

General Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 13, 2023 | 8:30-10:30 A.M. | Hybrid: NPB 1.412 or Teams

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8:32 a.m. Meeting Called to Order

- Guests: JoAnn Browning, Sheri Hardison, Lani May
- Attendees: Amy Fritz, Andrea McClure, Angel Espinoza, Angela Trejo, Anna Boyer-Chadwick, Bev Ostmo, Cindy Orth, David Dominguez, Gabby Flores, Harshan Raj, Jackie Ortiz, James Rodriguez, Jeff Miller, Jennilee Garza, Jenny Stokes, Jessica Vela, Jo Fernandez, Julie Fisher, Justin Marmolejo, Katia Diamante, Lauren Hoffmann, Lauren Smith, Lisa Alonzo, Lisa Johns, Matthew Fey, Nnenna Ikwuagwu, Peppy Garner, Sapna Naik, Sharon Martinez, Vero Salazar, Victoria Downing
- Excused: Angie Lopez, Drew Vincent, Eric Uriegas, Gaby Rodriguez, Heather Frazer, Mickie Tencza, Stef Casper, Xavier Loredó
- Unexcused: Olamiposi Kolajo

8:32 a.m. Justin’s Announcement

- The restructuring of Research resulting in the reduction in force and elimination of six positions. Justin’s position was one of them. His last day will be February 1, 2024, unless he gets rehired. For the remainder of positions, they were offered different positions and had a few days to decide. JoAnn Browning, Interim VP of REDKE, will be presenting later during this meeting.

8:35 a.m. Old Business

- October general meeting minutes: <https://www.utsa.edu/staffsenate/Minutes/2023-10-18-Staff-Senate-General-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>
 - 13 in person yay, 12 online yay, 0 nay, 1 abstention
- November general meeting minutes: <https://www.utsa.edu/staffsenate/Minutes/2023-11-15-Staff-Senate-General-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>
 - 15 yay in person, 12 yay online, 0 nay, 0 abstentions
- Votes on Staff Senate General Meeting Minutes from October 18, 2023 and November 15, 2023
 - Minutes passed for both October and November

8:37 Continued Business – Discussion about Performance Evaluation

- The People Excellence and Staff Senate Working Group is still collecting feedback
- The questioning about whether the results are representative of employees. They represent monetary incentives. Better define the categories.
- Training for individual contributors, because they don't know what is expected.
- Offering more training because as a reviewer, manager, some know how to highlight what they've done more than others. Need to demonstrate. That'd be helpful.
- Is the need for training on how to fill out the evaluation? Or is it to have the conversation? Where is the issue stemming from?
- Recommend that it's both. SMART goals should also have workshops. Provide examples in own role.
- Are there department goals or team goals that your goals stem from? Some departments do and others don't. That jumps starts the conversations. Should that be part of the process, coming up with goals?
- Speaking with colleagues from other areas, there are inconsistencies with SMART goals and what they are looking for.
- Realistic goals based on your work area. We tend to give examples with administrative roles. Think we need to highlight opportunities for staff. There are teachable moments.
- Goals for the whole unit and some are related but there are individual goals that are not related.
- How many SMART goals does each group have? It varies. At least 2.
- Some people have had their goals declined. The guidelines for goals and what counts as professional or personal development is different across areas.
- Workshops for individual contributors to help them figure out how to speak to their manager, fill out the performance evaluation. Also workshops for managers and processes for managers to follow. Training should come from top down, because these count towards merit and leave. It's intimidating for staff to have conversations with their manager, and the manager may perceive the person as disrespectful. Onus should not be on the employee, but it should be on the manager.
- Standards for individual contributors to let them know how you write about yourself,

present yourself. We aren't trained on that. It's assumed that we know how to do those things. Training for everyone on what the institution is expecting.

- It was a rumor that goals will be rated. AVP and higher – their goals will be rated, but for the rest of us, it will not be. We will continue with met or not met.
- Overall score – the split is not 33, 33, 33. They are not equal.
- Goals are met or not met.
- Experience of a boss rewriting what the person is saying. Boss should not be rewriting your self-evaluation.
- Share what you did this year, hype yourself up to show your supervisor what you did this year.
- Calibration process is still not clear. We don't meet with our managers until after the calibration process. Leaders seem to be able to
- Still hearing that it's very difficult, unattainable to get a 5. In some departments, it's hard to get a 4.
- It's very unlikely that we are going to receive an overall score of a 5.
- There was a training offered before we were doing our final review. Some of the examples in there, about what people did, got 5, but if they did some of those things, they are a 3. There isn't necessarily a clear rubric or way to evaluate. It still is subjective and feels unattainable, because not everyone is able to affect the entirety of the university.
- Our staff senate contributions aren't necessarily recognized
- Training experience: They were giving examples, but not as helpful as wanted them to be. Some managers just want to get it done, especially given the time of year. If there was an overhaul of training. As a supervisor, hesitant to give 5s because what happens next year. Needs to be more conversations around expectations.
- "Demystifying the 5" as a workshop for managers. Is there a window after the conversation for the manager to make a change. What happens after the window closes.
- Some have an understanding that once it's been calibrated that it cannot be changed. Some have said they couldn't change their scores.
- Do we need to be meeting with our supervisors before and after calibration? This would give us a better idea/understanding of our scores.
- But that might mean scores may change, because of calibration. If we had meetings before, would that prevent changing the score?
- For student-facing teams, having 2 meetings may be more difficult to meet before and after calibration. It's already so difficult for large teams who have multiple meetings with students, especially during high traffic times.
- Valuable as a people manager to have at your fingertips of knowledge of the work your employees have done, and can help provide more evidence to help.

9:30 a.m. Research Presentation

- JoAnn Browning, Interim Vice President, Research, Economic Development, and Knowledge Enterprise (REDKE), and Sheri Hardison, Sr AVP Financial Affairs and CFO
- Presentation at the end of the minutes

