

Please see the UCN 5 Year Internal Review conducted by Dwight Botting and posted on UCN Website:

This report was commissioned in November, 2016 by the UCN Governing Council at the initiative of the President. It focuses on two important aspects in the UCN operation: Student Retention and Success, and Trades and Technology. A total of 23 recommendations were made by the reviewer and are under consideration by the Governing Council. To that end, the report is posted on the website and the Governing Council has asked any staff with comments or other feedback to provide same to myself or Shelly Bulycz. All comments should be received no later than September 20.

Once the comments are received and considered, the VP Academic and I will lead a process to develop an institutional response to the review, including actions, timelines, and resource allocations (if required). This will be presented to the Board at their October 25th meeting. The Board will be responsible for approving and/or amending the recommended action plan as well as providing ongoing oversight.

Please note, at this time the Board has only received the report from the reviewer and has not agreed or disagreed with any of the recommendations. The report is being distributed to ensure all staff have the opportunity to provide input. A response from the Board will be forthcoming following their October meeting.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact either myself or Dan Smith.

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE NORTH

INTERNAL REVIEW:

Student Retention and Success

and

Trades and Technology

Conducted by:

Dwight Botting

May, 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This internal review focused on Student Success and Retention, and Technology and Trades, initially using a Framework approved by the Governing Council (Appendix A).
2. The review went beyond the Framework in order to better address the two issues in question.
3. The review encompassed 24 interviews of internal staff, 2 external interviews and 4 student focus groups.(Appendix B)
4. It also included a review of a number of internal documents.(Appendix C)
5. The review calls for immediate attention to the two focus areas with 23 specific recommendations.
6. Many of the organizational structures and processes which are already in place or in development at UCN will support the recommendations in this Review.
7. However, some internal cultural changes must take place for this to happen.
8. Student Success: There should be clear understanding of what success means at UCN and this should be the focal point for all organizational structures and operations.
9. Student Support Services: All of the functions which provide support for students should be coordinated into one internal strategy.
10. This above action is in development through the Academic Division under the name, Student Enrolment Management System (SEM).
11. Trades and Technology: This Division has recently received an organizational overhaul.
12. It is now time to operationalize more effective trades programming under this structure.
13. Staff Development support is required for the UCN Trades and Technology staff.
14. The development of an internal UCN Data Strategy should be a priority.
15. The staff at UCN should use data as a basis to measure the performance and improvement in Student Support Services and Trades and Technology.
16. Another area requiring immediate attention is the level performance of the students in the Regional Centres.
17. This requires assistance and coordination from all of UCN, principally the Academic Departments, SEM and Trades and Technology.
18. The UCN Division of Aboriginal Knowledge and Culture, the Resident Elders and the Council of Elders should also be included.
19. The Governing Council must also play a more active role in realizing improvements to Student Success:
 - The members of the Governing Council and the President should determine the guidelines for a more active role for the Governing Council.
 - The Governing Council should endorse the improvement process in SEM and Trades and Technology.
 - The Governing Council should approve budget reallocations to support the improvement process.
 - The Governing Council should regularly monitor these improvements.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the staff and students work to develop a definition of Success that is appropriate to the UCN Mission and clientele and that this definition be a focus for internal reforms, communication and celebration.
2. That a Recruitment Strategy be developed by a task force with representatives from key program and support areas.
3. That the student assessment process be reviewed to determine its effectiveness and to link it into other support services that may be appropriate.
4. That UCN give consideration to moving the Academic Advisors onto the Student Support staff team.
5. That all staff at UCN addresses the performance issues of Regional Centre students as soon as possible.
6. That UCN make formal tutoring immediately available for Regional Center students.
7. That UCN establish the position of Student Advocate in consultation with its Student Council.
8. That UCN give consideration to physical adjustments on the Thompson campus in order to provide students with easier access to the counselors and quieter study areas.
9. That the Student Enrolment Management review be given UCN priority and not be confined to the Faculty of Arts, Science and Business.
10. That the completion of the internal Data Strategy be accelerated into the 2017/18 budget year and supported with the necessary funds.
11. That the Governing Council monitor the progress in the development of the Student Enrolment Management System and the Data Strategy, and insist on measures to track progress in these two initiatives.
12. That the Governing Council endorse the changes to UCN's Trades and Technology Organizational Structure as an effective platform to initiate strategic improvements in its Trades and Technology mandate.
13. That UCN develop a time line for the establishment of a full complement of Trades and Technology Program Advisory Committees (P.A.C.s)
14. That all advisory councils at UCN be comprised of industry and community representatives.
15. That staff in UCN Trades and Technology be expected and supported to maintain close contact with industries and communities representative of their students.
16. That the new, more specific expectations for staff be accompanied by opportunities for improvement in teaching methodology; for maintaining currency in industry practises; and for facilitative decision-making skills.
17. That work experience and co-op placements be fundamental to the Trades training of each student.
18. That UCN collect data to allow trades staff to measure the effectiveness of their programming.
19. That the UCN Governing Council recognize the issue of recruitment of professional staff and ask the President to report on recommended action to address the situation.
20. That the Governing Council work with the President to develop a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to reflect major priorities and to use these for a basis for discussion when monitoring progress in the agreed upon areas.

21. That the staff work through the 2017-2018 Budget Process to fund the Review Recommendations from within existing budget lines or from reallocations within the 2017-18 Budget.
22. That UCN establish an alumni association organization.
23. That UCN initiate a fundraising campaign to assist in the support of special initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

This is the third official review of the University College of the North (UCN) since its inception in July, 2004. The Loxley Report, 2009, was commissioned by the Manitoba Government and focussed on the transition from Keewatin Community College (KCC) to UCN. The Lobdell Report, 2013, was also commissioned by the Government and covered a much wider scope including Institutional Structure, Students and Academic Programming, Finance and Partnerships.

This report was commissioned in November, 2016 by the UCN Governing Council at the initiative of the President and focuses on two important aspects in the UCN operation: Student Retention and Success, and Trades and Technology. These are outlined in the Review Framework which was approved by the Governing Council in November, 2016 (Appendix A). Due to the retirement of President Konrad Jonasson it was decided to complete the Report in May, 2017 and have the Governing Council deliberate on its findings while he was still in office.

UCN is now operating under its third strategic plan, Kiskinohtahiwewin, 2015-2020. This plan addresses Student Retention and Success and Trades and Technology directly in three of its Strategic Directions: Student Centred, Innovation and Responsive Education and Trades and Industrial Skills. This review will examine a number of Strategic Goals relating to these Directions in the light of their effectiveness in assisting to contribute to the realization of the focus of the review. The concluding summary of this report will address this effectiveness.

The review is internal in that it looks into the operations and structure relating to UCN Student Success and Trades and Technology. The sources for the review concentrate on interviews with staff members who are mainly responsible for results in these areas. A number of internal documents were also examined.

The reviewer would like to acknowledge the level of interest and cooperation shown by the staff in the interviews and in any follow up that resulted from the dialogue. UCN is fortunate to have a number of competent and dedicated staff. They should be commended for their efforts in helping to achieve the Mission of UCN.

It is now the purview of the Governing Council to consider the recommendations of the Review and to determine its role in the achievement of them.

Dwight Botting

May 25, 2017.

STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS

The primary goal of any post secondary institution should be to contribute to the success of its students. In the end this is how it should be judged. The reviewer was constantly mindful of this when conducting his activities. Of course in many ways it is the institution which defines “success” as it relates to the standards inherent in its programs. However success can mean a number of different things to its students. All this has to be taken into consideration when deciding what success means at UCN.

UCN was created in 2004 because the Government of the day believed it was necessary to provide post secondary education for people closer to their homes in Northern Manitoba. The people of the North heartily approved of this initiative.

UCN operates in a catchment area larger than Germany but with just over 80,000 people. It has two main campuses and 12 Regional Centres. It also conducts programming in a number of other Northern communities as well as in southern Manitoba. That is a huge achievement in itself.

Since its inception enrolment has grown slowly but steadily with an official headcount in 2015/16 of approximately 2200. Of these about 33% are in programs offered outside of its two main campuses in The Pas and Thompson. Approximately 70% of these students are Aboriginal on a self declared basis.

UCN is not without its detractors. There are those who feel that enrolment should be higher to justify the public investment in buildings and operations, There are also those who feel that the student retention rate is too low. That is, not enough has been done to provide support for many of its vulnerable students and consequently they drop out.

