

Schaefer & Company LLC

The Texas A&M University System
Research Administration Review

[Summary of Findings](#)

4 February 2011

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Michael D. McKinney, MD
Chancellor
The Texas A&M University System
200 Technology Way
College Station, Texas 77845-3424

Summary of Findings

Dear Chancellor McKinney:

We are pleased to provide this summary of findings from our assessment of research administration in The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS).

The assessment of contracts and grants administration included: a benchmark comparison of organizational structure among peer and leading research institutions; an assessment of operational efficiencies in research administration, and ; in conjunction with the TAMUS Office of General Counsel, a review of policies associated with managing financial and administrative risks in research administration.

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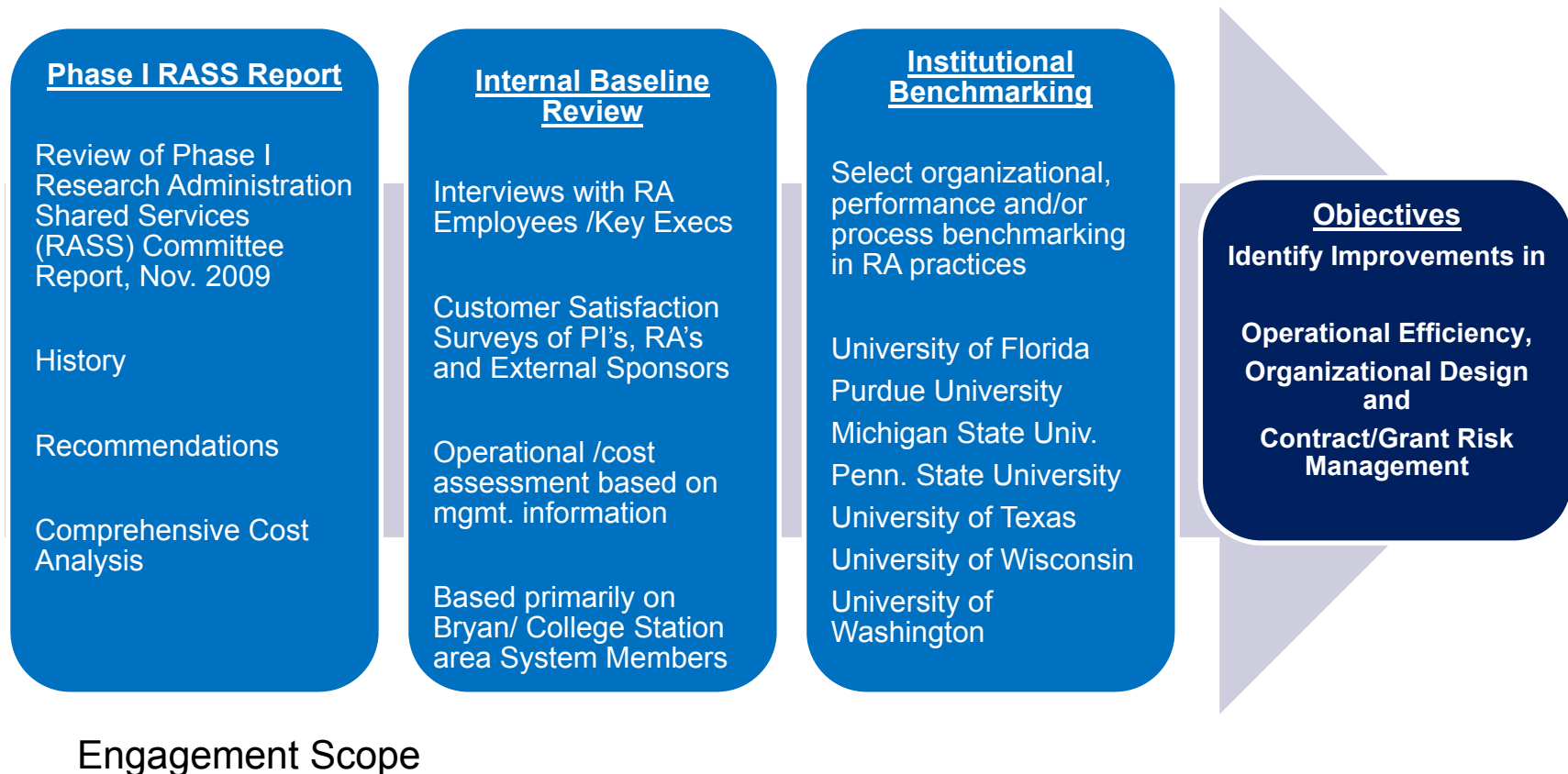
Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve The Texas A&M University System.

Respectfully,



Overview of Engagement Objectives and Scope

In April of 2010, Schaefer & Company was selected by TAMUS to conduct an assessment of research administration with primary focus on contract and grant administration.



Key Conclusions

Five System Members in Bryan/College Station area have fully staffed contract and grant administration (CGA) offices, each with its own management structure.

Among the seven benchmark institutions all have some form of centralized CGA office.

Compared with centralized offices at benchmarks, having separate, fully staffed CGA offices at TAMUS creates operational inefficiencies in service delivery, impacting effective allocation of System resources.

Challenges Noted:

- Management duplication
- Administrative redundancies
- Lack of standardized accounting /management systems
- Varying productivity levels in managing workload
- Varying customer service levels
- Absence of shared services
- Business process inefficiencies
- Limited sharing of best practices
- Training and development

Operational Efficiency

Organizational Design

Contract/Grant Risk Management

Recommendations: Organizational Design

Moving to a Hybrid, Shared Services Structure

- Form Office of Research Administration (ORA) at the System Level, reporting to the Chief Research Officer
- ORA includes ALL DIRECT PRE- AND POST-AWARD personnel reporting to ORA/Chief Research Officer regardless of where they are located, to optimize performance in operational efficiency, capacity and risk management; as well as sharing of best practices
- Maintain distributed network of DIRECT PRE-AWARD FTE's remaining in appropriate locations for continued service delivery, supported by MAESTRO research administration database and management capabilities
- Creation of CENTRALIZED POST-AWARD SERVICES at System level, including fiscal management/analysis, post-award accounting/, purchasing, AP/AR, HR, IT, risk/compliance and other related functions.

Assessed Advantages

- Maintains existing working relationships between PI's and pre-award RA's to support required customer service levels
- Improved coordination of workflow, integration and flexibility
- At lower overall cost basis with shared services in post-award
- Eliminates potential duplication, required specialization and management layers
- Focuses on managing actual costs where greatest, in post-award / TEES and TAMRF
- Improved control environment and alignment of contractual and other risk management

Recommendations/ Key Focus Areas



Schaefer & Company LLC

Strategic and technology management consulting | Decision research and analysis | Surveys and sampling

About Schaefer & Company

Schaefer & Company is a management consulting firm, whose strategic and technology management approach links science, engineering and management disciplines to the innovation process. We collaborate with corporations, universities, government and non-governmental organization (NGO) clients who view research productivity and innovation as management imperatives.

We serve clients with a commitment to excellence and judge our success based on the improved business performance and research productivity of our clients. We search for truth, value discipline-based knowledge and the empirical evidence on which it is based. We apply fundamentals of management science emphasizing primary research methods, statistical analysis and measurement – with an equal respect for the management and organizational behaviors that influence decisions and outcomes.

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