The University of Texas at San Antonio
UTSA Staff Senate

- Agenda: Listening and learning, benchmarking, a new structure, where we go from here
- Listening and learning
 - REDKE Townhalls – they have been talking about how to build UTSA R1 culture. Grown so quickly and want to make sure we’re positioning ourselves for more growth and brand recognition and that values of degrees continue to increase.
 - Got input from constituents, had unit conversations, town halls, and benchmarking.
 - Listening sessions were September 12-14, offering 6 focus groups, with three discussion prompts: (1) What research administration services are essential to support UTSA PIs? What are PIs’ biggest challenges and obstacles? What is working well?
 - They found out that staffing at the local level would be valuable; urgency to build a trust culture; it appeared that there was a lack of transparency and capacity; importance of providing high quality training; desire for increased communication; commonly cited strengths: faculty resilience, quality and dedication of faculty investigators, etc.
 - Other conversations raised additional topics: Siloed processes, needed a culture of timeliness, high administrative burden, high financial and institutional costs due to consultants.
 - Worked with Huron over the last year. Their recommendations included new operating policies including a revised budget, creating potential and overlapping responsibilities, defining service level agreements
 - Terminology: PI = principal investigator, the person in charge, usually a faculty member or research staff member, when a research grant is received. Huron is the consulting agency. Pre-award and post-award: Separate pre-award and post-award administration for our grants. Put together a proposal – 20% success rate. Once the award comes in, post-award works with the PI to set it up, and monitors progress and success of the grant.
- Huron
 - The research service improvements started before listening sessions, about a year ago, with Huron. They were brought it last Fall 2022 to look at transaction backlog, which primarily existed in Grants and Contracts Financial Services (GCFS). To sustain that effort, Huron also focused on building tools to help GCFS going forward, including tracking tools and training. Senior leadership made the decision that GCFS would move to Financial Affairs (Sheri Hardison’s area), as of May 1, 2023.
 - Since May 1, 2023:
 - Seen some visible improvements in processes that Huron was helping with. Huron was redeployed to help with other things.
 - Caught up with backlog with SWRI and NSA, key sponsors.
 - Realigning of tasks
 - Using robot digital worker to help with award closeout process.
 - Still have far to go on closeouts and cash collection. Grants use Project IDs (list cost centers), which exist under sponsored awards. Closing 500 projects that closed last year. There are a lot of different things that they’re looking at, like focusing on closing current awards in addition to dipping into the backlog. They have a plan to close 5 per month, and they are bringing temporary staff and interns to complete it.

- Other conversations they have been having is how to set up great service: reliability, accessibility, timely, empathy, and assurance/trust.
- Benchmarking
 - Review of 20 peer models of excellence and Texas research universities.
 - Common themes: Leadership positions; research administration office was often a unified sponsored program office (sometimes included regulatory compliance) and pre- and post-awards were together.
 - Overall sponsored projects administration with proposal and award management, which includes institutional proposal reviews and non-financial award management; and unit-level concierge-type service, including proposals and awards.
- A New Structure
 - Will begin on February 2, 2024
 - Principles
 - Assertive development of our knowledge enterprise, including raising reputation and be aligned nationally and strategically
 - Nurtured R1 research culture, including transdisciplinary and cross-functional teams, structure maturation of research leaders, strategic with resources that we have
 - Service-centered research support organization, staff supporting lifecycle of the award, culture of timeliness, data-informed, effective communication.
 - Aligning with UTSA Strategic Plan
 - Student success – faculty research development
 - Public research university – partnerships and strategy
 - Innovative place to work, learn and discovery – research administration
 - --> Venn diagram; cannot work in silos
 - Senior Vice President for Research
 - Associate VP for Research Partnerships and Strategy – New external search
 - Sr. Assoc VP for Research Administration – New external search
 - Combined pre- and post-award
 - Assistant VP for Faculty Research Development
 - Office of Sponsored Projects has changed the most because pre-and post-awards are coming together. Internal searches and opportunities to apply for these positions. Others were reassigned to central office or college concierge teams.
 - College concierge teams include 20 staff embedded in colleges. They will not be isolated and will still work with the larger team.
 - UTSA has had a great investment in research, including in staffing. Added 6 new positions that are for pre- and post-awards, which reduces the load.
- Name and timeline
 - They reviewed naming. REDKE was an inclusive name but people outside of UTSA don't know what REDKE is. Over half use Office of Research.
 - Announced new structure at the end of November. Searching and hiring new positions and because of the reorg structure, there are 13 open positions. Working on implementation teams and scheduling trainings.
 - They will do continuous assessment and make adjustments as they go.
 - They are working closely with VPBA and the IRM model to continue investment.

- Q&A
 - What went into the decision to eliminate 6 positions rather than reassigning staff? Looking at the new structure, it was impossible to pick winners and losers in the existing model to fit into the new model. The fair thing to do was to put the new structure in place and allow people to apply for the new positions.
 - How does Huron play into this process? Huron is contracted with VPBA. They are an excellent group that has a lot of resources and they help look at the structure and have been a good partner.
 - Dr. Browning is willing to come back and to answer additional questions

10:13 a.m. Sustainability Presentation

- Lani May, Director of Sustainability, Real Estate and Property Management
- Office of Sustainability has support from the university and UTSA has been pushing for sustainability and efficiency, which allows for saving money in other realms.
- Walkability grant – Federal government has recognized that we don't have enough roads and are putting money into alternative forms of transportation and getting single occupancy vehicles off the road. We got \$11.7M for Hike and Bike.
- This is helping towards the last mile commute, trekking in from the parking lots a mile away. There aren't enough sidewalks to get to campus and they are fighting against traffic.
- Feedback is that it's going to cause Brennan to close. It'll be a 12-foot sidewalk for pedestrians and a separated path for bicycles. It'll go down Brennan and will be separate from the pedestrian path.
- This will come in from 1604 on both sides. They'll be ADA Accessible. They'll also connect across 1604. This will improve the student experience.
- The pedestrian area will have four way stops and will be a focal point of transition from parking to pedestrian areas.
- Will the close be permanent? Yes, it will be permanent. The master plan will move it and will increase green space and walkable area. You will have to drive around. The center part will be a walkable campus. There will be an outer loop ring road. There will be shuttle access and there will still be roads.
- They found a safety issue via studies and counting pedestrians and cars, and there was too much interaction. They could not take the students out of that area so they will move the cars.
- Scheduled to begin in Summer 2024 – design phase, and will start construction in 2025. 2026 will be the second part.
- Is there a plan to add a sidewalk by Baurle? This is not part of the plan. They could not put the sidewalk there because of environmental concerns. They can now put a sidewalk but do not have funding.

10:30 a.m. Adjourn

- Next General Meeting: Wednesday, January 17, 2024, 8:30-10:30 a.m., Teams

Tabled

Questions about Written Updates

- Note: For updates from Staff Senate Committees and University Service Committee Representatives, please review the written updates at the end of the agenda.