The staff at UCN is well aware of these perceptions. It may also be beyond the scope of this or any review to determine what a suitable enrolment should be. What the review has attempted is to determine the effectiveness of UCN’s marketing and recruiting operation and perhaps more importantly has also unpacked the many aspects of student services and examined their effectiveness in student support and retention. In the end however the reviewer asks the reader to look beyond numbers and to consider the quality of experience that UCN provides to its students.

The Lobdell Report fingered “Student Services” at UCN as an area that needed attention. As a first step it called for an internal review of student services to determine current capacity. It also called for a comprehensive review of the factors which influence student attrition with the view to improve student graduation rates. To support these reviews Lobdell called upon UCN to continue to develop “robust and reliable student data bases”. The UCN President’s Priorities 2014/15, which were approved by the Governing Council called for a review of the current capacity including student success factors but did not address the student attrition recommendation of Lobdell. Due to variety of circumstances this review was not conducted.

Interviews conducted in the current review indicate a strong perception that graduation rates could be much higher if student support services could be revamped and better coordinated. The whole issue is further exacerbated by the fact that data bases have not been developed in order to inform improvement strategies.

The Vice President Academic and Research has now initiated an ambitious exercise to coordinate all the aspects of student support services from recruiting to graduation under a framework entitled Strategic Enrolment Management Services (SEM). There are also plans to launch a Data Strategy.

Student Success

Many of those interviewed related directly or indirectly to the need to define what is meant by the term “Student Success” at UCN. This is more important than a surface reaction may conclude. Given the makeup of its population and the wide range of its mandate it would be wise if the definition reflected a broader based set of values. Certainly graduates of Diploma, Certificate or Degree programs must be termed a success. However looking beyond this many feel that UCN should also recognize students who obtained credits but had a legitimate reason to discontinue their studies. It is important to note that a number of UCN’s valued employees discontinued their studies before they completed their programs and even went on to further study. Either way there should be a clear understanding as to what is the overall goal of student success at UCN.

RECOMMENDATION 1.0:

That the staff and students work to develop a definition of success that is appropriate to the UCN Mission and clientele and that this definition be a focus for internal reform, communication and celebration.

This Review will now provide commentary and analysis on the elements of Student Support Services as understood at UCN.

Recruiting

Recruiting is presently in the hands of one staff member who reports directly to the Dean of Student Development and Registrar. This individual’s primary responsibility is to conduct information visits to schools and communities as well as assume responsibility for career fairs and other related events. She also provides assistance to faculty in promoting their program areas. There is an informal organizational relationship between the Student Recruitment Officer and the Director of Communication who is also in charge of marketing.

There is no Recruitment Strategy at UCN. Those interviewed all agreed that one was needed. Several interviewees had suggestions for recruiting. Some of these included establishing target groups, calling upon alumni, and agreeing on a central theme for messaging. The students in the focus groups indicated that they had found out about UCN through a variety of circumstances including social media and word of mouth. Most of these students came to UCN because of its proximity to their home communities and to where they would like to pursue employment upon graduation. Most of the students who enrol at UCN are adults. There is a perception that there is now a trend to a greater number of younger enrollees but there is no data to support this.

At this stage of its history UCN should have a recruitment strategy that provides a clear, inviting message to prospective students that speaks to the needs of its target groups. The SEM initiative has incorporated recruiting into its scope. In the meantime it should be possible to develop an interim recruitment strategy that endeavours to include common messaging and ownership from all staff.

This interim strategy should attempt to capture some data to help measure effectiveness. For example it is not clear to what extent the students from the local high schools are choosing to come directly to UCN after their high school graduation.

RECOMMENDATION 2.0:

That a Recruitment Strategy be developed by a task force with representatives from key program and support areas.

Student Registration and Acceptance:

Registration is the immediate operational responsibility of two Associate Registrars, one in Thompson and one in The Pas. They both report to the Registrar who is also the Dean of Student Development. In each of the campuses there are Enrolment Service Advisors and Academic Advisors who report to the respective Associate Registrars. This area is undergoing reorganization in the sense that the Associate Registrars and Registrar are engaged in a process to better align their responsibilities with the overall review process in Student Support. Registration is a unique component of post secondary institutions. In some quarters it can be considered as a technical exercise but it is important to note that the way it is organized and the manner in which it is conducted can have a definite bearing on the quality of a student's experience.

When a student applies for acceptance at UCN his/her application is reviewed by an Enrolment Services Advisor to determine whether the student qualifies for acceptance. If the student is accepted he/she will receive a letter of acceptance as part of a Registration Package which outlines the next steps he/she should take. A number of students do not respond to these letters. At present there is no follow up as to the reason for this. Also these letters should be reviewed to ensure that they are in plain English and convey a positive message

A number of students who apply for UCN do not have the academic standing to qualify for acceptance. It is not clear how these cases are handled by registration staff. Some of them are referred for assessment. Others apparently can apply as a Mature Student and be accepted. Questions were also raised concerning the quality of the assessment process and how it could be used as a basis for providing assistance to the student in question.

RECOMMENDATION 3.0:

That the student assessment process be reviewed to determine its effectiveness and to link it into other support services that may be appropriate.

Although it is not mandatory all registrants are encouraged to meet with an Academic Advisor to ensure that the courses they are considering to take meet the requirements of the program into which they are registering. These Advisors also provide support for students in their programs and can refer them to other UCN staff for specific support services, e.g. tutoring. All the students in the focus groups had seen an Academic Advisor during the year and were satisfied with the advice that they received.

There is an effort taking place to introduce On Line Registration. This has been a long standing issue and it now appears that this change will come to fruition.

RECOMMENDATION 4.0:

That UCN give consideration to moving the Academic Advisors onto the Student Support staff team.

Classes:

Although the review did not explore the issue in detail, there were several interview comments regarding the lack of a constructive relationship between the time tabling function and that of the registration process. The issue that seems to be the most problematic is the lag in a student getting his/her time table after payment of tuition and completion of the registration process.

There is a plan in place in Thompson to provide an in class orientation visit to each class early in the school year. The intent of such visits would connect the students to the support services that are available should they be required. The implementation of this plan will be valuable for the students.

It is well founded that for the most part instructors and professors at UCN are working very diligently to provide solid instruction for their students and that they are open minded about how to improve this effectiveness. If they notice a student who requires assistance they can register a request on line through the Early Intervention Referral System. However, this system is seriously under used. Estimates are that only about 15% of the instructional staff use the system. Therefore, in too many cases, students are on their own once they have commenced classes

From the students point of view there are some misgivings about using distance education teaching effectively. These range from technical issues with the delivery systems to noise distractions from certain sites that are part of the distance delivery network. It is the expectation of students in the two main campuses that they will have at least one chance to meet their distance delivery instructor for some face to face instruction or assistance. It appears that this is not always the case. However when it does happen it is much appreciated by the students.

The Academic Faculty are also developing courses and strategies to address skill deficiencies in first year students. A strategy entitled "Preparation for Post Secondary" is in the works for Academic students. A "Preparation for College" strategy is also being developed. These initiatives should be applauded.

Specific Student Supports (main campuses):

It is safe to say that many of the students at UCN can and do benefit from the many supports that are provided. Financing post secondary education is a challenge for many of them in that they have to move into The Pas or Thompson from their home communities. In most cases this involves coming with their children, spouses and partners. Hence day care and housing are prime needs. Financial assistance in the form of sponsorship, bursaries and other specific funding programs is a virtual necessity. There is staff at both campuses who can provide advice and assistance in these matters. Obviously these advisors perform valuable services. Housing and day care are constant issues. The price of these services is quite high regardless of the role UCN plays. Availability is also an issue.

The students in the focus groups state that many of them require assistance in writing skills in order to succeed. They also said that there is a significant amount of informal, unpaid peer assistance and support that goes on between the students. The positive benefits of this should be recognized. Formal tutoring is also provided through Learning Assistance Centres in both campuses. The tutors are paid

from Student Association Fees. As an example this amounted to a total of just under \$7,000.00 (S. Muilenburg, VP-Finance & Resources) for students in The Pas and Thompson in each of the last two school years. On top of this, in 2016, nursing students accessed free tutoring valued at \$11,600.00 (S. Muilenburg, VP-Finance & Resources). Tutoring assistance must remain available.

A number of students mentioned the value of the Aboriginal Centres on each campus. The activities and supports provide through these centres is valued as well. It was emphasized that the centres are there for all students regardless of their ancestry but that this is not well known. One student strongly affirmed the important benefits of alcohol free activities at the centres as well in Student Council activities.

