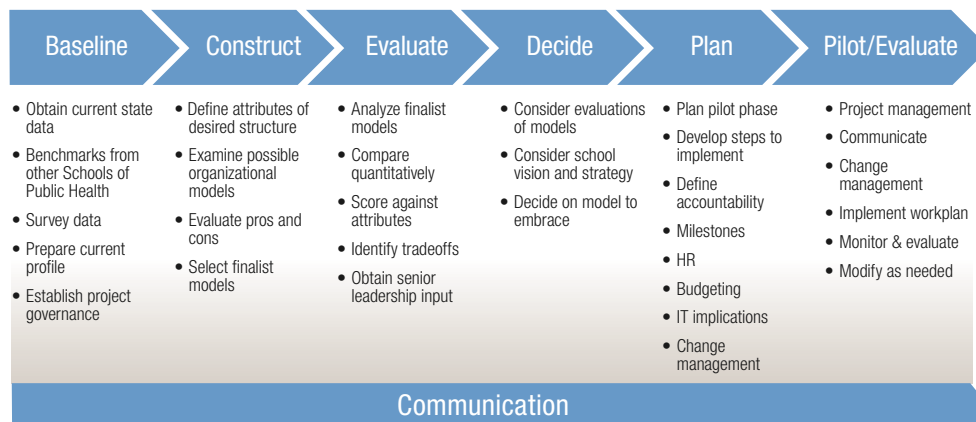
Opportunity

The Dean of a School of Public Health at a major research university established the goal of responding to the evolving needs of the 21st century, including conducting basic research to discover new knowledge that translates into beneficial programs for society. Recognizing that achieving this ambitious goal would require an equally ambitious and innovative research administration platform, the school's leadership turned to Huron for assistance in designing and implementing a process to enable it to strengthen its research administration platform and associated business operations. The project's primary goal was to improve the overall facilitation of research administration, with increased efficiency in business processes, increased use of technology, and improved customer service.

Approach

Huron designed a highly interactive process that leveraged the school's resources, including senior sponsors, and a working group composed of faculty and administrators. After analyzing its operations, Huron's team led the project stakeholders through a decision-making process that used surveys and values-based criteria to determine the next course of action.

The diagram below provides a high-level illustration of the steps followed throughout the decision-making process:



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The project resulted in the design of two alternative models to pilot: (1) a Departmental Model and (2) a One-Stop-Shop Model. Both models were designed to be responsive to the following criteria defined by school leadership after much internal discussion:

CRITICAL FEATURES OF A NEW MODEL

- **Accountable Leadership: ED/RA.** Research Administration under a common, accountable leader – the executive Director for R.A.
- **Department Chairs** responsible for academic matters and policies
- **Automated processes.** Extensive use of technology to electronically route/complete work and create meaningful report for PIs
- **Integrated compliance.** Improved coordination of Institutional review Board, Conflict of Interest, Technology Transfer, etc.
- **Incorporation of pre-award and post-award** with reporting lines to the executive director
- **Standard** operating procedures, reports and **performance metrics**
- **Standard** roles, **expectations**, titles and salary grades for Staff
- **Customer service** orientation – treat the PI as a customer

Results

The Transformation project pilot phase is now complete. The School evaluated pilot results and selected a hybrid model that strengthens reporting to the center but also delegates increased decision-making and authority to academic departments. Implementation planning for the selected model kicked off in winter 2011.

The school also hired its first Executive Director of Research Administration to manage the research administration enterprise and to execute the new vision.

For More Information

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