Reminders

- Attendance and [Bylaws](#)
- Staff Senate Virtual Coffee Chat: Thursday, January 11, 2024, 11:30am-12:30pm. Register here: <https://utsa.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUkde2pqj8iEtbA9oSml2PML9mZNGUuNU2q>
- Next newsletter will go out Thursday, January 25, 2024

Written Updates

University Service Committees

- Enriching Campus Wellbeing Committee – Gabby and Vero
- Employee Advisory Council – Brandy and Matt
- Faculty Senate – Justin
- Hispanic Thriving Leadership Council – Eric
- HOP Committee – Andrea
- Inclusive Excellence Advisory Board – Anna
- Operational Review Committee – Amy
- Out-of-State Work Modality Committee – Lisa A.
 - The committee has not met. There have been no requests to review.
- Parking & Traffic Committee – Heather, Lauren H., Harshan, Gaby
 - No updates
- People Excellence Working Group – Stef, Anna, Jennilee, Eric, Sapna
 - Continue to share your and your constituents' feedback about Performance Evaluations via the link in Teams.
 - We are continuing to work on work modalities, educational benefits, and performance evaluations.
 - Our next working group meeting is Monday, December 18, 2023 (our December 4 meeting was moved to this date)

The University of Texas at San Antonio
UTSA Staff Senate

- Staff Senators can access our complete notes at [PE and SS Working Group Notes.docx](#)
- Public Safety Advisory Council – Xavier
- Strategic Investment Fund Committee – Damaris
- Sustainability Council – Julie
- University Excellence Awards Steering Committee – Pebby and Sharon
- University Leadership Council – Amy
- University Scholarship Committee – Justin

Staff Senate Committees

- Bylaws – Harshan
- Communications – Drew and Jennilee
 - Next Senate Newsletter Release: January 25, 2024
- Community Outreach & Events – Jessica
 - The Great Staff Appreciation will be on Tuesday, May 21st from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm in the HEB Student Union Ballroom.
- Elections – Cindy and Victoria
- Finance – Angel and Lauren S.
- Health & Wellness – Vero and Heather
 - Next LEGO of Stress event will be Wednesday, January 31st from 11am-1pm in the Pecan Room (SU 2.01.26)
 - Working on Rowdy Games logistics
 - Current proposed date is Saturday, March 23, 2024
- QIC – Lauren H. and Bev
 - Met on 12/1; some QIC form submissions resolved and a couple others ongoing. Spreadsheet has been updated.
 - One new QIC received after our meeting that will be discussed at our next meeting on 1/5.
- Staff Appreciation & Scholarships – Sharon, Pebby, Julie

E-Board Updates

- Staff Senate Virtual Coffee Chat is Thursday, January 11, 2024. Please encourage constituents to register at <https://utsa.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUkde2pqj8iEtbA9oSml2PML9mZNGUuNU2g> (and please attend, too!)



Bold New Knowledge Enterprise

JoAnn Browning, Interim VP REDKE

Sheri Hanson, Sr AVP Financial Affairs and CFO

Caroline Garcia, Consultant

December 2023

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- Listening & Learning
- Benchmarking
- A New Structure
- Where we Go From Here



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- Listening & Learning
- Benchmarking
- A New Structure
- Where we Go From Here

UTSA

REDKE Townhalls

PURSuing RESEARCH EXCELLENCE | UTSA R1 CULTURE

Community → Resources & Services → Goals

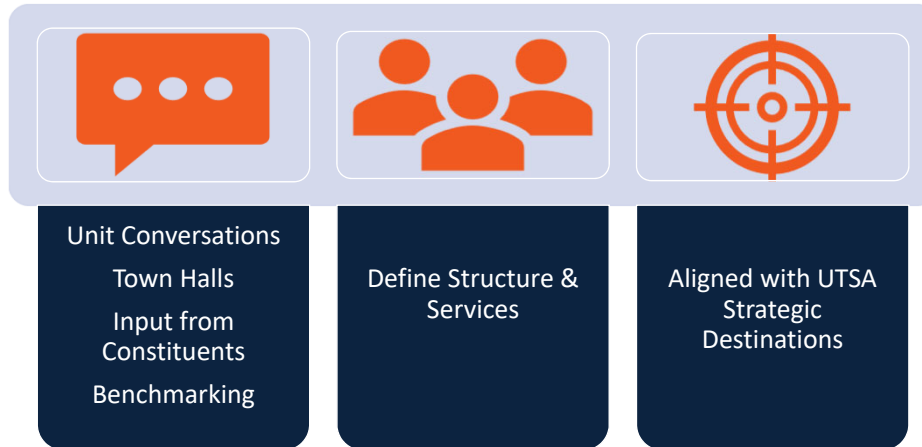
Listen, Learn, Develop

UTSA CREATING **BOLD FUTURE**S

4

REDKE Townhalls

LISTENING & LEARNING | DEVELOPING R1 CULTURE



Listening Sessions: September 12-14, 2023

STRUCTURE | QUESTIONS

6 Focus Groups

- 4 Deans
- 26 PIs
- 10 Center & Institute Directors
- 7 Associate Deans for Research and College Fiscal Managers

3 Discussion Prompts

- What research administration services are essential to support UTSA Investigators?
- What are investigators' biggest challenges and obstacles?
- What is working well?






Listening Sessions

PRIMARY TAKEAWAYS

-  Would value staffing at the local level for pre- and post-award grant and contract support to PIs.
-  Urgency to build trust culture and a team mindset within the research community at UTSA, including between faculty and research administrative staff.
-  Lack of capacity and understanding of roles and responsibilities and processes.
-  Importance of providing high quality training for staff, to build a “culture of research administrators.”
-  Desire for increased communication between REDKE and UTSA faculty.
-  Commonly cited strengths: quality and dedication of faculty and staff, collaboration between staff across departments to problem solve, faculty resilience, and the success of the CyManII capture team.

Other Conversations

FACULTY SENATE LEADERSHIP | ASSOCIATE DEANS FOR RESEARCH

-  Siloed Pre- and Post-award leadership, staff, and processes
-  Needing a culture of timeliness
-  High administrative burden to Principal Investigators
-  Reputational Damage
-  High Institutional Financial Costs for Consultants

Other Conversations

HURON

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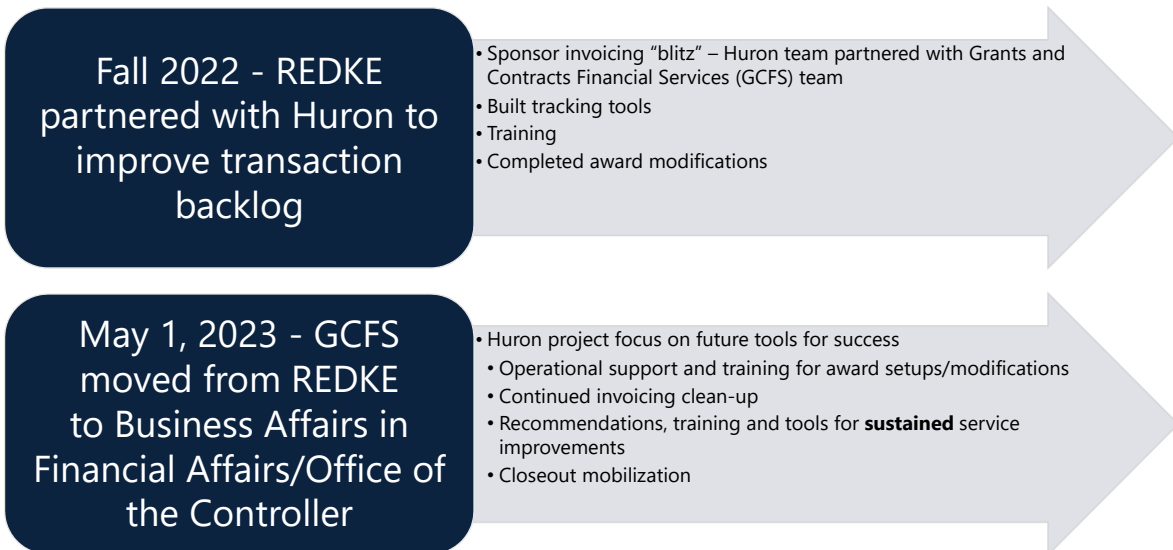
Consider new operating policies, such as limiting when central office requires a revised budget or supplemental reviews – reduce cycle times
- 