There is a general belief within many of the faculty and in the academic community in Canada that in institutions such as UCN it is vital to include Aboriginal content and references to Aboriginal culture where possible in curriculum and teaching. The student focus groups in this review bore this out. The initiative that UCN has taken in Cultural Proficiency would be very consistent with this thinking. Another example that deserves mentioning is the Kenanow program in Education. This not only prepares students to teach in Northern schools it also helps to reinforce any Aboriginal roots that the students may have and to sensitize to the other students to these important aspects.

At present, when students drop out of UCN, there is no system in place for exit surveys or where possible, an exit interview. Therefore there is no data available with which to inform the staff to assist in development of retention strategies for this population.

Regional Centers:

The operation of the Regional Centres is the responsibility of the Vice President of Community Based Services. Each of the 12 Regional Centres has a Coordinator and a Director, who has more direct operational responsibility. Some of the programs are UCN base-funded leading to a degree, certificate or diploma. Others are termed contract training. These are specifically designed to provide special skills required in the workplace. Still others are credit courses offered through Inter University Services (IUS). Teaching staff in the regional centres are members of the respective faculties and not the immediate responsibility of the Centres.

A number of issues were raised about education in the regional centres. It is a common perception among staff and students that the levels of achievement of too many regional center students are not acceptable. Many comments were made in reference to these students. Many Northerners hold the view that the students in the reserve schools, which are funded by the Federal government, are being under served. The Academic Faculty do not have the resources to properly guarantee that Academic standards are adequate in the courses being offered. The quality of the onsite instructors and professors was singled out by many to be inadequate. A major reason for this is that staff recruitment is very difficult. Also because formal tutoring is paid for out of Student Association fees and because regional centre students do not pay student fees, this service is not available for them.

One of the organizational issues is that it is very difficult to coordinate the operational needs of the Regional Centres with the Academic Division, Inter University Services (IUS) and Community Based Services. This is partly due to the complexities involved and partly due to inadequate resources. Therefore many of the problems of the Regional Centre students are beyond the control of the

Community Based Services staff. Coupled with them is the perception that the students who do come to the main campuses from the regional centre programs are disadvantaged and comprise much of the attrition problem in those two locations. However there is no data to support an informed analysis of the situation.

In many respects regional centres are the backbone of the University College of the North but it is time for them to receive some increased attention.

RECOMMENDATION 5.0:

That all staff at UCN addresses the performance issues of Regional Centre students as a soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATION 6.0:

That UCN make formal tutoring immediately available for Regional Centre students.

Student Appeals:

In the course of the student focus groups it became very apparent that because of variety of backgrounds of UCN students and their desire to be treated fairly that the appeals process is very important. A number of students were willing to describe issues that they had brought forward, some as general complaints, others as specific appeals. The nature of these issues ranges from confusion over advice about prerequisites; electives that were not accepted when enrolling in a specific program; inadequacy of the distance education; the quality of instruction and personal conflict with staff.

The student support staff work through many of these with the students and should be commended for the sensitive manner in which they resolve many complaints informally. However when things develop to a formal process a number of students expressed dissatisfaction particularly with the final resolution process. There are complaints that the process drags on too long and final decisions are not communicated within prescribed guidelines. Sincere discussion and description of these complaint issues provided graphic discussion in many in the focus groups.

RECOMMENDATION 7.0:

That UCN establish the position of Student Advocate in consultation with its Student Council.

Student Safety:

There is a fairly consistent perception from staff and students that safety is not an issue at UCN. The same can be said for harassment and racism. There have been incidents and complaints. However, the environment is relatively healthy given the variety of students who come together to study at UCN's facilities. One reason for this may be that the average age of students is higher than in other institutions. As young adults the UCN students seem very serious about wanting to succeed and appear to have a general concern for each other. Complacency is not an option when it comes to student safety. UCN should be mindful of the importance of continuing to be vigilant and of developing workable procedures to deal with any student safety matters.

Physical Layout:

In recent years UCN has benefited from major upgrading of its Regional Centres and the campus in The Pas. Thompson was provided with a much needed new campus facility. The student support services staff in The Pas functions effectively as a collaborative group in their area. In Thompson there were a number of comments which expressed concern over the fact that the general aura of the facility is not warm and that there are some impediments which separate students from advisors and councillors.

The connection of the Thompson Recreation (REC) Centre to UCN seems to be working well with one caveat. The exuberance of many of the REC Centre participants creates distractions for students who need a place to study in the evenings and on weekends. This matter should receive attention.

RECOMMENDATION 8.0:

That UCN give consideration to physical adjustments on the Thompson campus in order to provide students with easier access to the counsellors and quieter study areas.

General Remarks:

Previously it was stated that a total review of Student Services has been initiated by the Vice President who is responsible for such. A reference was also made to the creation of a Data Strategy. It is important that all of the student service responsibilities undergo a review with the intention of coordinating them into a collaborative strategy (SEM) with specific aims directed toward increasing student success. This would include insuring that any data from Institutional Research be in a format to support internal improvement processes. A data strategy should be coupled with this initiative. This will allow the staff to set specific targets of improvement and to be able to track their effectiveness. As it stands a draft Data Strategy is under discussion with supporting funding being planned for 2018/19.

RECOMMENDATION 9.0:

That the Student Enrolment Management (SEM) review be given UCN priority and not be confined to the Faculty of Arts, Science and Business.

RECOMMENDATION 10.0:

That the completion of the internal Data Strategy be accelerated into the 2017/18 budget year and supported with the necessary funds.

RECOMMENDATION 11.0:

That the Governing Council monitor the progress in the development of the Student Enrolment Management System and the Data Strategy and insist on measures to track progress in these two initiatives.

Specific Data Questions:

This report has made reference to the importance of capturing internal data to inform internal effectiveness. During the course of the interviews a number important questions requiring data were discussed. A summary of these is as follows:

1. How many students do not respond to a Letter of Acceptance and for what reason?
2. What is the average age of acceptance? Is it declining or increasing?
3. How many students are choosing to attend UCN from the local high schools? Into what faculties are they applying?
4. What percent of the students who apply to enter UCN do so without assessment? As mature students? As Special Acceptance students? How do these numbers compare between the main campuses and the Regional Centres? What comparisons can be made between these groups in regards to success?
5. What percent of students who receive assistance come to this service as a result of the Early Intervention System.
6. What percent of students in the Regional Centres move on to programs on the main campuses? How successful are they? How does their success compare to students who took all of their programs on main campuses?
7. Why do students drop out of UCN? What can be learned from an analysis of this information?

TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY

Background:

Keewatin Community College (KCC) had been well established in Northern Manitoba when the UCN Act was passed in 2004. Prior to that KCC had been functioning under the Colleges Act, 1993, which had removed it as a department of government and given it a measure of autonomy. In some circles this is known as “governance.” The years prior to and immediately following the adoption of governance saw KCC encountering some instability. In this time period it experienced a number of short term stays for its presidents as well as the decision by the Federal Government to cease the purchasing of training seats in the colleges. None of this was conducive to the development of viable trades programming.

Training a skilled workforce in the North has been a long standing priority but a very difficult one to effectively put into practice. When the UCN Act was passed the reputation of KCC was somewhat tarnished in many circles. Enrolment in its trades programs was not robust. The credibility of UCN trades training was not high among employers and the training community. In this context the potential for a seamless inter-relationship between university and college programming and the establishment of a network of regional centres were the pillars of the new UCN resolve. It was now time to move forward within this new structure. The inaugural Governing Council formally adopted community based training as a key part of the new direction. There was a common feeling among UCN senior officials that they must explicitly address the training and employment needs of the Northern Aboriginal citizens, many of whom were living outside of Thompson and The Pas.

During the period from 2004 to 2013 the responsibility for College program standards, including the deployment of instructional staff rested under the authority of the Vice President Academic while the establishment and administration of the regional centres was in the domain of the Vice President Community Based Services. UCN had formally welcomed 12 Regional Centers into its fold. This was no mean feat. For many of the people living in these communities UCN had given them the first opportunity to receive formal training and a chance to ladder into the completion of his/her program at one of the

two main campuses. Also in some of the larger communities, base-funded programming is being offered and graduation could occur there.

However, during the period from 2004 to 2013 there was a nagging feeling that things could be better on the trades' side. One explanation was that the creation of new university programming and structures at UCN required such a heavy concentration of resources and attention that trades development had been neglected.