Establish clear, standardized criteria for when to create new PeopleSoft projects to limit unnecessary administrative workload
- 

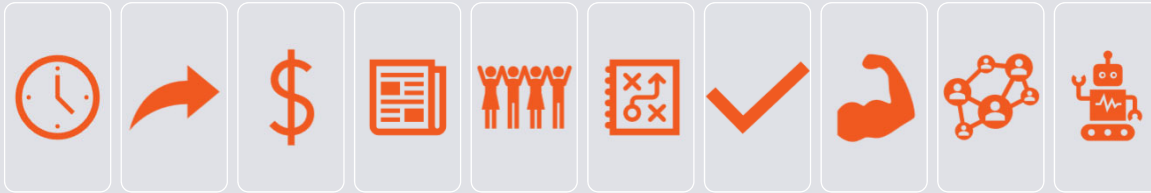
Identify gaps in service delivery and potential overlapping responsibilities to strengthen ownership of key tasks
- 

Define service level agreements to set expectation of customers and motivate staff

Phase 1 of Research Service Improvements

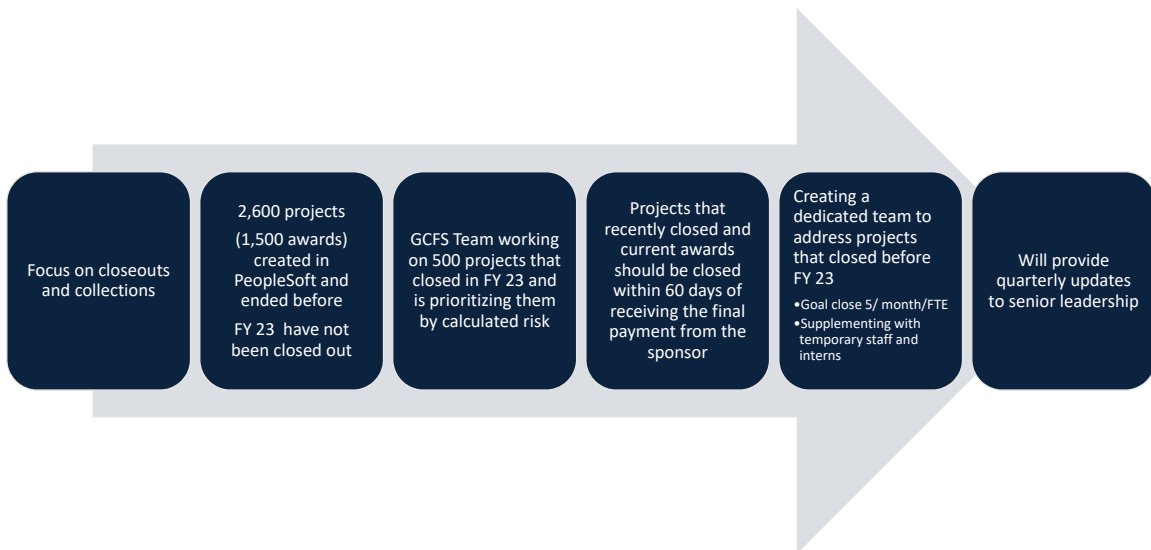


Phase 1 – Process Improvements Since May 1, 2023



- On-time monthly sponsored invoicing**
 - improved from 65% to 99% for eligible invoices
- Cost transfer and award setup/modification**
 - reduced time from >30 to <10 business days
- Accounts Receivable**
 - Identified and applied over \$2 million in unapplied cash to open accounts receivable (AR)
- Invoicing**
 - Addressed the backlog of 30 SWRI/NSA projects not invoiced in FY 22
- Cross-Trained**
 - GCFS team has been cross-trained on GCFS tasks and different awards
- Re-aligned**
 - Controller reallocated dedicated invoicing personnel to processing setups, closeouts, and accounts receivable management
- Award Setup**
 - Created a dedicated team to manage award setup and eliminated the need for a dedicated consultant
- Self-Sufficient**
 - GCFS autonomy from Huron by Summer 2023
- Analysis of remaining tasks**
 - Huron performed closeout risk analysis, mobilization prioritization and preparation of closeout documentation
- Automation**
 - Deployed automated processes to parts of closing process

Next Phase – GCFS Processes



Other Conversations

HURON

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Defining Great Service

Ultimately, organizing for service delivery needs to address all of the dimensions of service quality.



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- Listening & Learning
- Benchmarking**
- A New Structure
- Where we Go From Here

Peer Institutions

Review of 20 Peer Models of Excellence and Texas Research Universities

- Organization of Research Offices
- Services
- Reporting Structures

Emergence of Common Themes and Best Practices

- AVP Leadership Positions: Research Administration, Commercialization, Research Development, and Strategic Initiatives
- Leadership Positions: varied Centers, Communications, Research Data and IT
- AVP Research Administration with a Unified Sponsored Programs Office
 - Regulatory Compliance was split between AVP for Research Administration or as a separate AVP
- Preaward Proposal Support and Postaward Financial Management support for PI's 

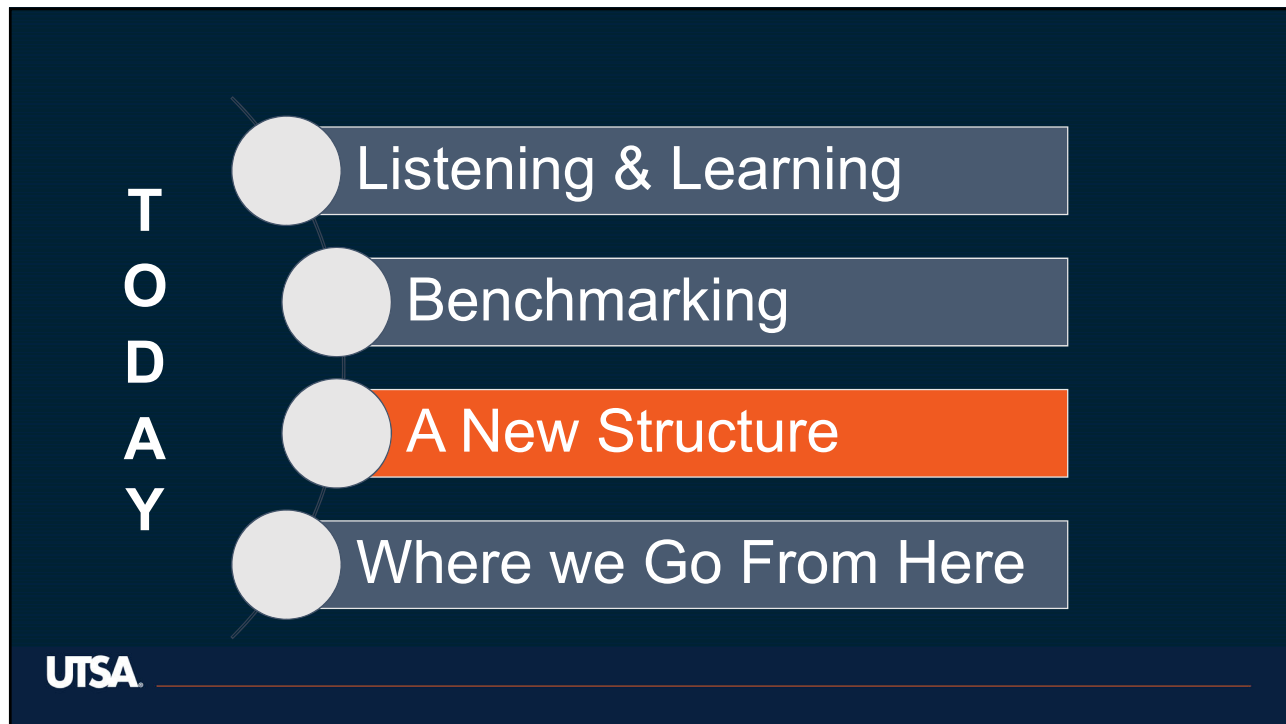
Sponsored Projects Administration

Proposal & Award Management

- Institutional proposal review, approval, submission
- Non-Financial Award Management

Unit-Level Concierge

- **Proposals**
 - Budget development & justification
 - List of required documents
 - Package & submit to central team
 - Compliance, responsible conduct, etc.
- **Awards**
 - Provides financial award management support of sponsored grants and contracts to PIs over life-history of project, including time & effort reporting



Core Principles

Assertive development of our knowledge enterprise

- Nationally & strategically aligned
- Enhanced reputation as strategic partner
- Flexible & agile to influence & respond to opportunities

Nurtured R1 research culture

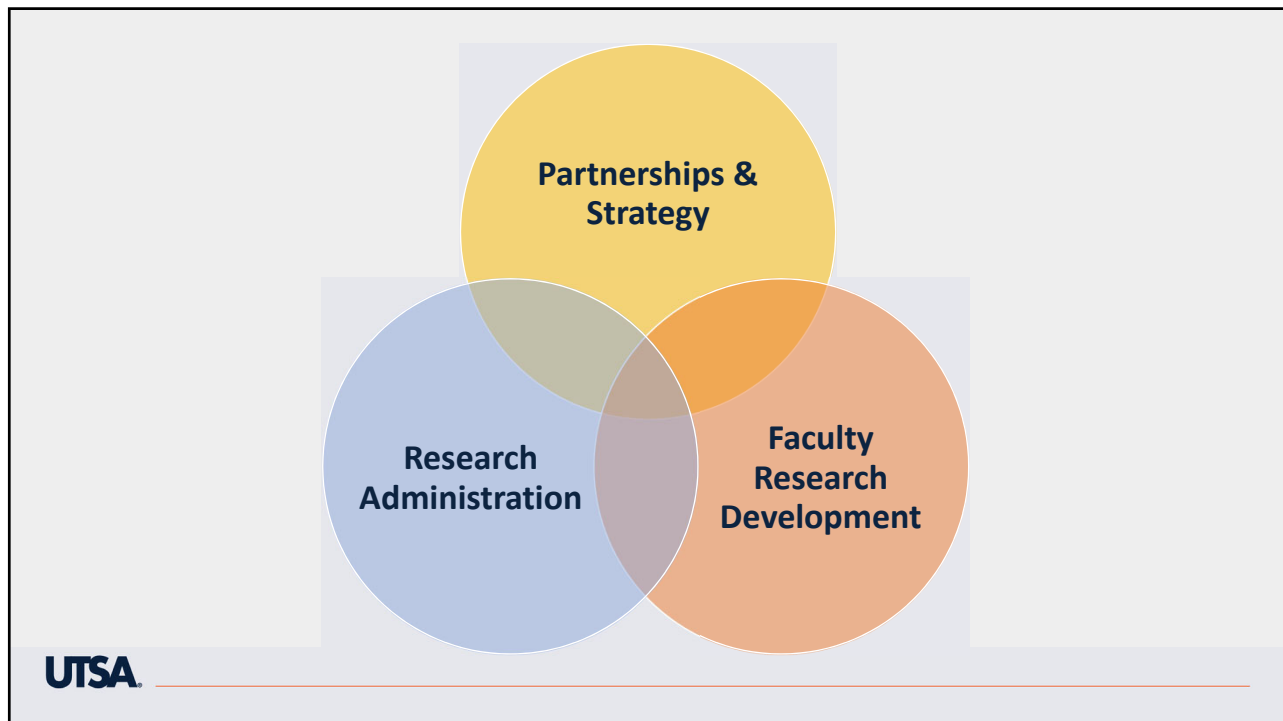
- Transdisciplinary & cross-functional teams
- Structured maturation of research leaders
- Strategic resources to grow new opportunities