The Lobdell Report, June 2013 addressed some of the ongoing College issues particularly the quality of diplomas and certificates and the necessity of ensuring a key focus on college trades training. The potential for co-op placements and industry partnerships was also addressed.

Partially as a result of the Lobdell Report recommendations and partially as a result of discussions at the Governing Council an extensive trades consultation process was launched by President Jonasson in the Fall of 2013 to assist in ensuring that training was "more closely aligned" to the needs of the communities as well as industry. Its results were published in the winter of 2014. In the introduction to the Trades Report 2013-2014 President Jonasson officially acknowledged the criticism that UCN had been facing on the training side. If nothing else the consultation findings acknowledged the prime importance of the UCN mandate for Northerners and set the stage for the development of a training strategy to focus its commitment to come closer to fulfilling this mandate. However, UCN staff would be well advised to review the findings and the discussions of the conclusions in this Trades Report. In the interview process for this review there was no evidence that the findings of the Trades Report have been incorporated into the preliminary development of a trades' strategy.

However, a few significant changes have been made to the organizational structure in Trades and Technology. A Mining Academy was established in 2011 in co-location with the Flin Flon Regional Centre. This was in direct response to dialogue between the Manitoba mining industry and the Manitoba government who had become very interested in supporting the development of the mining industry in the North. Subsequently the Position of Associate Vice President Trades and Technology was created.

Recently more changes have occurred. The position of Dean of Trades and Technology has been eliminated and a College of Trades and Technology (CTT) has been created within the UCN structure as part of the responsibilities of the Associate Vice President. There is also a commitment to form a Strategic Council to advise the CTT on directions and initiatives. The position of Director of Career and Workforce Training has been transferred from Trades and Technology to Community Based Services to promote a greater emphasis on contract training. The drafting of a Trades Strategy has been initiated. All of these structural initiatives are designed to assist in creating a platform to develop more effective trades and technology programming by getting into closer dialogue with industry and community representatives

Possibilities and Potential:

All Colleges are expected to provide training in basic industrial skills that are somewhat generic but form the basis for specific on the job training. Much of this kind of training is publically funded. It is also important for colleges to provide training that is more closely aligned to the needs of employers

although satisfying their needs can be somewhat precarious, it is generally recognized that this type of training be done in close consultation with industry and in many cases with employers sharing in the training costs. Contract training, where the customers usually bear the total cost, is the ultimate expression of this agenda. A good training strategy should reflect commitments across this continuum. Frequently, in today's training world institutions are being judged on their ability to be responsive to workplace training needs. These can be variable from year to year so it is vital that it be done in close partnerships with local employers.

UCN has the additional requirement to ensure that the interests of the communities and their members are represented in the training offerings. This would also include proper representation of community interests on the Strategic Council and the PAC's. The criticism that publically funded training institutions are not responsive to industry needs is fairly widespread from within and beyond UCN. As part of its way of better positioning itself in this environment UCN is creating this Strategic Council to advise the CTT to help ensure training needs are more adequately aligned to both industry and community needs.

UCN has also made a commitment to establish Program Advisory Committees (PAC's) to narrow in on the specific needs of a trade and to help maintain relevance of programming. However it is going to be a challenge to establish suitable leadership resources to support and facilitate these PAC's.

These PAC's combined with a Strategic Council should be invaluable in providing recommendations for the introduction of new programs as well as improvements to existing ones. UCN houses the Provincial Red Seal Apprenticeship training for Industrial Electrician and Industrial Mechanic. These Apprenticeship programs have been fundamental to the stability of KCC and UCN. They would be well served by an industry and community based PAC.

RECOMMENDATION 12.0:

That the Governing Council endorse the changes to UCN's Trades and Technology Organizational Structure as an effective platform to initiate strategic improvements in its Trades and Technology mandate.

RECOMMENDATION 13.0:

That UCN develop a timeline for the establishment of a full complement of Trades and Technology Program Advisory Committees (PAC'S).

RECOMMENDATION 14.0:

That all advisory councils at UCN be composed of industry and community representatives.

At present the Terms of Reference of the Strategic Council are in a very preliminary form and are open for discussion. It is not sufficient to endorse the establishment of an organizational structure. It is necessary to have some understanding about the key operational elements within the structure. When employers and community representatives are invited to participate in advisory structures there are a few key things to keep in mind. First, everyone's time is valuable so meetings should be inviting but

business-like. The Terms of Reference should be quite clear as to limits of the advisory influence of process. UCN is not surrendering its legislated responsibility by promising to dialogue with advisory committees and take their ideas into account before final decisions are made. In fact, this should be seen as enhancing its credibility. Second, it is important to have committees that are not too large but also of a proper size to be able to provide expertise on major training needs of the industry or trade.

UCN was created with the expectation that high school and university college programs could be formally and informally linked. There is little evidence to indicate that this is happening in any extensive manner.

Informal contact with communities and industries is also fundamental to the strong partnerships in the training agenda. There is clear perception that the Trades and Technology staff are not in sufficient contact with potential partners. There once was a time when it was a commonly held opinion that the job of trades and technology providers was to provide pure training in an environment that was devoid of outside influence. Under this former paradigm it was too easy for trades' staff to become isolated from industry and from the communities. However, detachment is no longer advisable. Colleges are now working in an environment that is more client-driven than ever.

RECOMMENDATION 15.0:

That staff in UCN Trades and Technology be expected and supported to maintain close contact with industries and communities representative of their students.

RECOMMENDATION 16.0:

That the new, more specific expectations for staff be accompanied by opportunities for improvement in teaching methodology; for maintaining currency in industry practises; and for facilitative decision-making skills.

A natural offshoot of this training world is that students be given the opportunity for work experience and even co-op placements. Lobdell recommended consideration of co-op placements as part of the students' programs. Interviews conducted in this study did not conclusively catalogue how much work experience is being provided to students outside of Apprenticeship Training. It is suspected that there is not a lot taking place.

RECOMMENDATION 17.0:

That work experience and co-op placements be fundamental to the Trades Training of each student.

Based on the perceptions of the interviewees it has been recommended that improvements in the success rates of students in Regional Centres should receive priority attention. All of the initiatives referenced in the SEM process in the earlier part of this review should include trades and technology students. This would include the Preparation for College Strategy.

Data Issues:

In the interviews and document reviews there was no evidence of the use of data to assist in program effectiveness and improvement. Many of the questions that were tagged as relevant in the Student

Retention and Success portion of this paper apply here. Essentially data should be used to inform decision makers as to where students are coming from when they register for Trades and Technology programming at UCN and whether their origin is related to any differences in their retention rates. It is now time to track College Graduates in order to gain insight into longer term effects of training on employability.

Some additional questions that could be answered to assist in program improvement are:

1. How many UCN Trades and Technology students have had work experience?
2. How many students drop out of Trades and Technology and for what reason?
3. How many students enter UCN pre Employment Training directly from high school?
4. How many pre Employment graduates go into Apprenticeship?

RECOMMENDATION 18.0:

That UCN collect data to allow trades staff to measure the effectiveness of their programming.

None of what is being recommended is revolutionary. However it is important to reiterate that past Trades Training at UCN has not reflected these elements in any formal manner. Many feel that there has been no real sense of urgency to revamp training programming at KCC and UCN. This is not a time to panic but it is a time to pull together and to commit to a renewed model for Trades and Technology training.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff Recruiting:

During the interviews it became very apparent that recruiting of instructional staff is continuing to be a serious challenge at UCN. Part of this is due to the newness of UCN and the growing pains that have occurred as a result. Part of it is also due to the physical isolation of the campuses and Regional Centres. Another challenge is to have a staff complement that represents the Aboriginal population in the North. Aboriginal people comprise just over 70% of the population of Northern Manitoba and the instructional faculty comprise just over 30% of this group. Clearly there are some serious challenges in this regard. The quality of the instructional staff is an important factor in achieving student success in all of UCN's programming including the Trades and Technology.

RECOMMENDATION 19.0:

That the UCN Governing Council recognize the issue of recruitment of professional staff and ask the President to report on recommended action to address the situation.

Performance Indicators:

In this review much has been said about the use of data to measure effectiveness in important areas and to be used as a tool to make improvements. In its recent past the Governing Council and the President attempted to develop a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and to use these as a framework of discussion in meetings with the President. It is time to renew this initiative. This entails reaching agreement on goals and how to monitor progress using a plain set of KPI's. That step may take

a few meetings if done properly. The Governing Council would be well advised to relate some of these KPI's to Student Retention and Success and Trades effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATION 20.0:

That the Governing Council work with the President to develop a set of Key Performance Indicators to reflect major priorities and to use these as a basis for discussion when monitoring progress in the agreed upon areas.