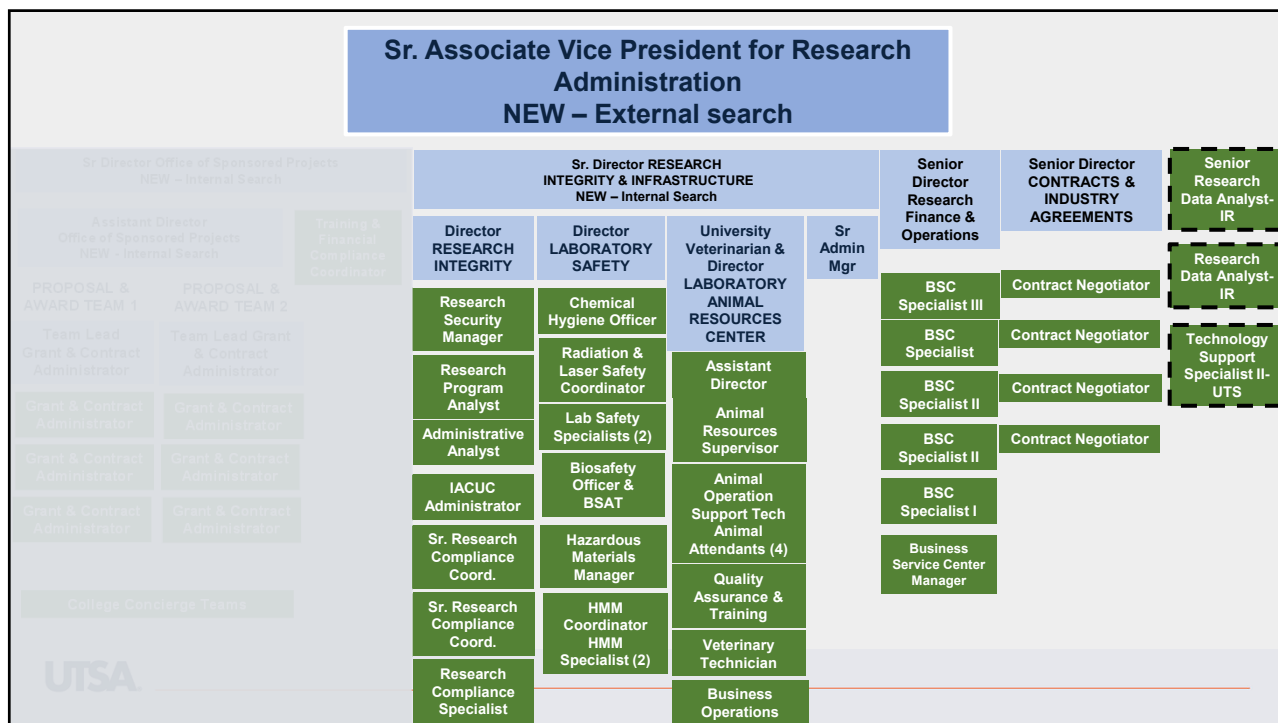
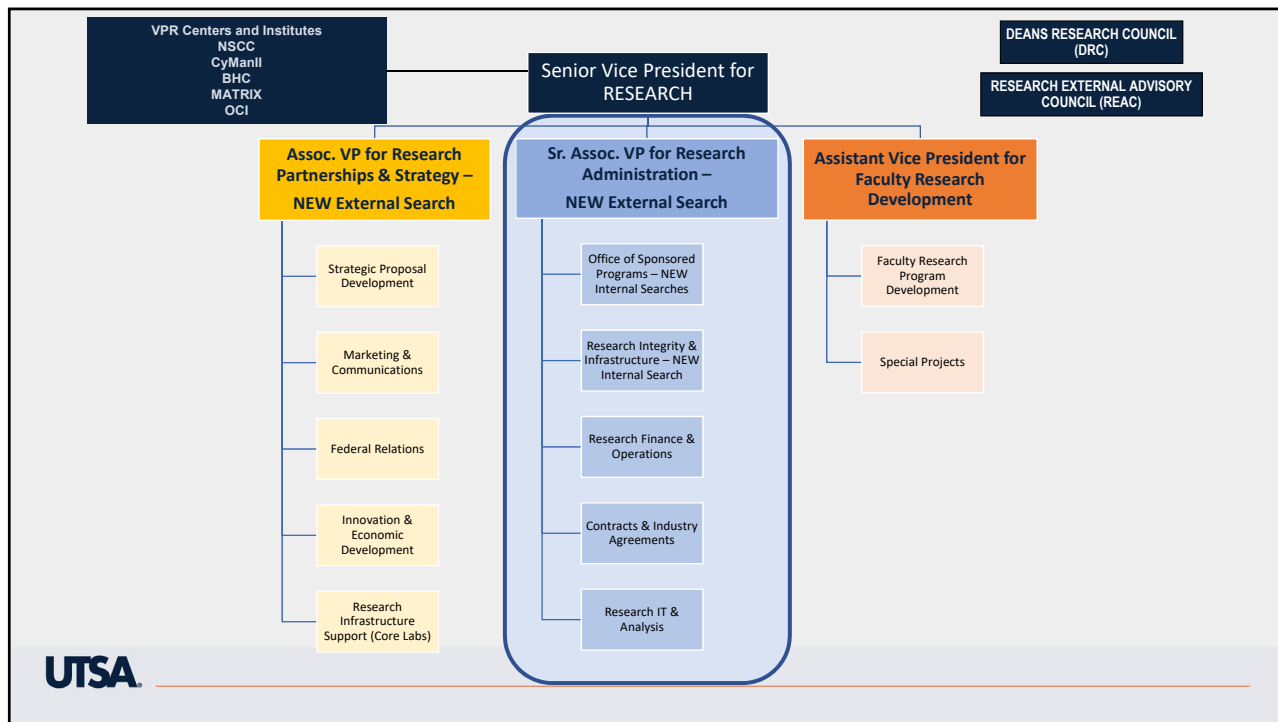
Service-centered research support