Budget Implications:

This review is very cognizant of the tightness of the UCN budget for the next fiscal year. However some of the recommended changes will require resources. It is probable that the implementation of the review's recommendations can be funded from existing budget lines while others will require the reallocation of internal funds. Regardless it is important to list some of the areas that are judged by the reviewer to require resources outside of existing budget lines. These are:

- Recruiting Strategy
- Regional Centre Tutoring
- Student Advocate
- Thompson Campus Layout
- Data Strategy
- Trades and Technology Staff Professional Development

RECOMMENDATION 21.0:

That staff at UCN work through the 2017/2018 budget process to fund the Review Recommendations from within existing budget lines or from reallocations within the 2017/2018 budget.

External Communication:

One of the important questions any organization has to constantly resolve is its external communication. On an ongoing basis it is important that UCN deliberate to determine what to communicate to external audiences; when to conduct this communication and how it should be conducted. At UCN this has been done on a case by case basis. There is reason to believe that UCN places a low priority on external communication in the Winnipeg area. However, a number of important decisions are made in Winnipeg that impact UCN. The recent changes to the membership of the Governing Council are a case in point. It is not advisable for governments to ignore public opinion when making decisions that affect the post secondary institutions in this province.

On May 8, 2017 the Winnipeg Free Press ran a one page spread high lighting the number of Aboriginal post secondary graduates in this year's class. It was a very positive, celebratory article. They featured the University of Manitoba but also mentioned successes at University of Winnipeg, and Red River College. The University College of the North was not mentioned and yet Aboriginal graduates are of the greatest importance at UCN.

This review has made mention of defining and celebrating success at UCN. Among other things celebrating means sharing institutional pride with its external stakeholders.

Fund Raising and Alumni:

Another issue that received attention in the interviews was that it was now time to work to create an active Alumni organization both as a source of celebration and support for special projects and initiatives. Profiles of successful Alumni could also be used in recruiting. A few years back UCN had initiated a capital campaign. This was put on hold to allow staff to pursue other priorities. It is now time to resurrect some form of a financial campaign and to initiate the formation of the UCN Alumni.

RECOMMENDATION 22.0:

That UCN establish an Alumni organization.

RECOMMENDATION 23.0:

That UCN institute a fund raising campaign to assist in the support of special initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS

The University College of the North has an extremely extensive mandate to be conducted throughout a large geographic space that sustains a small population. It is worth restating that UCN staff should be commended for conducting its essential operations, sometimes under trying conditions.

It is now time to move forward in a more defined manner. It is time to tune up and coordinate internal operations in order to support and to deliver a new resolve. UCN cannot be all things to all people but it can be more effective in targeting its outcomes to fit the uniqueness of its mandate.

In an attempt to address operational issues UCN has incorporated a number of structural changes to its organization. These changes will be more effective with staff adopting a common focus and working together in a more strategic manner. These aspects of organizational culture are fundamental to an effective organization.

In many ways the Regional Centres define the essence of UCN by providing important opportunities for post secondary education to a population that would never have received a chance in previous times. All of the interviews touched on the importance of these centres. However, many of the participants, students and staff, were concerned about the vulnerability of many of the learners in the centres. The Trades Report, 2013, references social issues in some of the communities and the impact that poverty has on living conditions. It is not a question of dropping training into locations with these kinds of conditions. All UCN staff must be prepared to enter into long term commitments in a qualitatively different manner than what would be deployed in a more urban environment. This must include staff from the Division of Aboriginal Knowledge and Culture, Resident Elders and the Council of Elders.

The remedies in the review will only begin to address the issues in the regional centres and on the main campuses in order to improve student retention and improve student success in the college and the university.

The Framework for this review relied heavily on the Strategic Goals of the current UCN Strategic Plan, Kiskinohtahiwewin, as guide to address its two main issues. As the interviews and research proceeded it

became apparent that the approach to Student Success, Retention and Trades and Technology required a broader based inquiry. That is not to say that those Strategic Goals of were not relevant but that they were too limiting. Meanwhile staff participation in the cyclical outcomes assessment for Kiskinohtahiwewin is alive and well. Perhaps the biggest contribution of this outcomes process is the development of a strategic mindset at the staff level. An analysis of the targeted Strategic Goals in the Review framework concludes that all of them were addressed in the review either directly or indirectly.

The recommendations of this Review ask the Governing Council to become more involved in internal matters. There are ways to do this without interfering in day to day operations. The President must communicate his/her commitments very clearly and report on progress. The Governing Council must not lose sight of these commitments. Members of the Governing Council must be very clear on their role and be prepared to enter into constructive dialogue with the President at Governing Council meetings. The Learning Council and the Council of Elders must also be included in the dialogue particularly in areas that are of direct concern to their mandates.

The strength of the recommendations of the Review lies in their origin. They all arise out of issues that were brought forward by the staff and focus group students in the interviews and in some of the documentation. Thus it is safe to say that there is a commitment to move forward.

Personal Comment:

I was most impressed with the quality of the interviews and I would like to commend the staff for the manner with which they addressed my questions. The students who participated in the focus groups should also be recognized. They provided a necessary insight into the components of a successful post secondary education.

Post secondary institutions function within a very unique culture that may be hard for outsiders to understand. As an outsider I apologize if I have committed mistakes in my terminology or assumptions.

My heart is with the students, staff and the governing bodies of UCN and I can only wish them well in future endeavours.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Framework for a Review of UCN

November 4, 2016

BACKGROUND

- The UCN Act references the duty of the Governing Council (GC) to conduct an operational and organizational review at least every 5 years under guidelines provided by the Minister. 12(c)
- ACC is functioning under The Colleges Act, 1993. This Act specifies the same duty for their respective boards.
- New legislation for Red River College (RRC) was passed by the Legislature this past spring. That bill called for RRC to conduct an operational and organizational review at least every five years. However, no reference was made as to Ministerial guidelines.
- The legislative acts governing University of Manitoba (UMb.), University of Winnipeg (UWpg.) and Brandon University (BU) make no reference to the duty to review. It is entirely within the purview of universities to determine if and what to review.
- Two reviews of UCN have been conducted at the initiative of the Ministry,
- The first one centred on the transition of Keewatin Community College to UCN with a focus on governance. It was conducted by John Loxley, UMb., and completed in 2009.
- The second one was a general review of organization and operations. It was conducted by Richard Lobdell, retired UMb., Vice President, and completed in June 2013.
- In the Introduction of his Report Lobdell suggested that UCN's next review be an internal self study.
- The completion of a framework for a review has been articulated in the UCN statement of Presidential priorities as approved by the GC for 2015-2016 and again for 2016-2017.

RECOMMENDATION

- During 2016-17 UCN conduct a confidential internal review to be presented to the GC in June, 2017.
- The review would be conducted on an aspect(s) of organization and operation under liaison with the President and the EC.
- The undertaking of the review would be communicated to the Ministry prior to its initiation.
- The review would focus on an issue(s) that is of prime importance for achievement of the Strategic Plan of UCN.
- The review would entail examination of data, structure and processes within UCN that are relevant to the issue. A limited amount of external research may also be conducted.

- The review would be formative in the sense that it would provide recommendations for self growth within UCN.
- The final report and the responsibility for its findings would be in the complete domain of the GC and it would determine all communication and follow up.

ISSUE TO BE REVIEWED:

Student Retention and Success

UCN has adopted a new Strategic Plan, Kiskinohtahiwewin, for 2015-2020. The finalization of the Plan involved extensive consultation as well as deliberation on the part of the Tri-Council.

The issue of Student Retention and Success is particularly important because of the many unique challenges facing UCN. A very wide variety of students are interested in attending UCN each year and UCN must endeavour to accommodate their needs while maintaining acceptable standards. Overriding all of this is the desire to have a stable enrolment that reflects the needs of the communities and the skills required to actively participate in Northern Economic development.

Using Kiskinohtahiwewin as a guide, the review will assess the effectiveness of UCN activity that is targeted to Student Retention and Success under the Strategic Directions for the Goals of Student Centred and Innovative and Responsive Education.