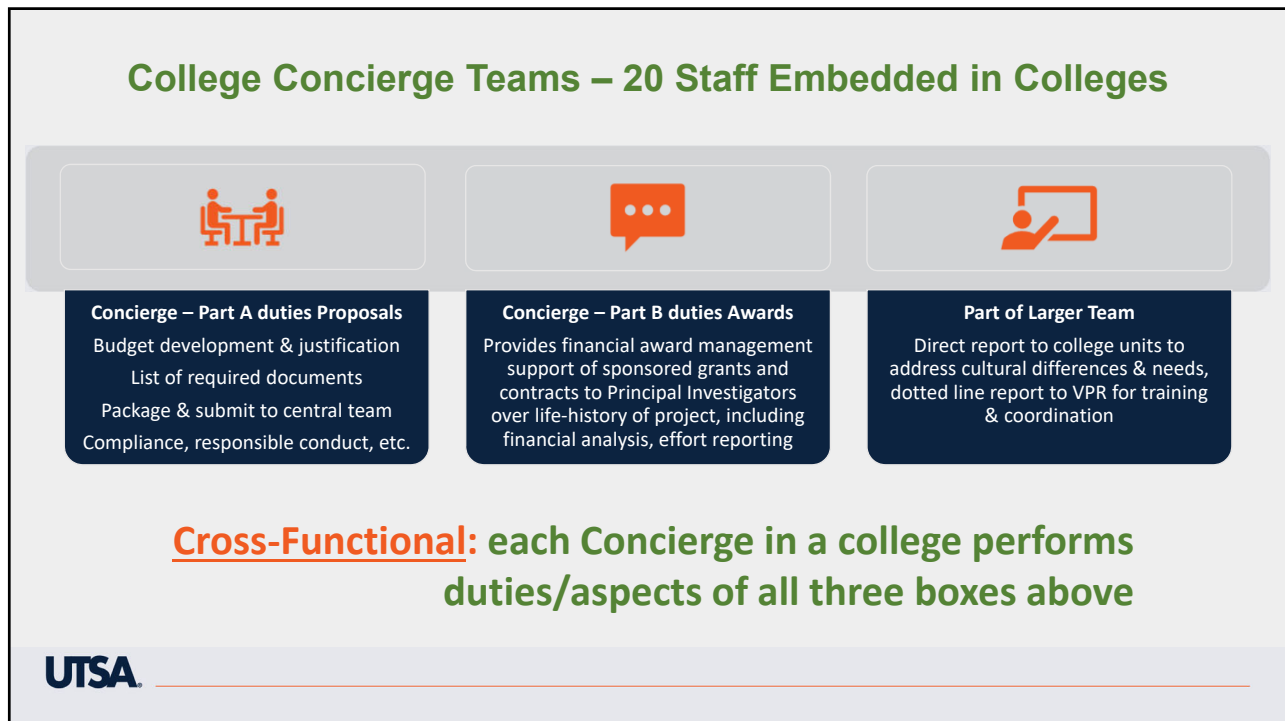
- Staff supporting lifecycle of award
- Culture of timeliness & collaboration
- Transparent processes, systems & workflows
- Data-informed & strategic measures
- Effective communication
- Knowledgeable & trained

Aligning Efforts: UTSA Strategic Plan

Strategic Destinations	UTSA's R1 Culture
UTSA will be a model for student success	<p><i>Develop thought leaders through Faculty Research Development – inspiring and mentoring the next generation of experts.</i></p>
UTSA will be a great public research university	<p><i>Grow research through Partnerships and Strategy – to reach greatness.</i></p>
UTSA will be an innovative place to work, learn and discover	<p><i>Model service excellence in Research Administration – so that researchers are inspired to work innovatively to learn and discover.</i></p>







UTSA Investment in Research

The infographic displays four categories of research investment:

- Research Computing**: Represented by a computer monitor icon.
- Hazardous Waste Facilities**: Represented by an icon of three test tubes in a rack.
- Cores & Lab 6**: Represented by a network diagram icon with a central node and five peripheral nodes.
- College Concierge Research Staff**: Represented by an icon of five stylized human figures holding hands, which is circled in blue.

A blue starburst graphic next to the College Concierge Research Staff icon contains the text: *Adding 6 NEW Positions!*

UTSA

What's in a Name?

RESEARCH | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | KNOWLEDGE ENTERPRISE

The diagram features two large arrows: a dark blue arrow pointing upwards and an orange arrow pointing downwards. To the right of the blue arrow is the text: **Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise**. To the right of the orange arrow is the text: **REDKE**.

UTSA CREATING **BOLD FUTURE**S

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Our Peers

RESEARCH | KNOWLEDGE ENTERPRISE | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
 INNOVATION | CREATIVE ENDEAVORS | SCHOLARSHIP

ASU	FIU	George Mason	GA State	UC Irvine	UC Santa Cruz	UC Riverside	UCF	UIC	USF	TAMU	TX State	TX Tech	U Houston	UNT	UTA	UT Austin	UTD	UTEP
Knowledge Enterprise	Research & Economic Development	Research, Innovation, & Economic Development	Research & Economic Development	Research	Research	Research	Research	Research	Research & Innovation	Research	Research	Research & Innovation	Research	Research & Innovation	Research & Innovation	Research, Scholarship & Creative Endeavors	Research & Innovation	Research
VP Research																		