The following Strategic Goals will be analyzed:

1. UCN will review and enhance supports to assist in achieving a balance between academic and personal life.(Student Centred)
2. UCN will enhance, strengthen and monitor the student feedback process. (Student Centred)
3. UCN recognizes the need for student housing, transportation and child care in all of our locations and will seek partnerships to address these needs.(Student Centred)
4. UCN's recruitment strategies will target Grade 7-12 and adult learners in Northern Manitoba.(Student Centred)
5. UCN will review our systems to ensure we have the ability to respond quickly to student and stakeholder needs.(Innovative and Responsive Education)
6. UCN will provide ongoing academic upgrading to help ensure student success and transition from high school to post secondary to employment by increasing program laddering, practica, hands on experiences, dual credits and transfer credits. (Innovative and Responsive Education)

The questions for review for each of these goals are:

- What are the current operational and organizational elements that address their achievement?
- What has recently been attempted to increase their effectiveness?

- What else should/could be done?

The review process will include an analysis of any relevant data, interviews of staff, interviews with community representatives, and interviews with students. It will also include a review of relevant documentation.

To sum up, the review on Student Retention and Success will provide clear, practical recommendations for improved effectiveness.

ISSUE TO BE REVIEWED: CONTRIBUTING TO A SKILLED WORKFORCE

UCN has adopted a new Strategic Plan, KISKINOHTAHIEWIN, for 2015-2016. This process involved extensive consultation as well as deliberation by the Tri-Councils before the Plan was finalized.

The concept of trades training and employable skills is fundamental to the Mission and mandate of UCN. UCN has also been faced with capacity issues in providing a high quality, market responsive education and training opportunities for its students.

In the last five years UCN has endeavoured to develop a Trades Strategy and to work more closely with its industry and community partners in this area.

Using KISKINOHTAHIEWIN as a guide the review will assess the effectiveness of UCN activities that are targeted to Contributing to a Skilled Work Force under the Strategic Goals of Trades and Industrial Skills and Innovative and Responsive Education.

The goals in KISKINOHTAHIEWIN that are relevant to this issue are as follows:

1. UCN will develop work experiences to enable students and potential employees to network and to develop meaningful employment opportunities upon graduation.(Trades and Industrial Skill).
2. UCN will work with Apprenticeship Manitoba and partners on the delivery of diverse and innovative programming with respect to industrial skills and trades.(Trades and Industrial Skills)
3. UCN will collaborate with partners to provide access to equipment technology and infrastructure to support programming. Trades and Industrial skills)
4. UCN will strive to ensure applied and participatory research is an approach utilized for the benefit of stakeholders and the communities. Trades and Industrial Skills)
5. UCN will be flexible in providing both credit and non-credit workplace training. Trades and Industrial Skills)
6. UCN will strengthen our partnerships to enhance educational opportunities and accessibility throughout Northern Manitoba. (Innovative and Responsive Education)
7. UCN will ensure our course certificates, diplomas, and degrees are reviewed , remain current, relevant and revitalized.(Innovative and Responsive Education)
8. UCN will review our systems to ensure we have the ability to respond quickly to student and stakeholder needs.(Innovative and Responsive Education)

The questions that will be addressed in relation to these goals are as follows:

- What are the current operational and organizational elements that address their achievement?
- What has recently been attempted in order to increase their effectiveness?
- What else should/could be done?

The review will include an analysis of relevant data and interviews with staff and key industry and community partners as well as students, current and alumni. It will also include a review of relevant documentation.

To sum up, upon completion the review will provide clear, practical recommendations for improved effectiveness.

Documents to be Examined: (Not exclusively)

- Kiskinohtahiwewin Cycle Reports
- Trades Strategy
- Presidential Priorities and Reports
- Monitoring Reports
- HR Review
- Presentations to GC
- Manitoba Northern Development Strategy

Appendix B

LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN 2017

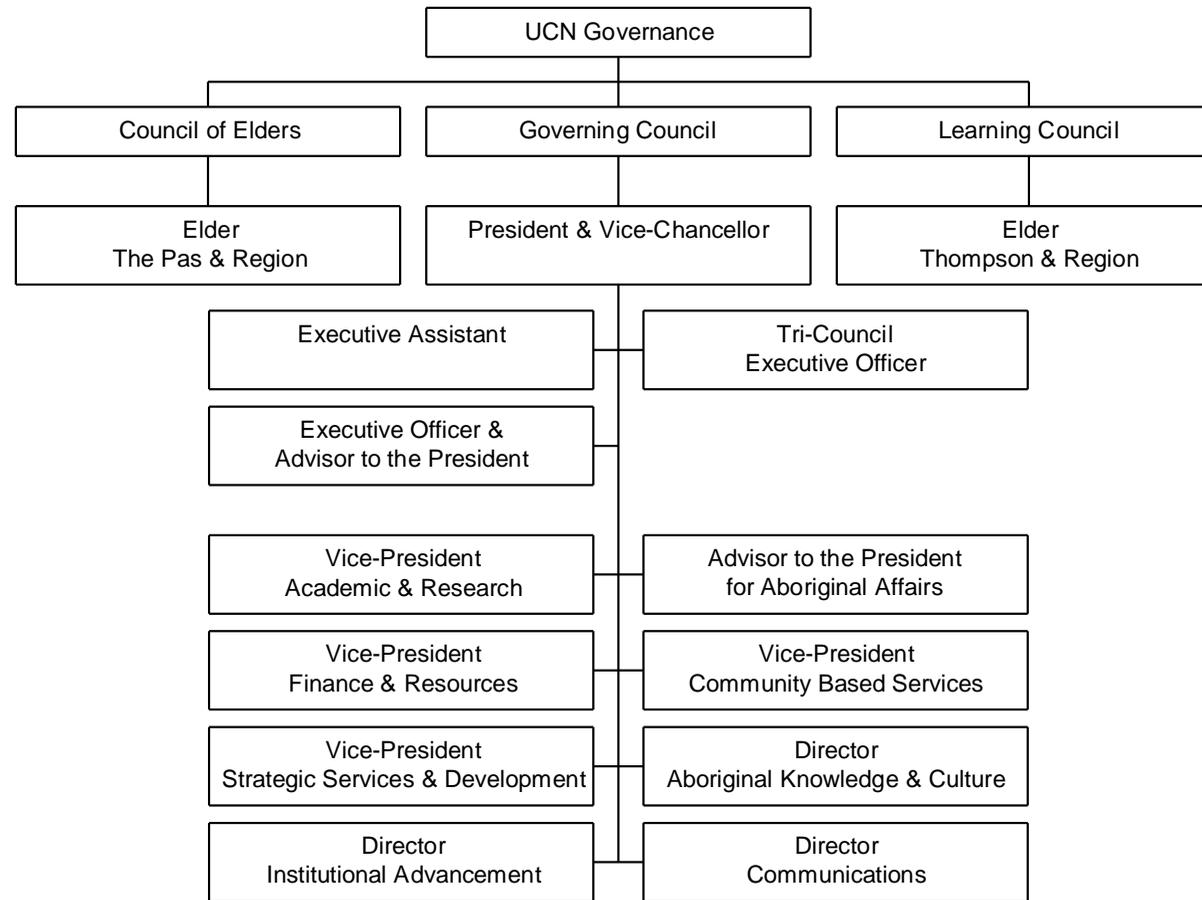
- Michelle Ballantyne: Financial Aid and Awards Officer, UCN
- Harvey Briggs: Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Business and Science, UCN
- Donna Carriere: Vice President of Community Based Services, UCN
- Monica Cook: Director of Human Resources, UCN
- Claire Fiedler: Associate Registrar, UCN
- Jackie Fitzpatrick: Director of Student Life, UCN
- Peter Garrioch: Director of Career and Workforce Training, UCN
- Lorie Henderson: Superintendent Educational Services and Programming, School District of Mystery Lake
- Leslie Holowachuk: Academic Advisor: UCN
- Konrad Jonasson: President and Vice Chancellor, UCN
- Charlene Lafreniere: Director of Institutional Advancement, UCN
- Doug Lauvstad: Executive Director, Northern Manitoba Sector Council
- Brian Loewen: Academic Advisor, UCN
- Sharon McKay: Director of Aboriginal Knowledge and Culture, UCN
- Linda Melnick: Dean of Research and Innovation, UCN
- Sandra Muilenburg: Vice President of Finance and Resources, UCN
- Suzie Nemeth: Executive Officer and Advisor to the President, UCN
- Rob Penner: Associate Vice President of College of Trades and Technology, UCN
- Chris Reddy: Vice President of Strategic services and Development: UCN
- Jim Scott: Director of Communications, UCN
- Dan Smith: Vice President Academic and Research, UCN
- Florence Watson: Dean of Student Development and Registrar, UCN
- Lorrie Weldon: Associate Registrar, UCN
- David Williamson: Dean of Education, UCN
- Doris Young: Advisor to the President on Aboriginal Affairs, UCN
- Vicki Zeran: Dean of Health, UCN
- Student Focus Group A, UCN, The Pas
- Student Focus Group B,UCN, The Pas
- Student Focus Group A,UCN, Thompson
- Student Focus Group B,UCN, Thompson

Appendix C

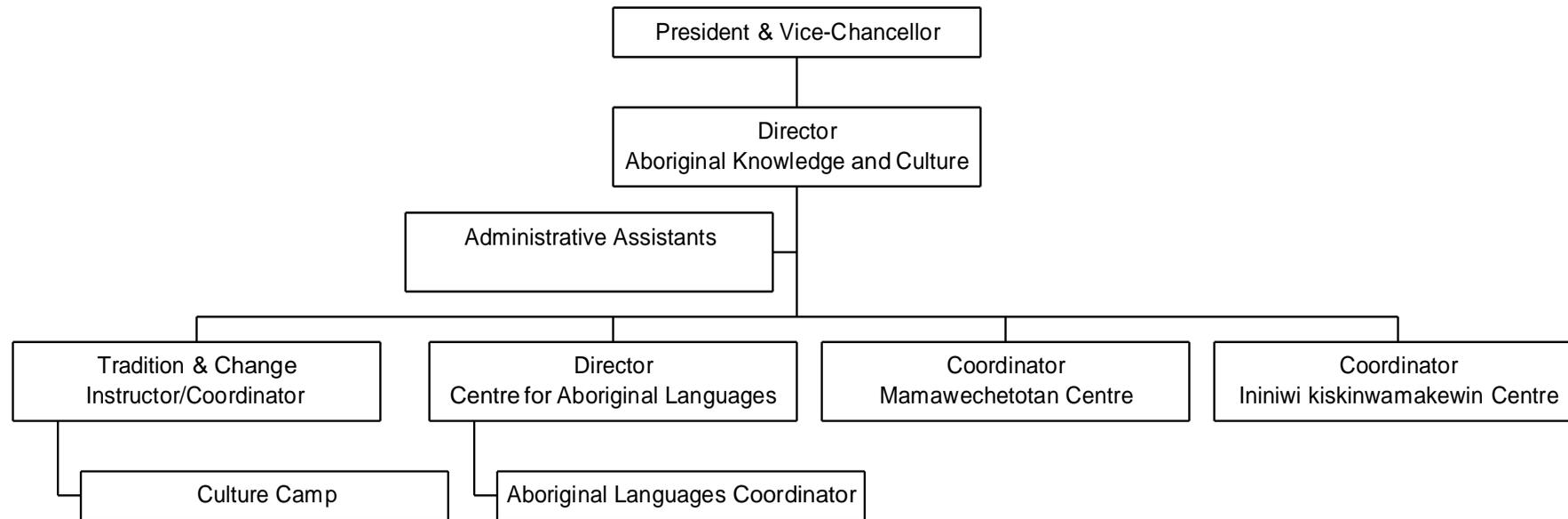
Sources

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- Kiskinohtahiwewin: University College of the North, Strategic Plan 2015 to 2020
- Kiskinohtahiwewin: University College of the North, Cycle 1 Progress Report, July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016
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- Organizational Chart, University College of the North
- Organizational and Operational Review 2004/05 to 2010/11, University College of the North, Dr. Richard Lobdell, June, 2013
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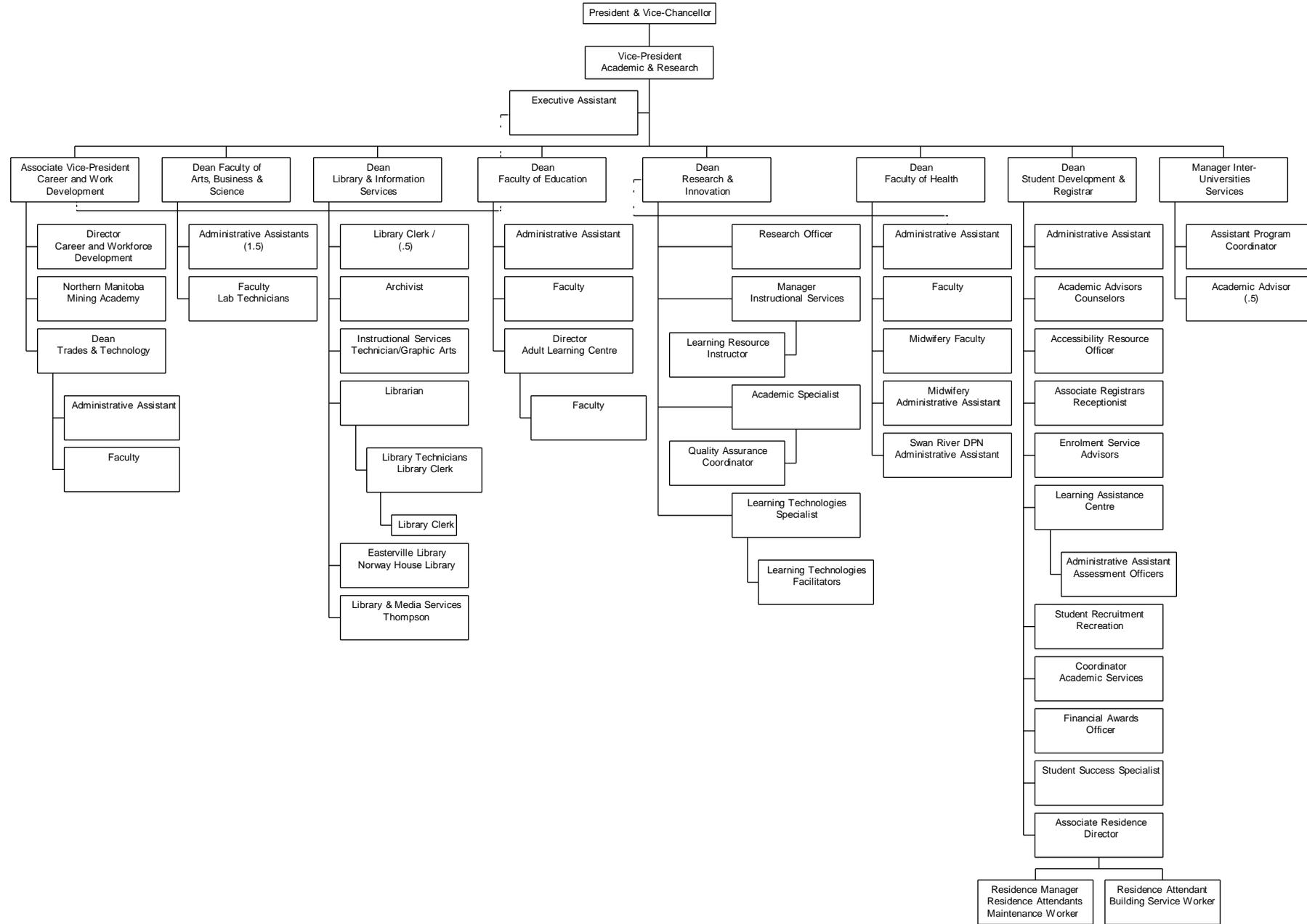
University College of the North
Senior Administration and Office of the President