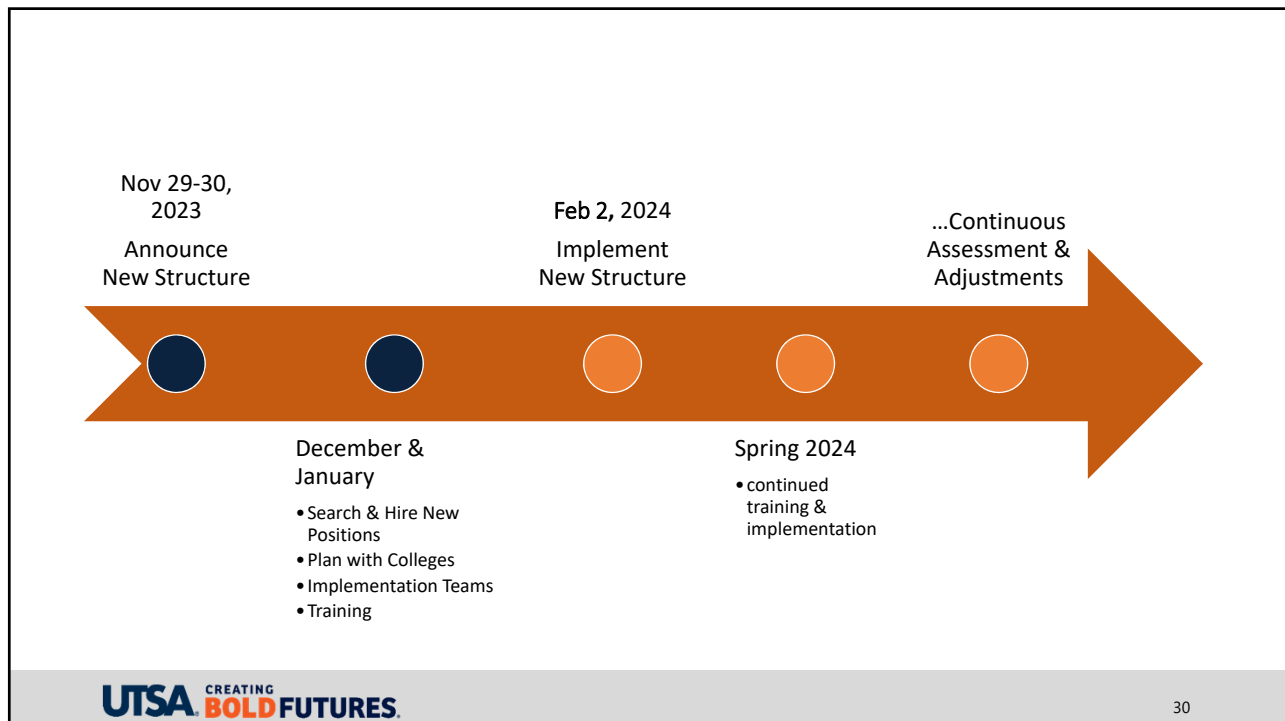
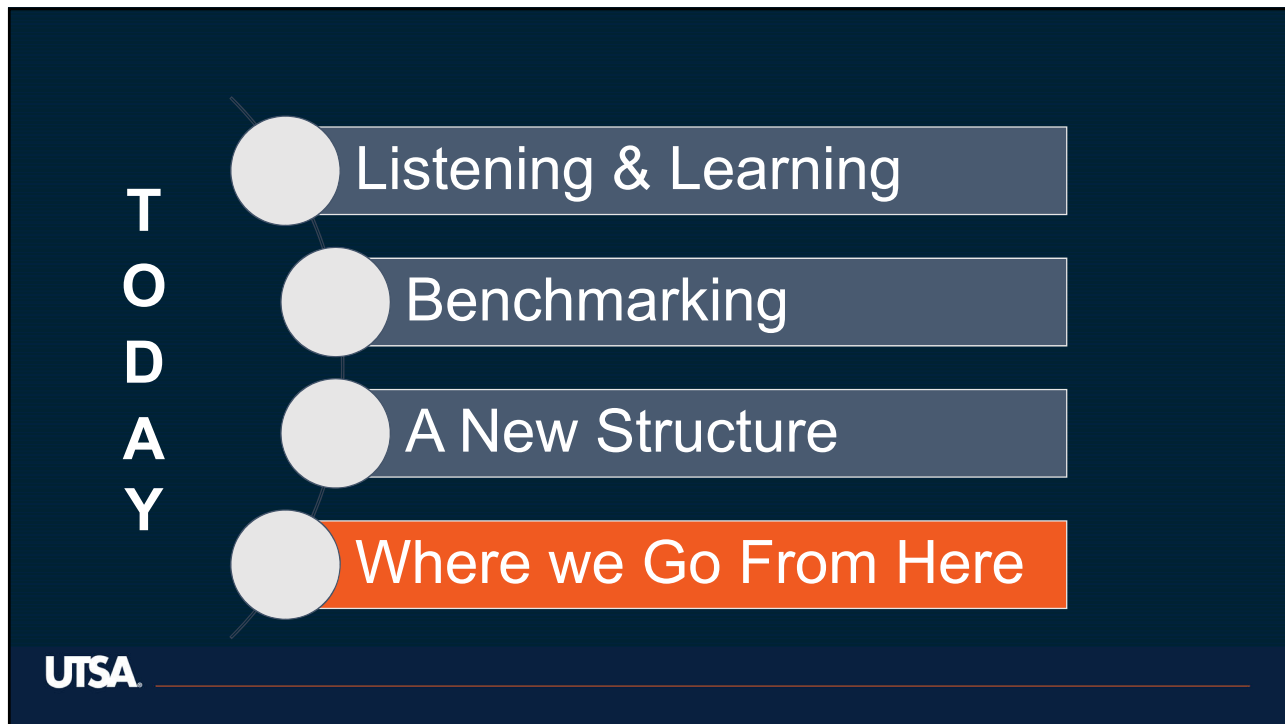
• Over half use an Office of Research



UTSA Office of Research

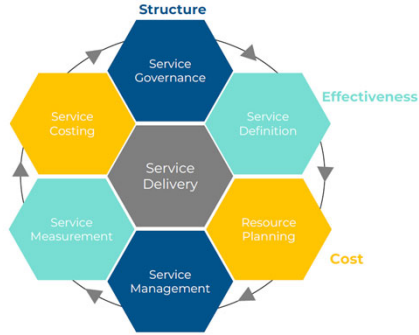
Supporting UTSA's Knowledge Enterprise





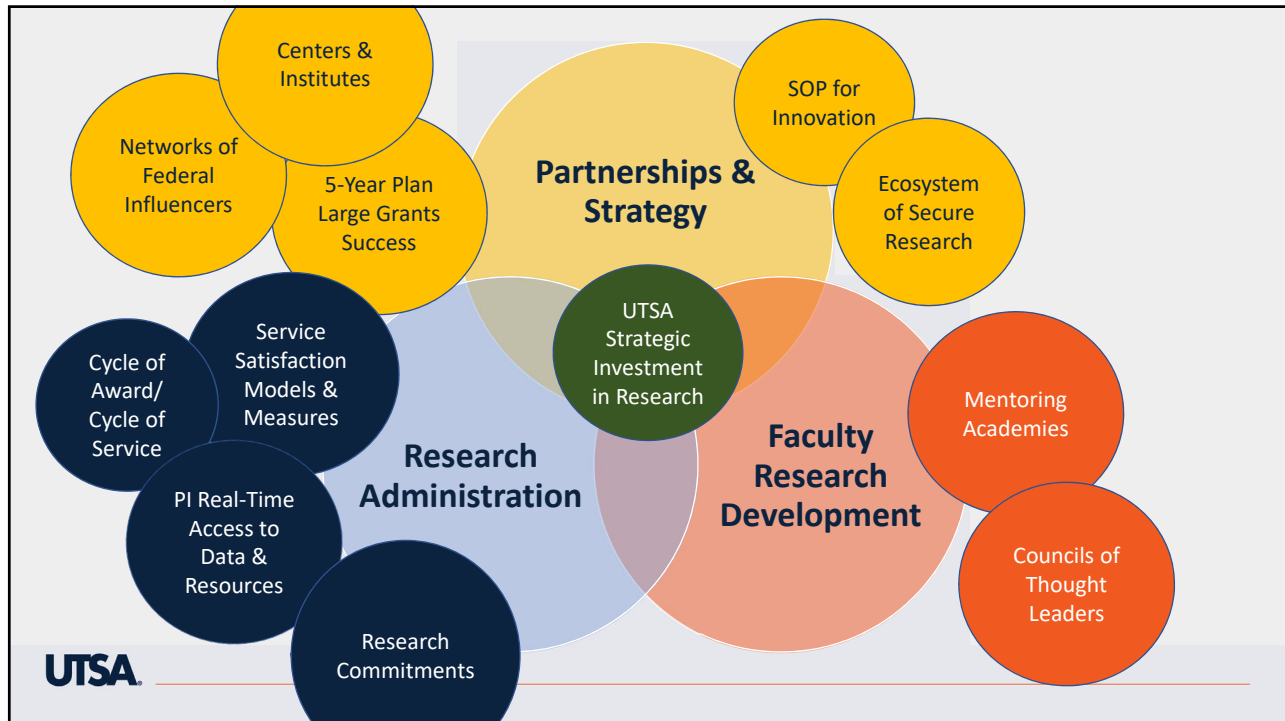
Measure and Calibrate

A strong service management framework structures the ongoing evaluation, resourcing, and adjustment of services.



Service management provides the forum for expanding service delivery implementation to new functions, new services, or new customers.

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