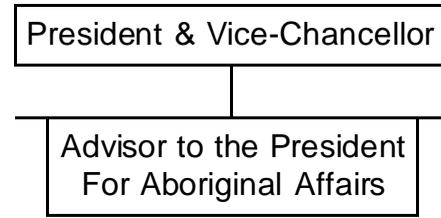
Aboriginal Knowledge and Culture



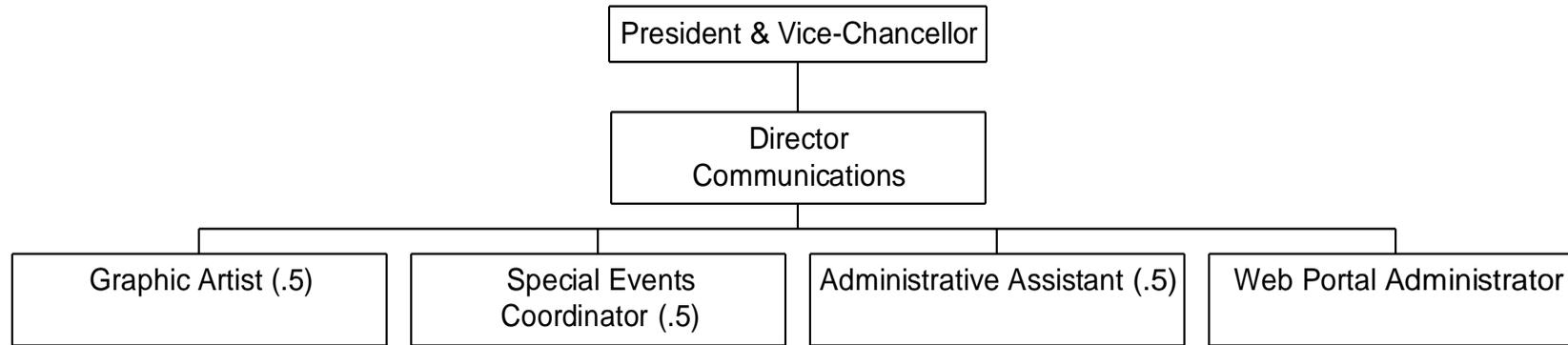
Academic - Deans and Faculty



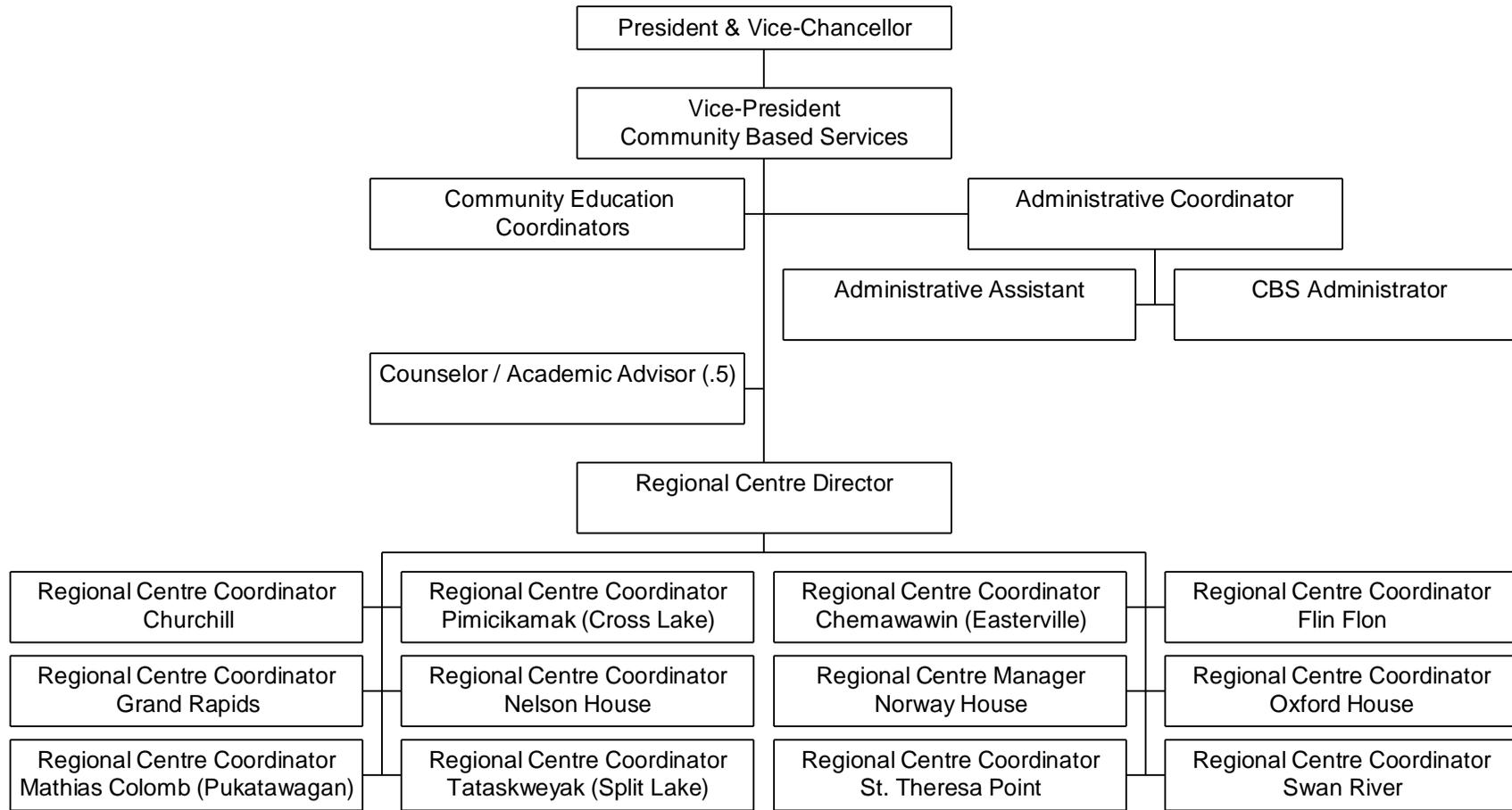
Advisor to the President for Aboriginal Affairs



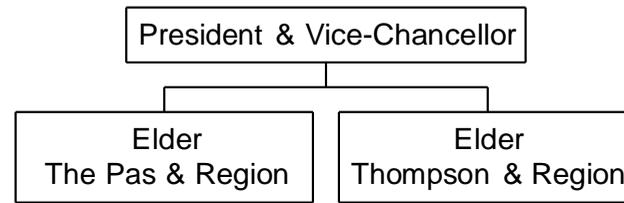
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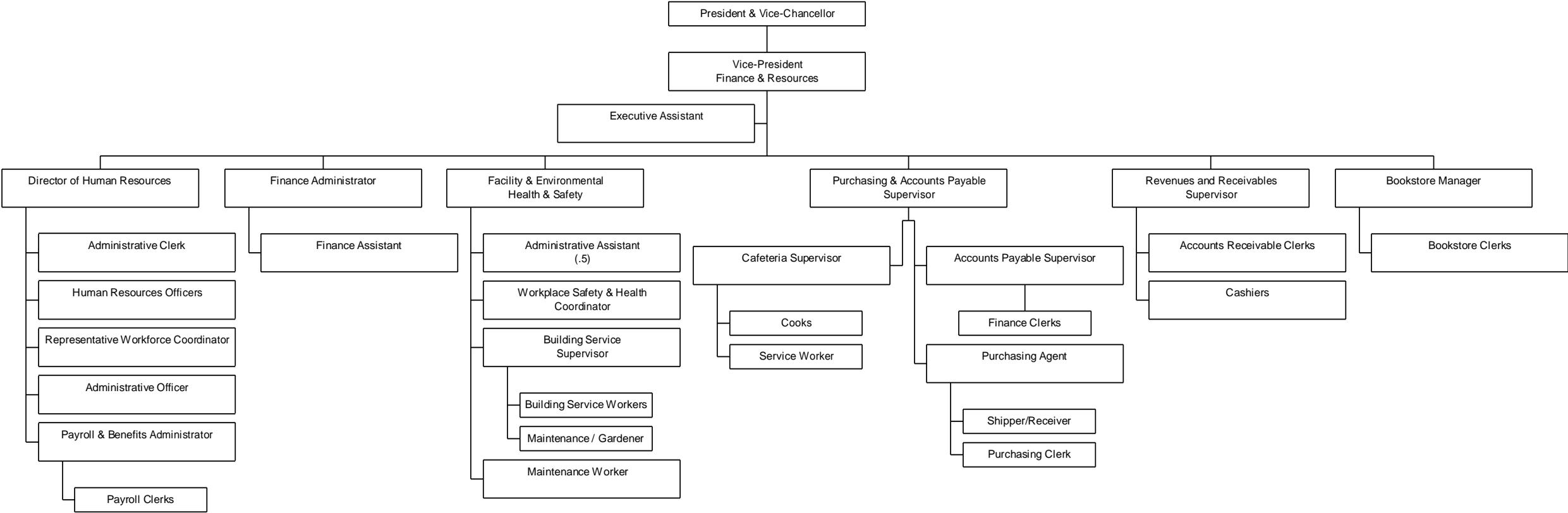
Community-Based Services



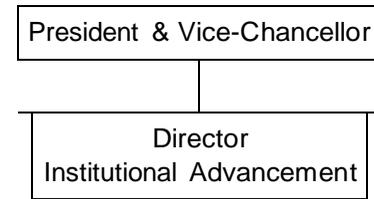
Elders



Finance and Resources



Institutional Advancement



Strategic Services and Development

