

The Comprehensive Administrative Review Update

What is the Comprehensive Administrative Review (CAR)?

In April 2017, the University System of Georgia (USG) announced a [Comprehensive Administrative Review](#) (CAR) of all 26 USG institutions.

This system-wide initiative is focused on improving administration through increased efficiencies, streamlining of processes and maximizing the effectiveness of USG and institutional resources. Ultimately, the CAR is designed to identify and address any challenges to the delivery of a high-quality education in a **cost-effective manner**.

The objectives of the CAR are to:

- identify ways that administrative functions can be conducted more efficiently and effectively;
- enhance support for delivering on the missions of USG institutions;
- achieve opportunities for savings to provide greater affordability and access for students and;
- strengthen the core academic enterprise and support systems that improve student success.

The CAR is expected to assist the USG and the respective 26 institutions by:

- developing model organizational structures and processes that will enhance our ability to deliver on our teaching, research, and service mission;
- developing and implementing 21st century operational models;
- gaining staff input to enhance administrative effectiveness and efficiency at all levels and;
- identifying administrative cost savings that can be redirected to core functions of teaching, research, and service.

Kennesaw State's Involvement

Kennesaw State was among the first institutions in the USG, along with a small cohort of other schools, to participate in the CAR. The largest cohort of schools are in phase two of this process that began in August 2018 and are scheduled to be completed in Spring 2019.

Between January and April 2018, KSU non-teaching, administrative employees provided input to the CAR through a range of mediums. Participation from our staff was high, with 551, or 69%, responding to the Opportunity Identification Survey; 1,694, or 96% of all in-scope employees participating in the Activity Assessment Survey; and 188 employees participating in interviews and focus groups to provide more in-depth insights. These efforts contributed

important perspectives, experiences, and information about their work that have been valuable in providing on the ground insights into the operations of the University.

In the late spring, we received an initial report with the results of the assessment, which indicated practices that are working well and also identified opportunities for KSU to make local improvements.

We are now ready to launch our KSU-specific CAR action planning and implementation process. This presents a tremendous opportunity for us to address administrative and process challenges, and identify ways to improve efficiency.

Report Summary

The report reflects input from more than 2,148 KSU employees who were selected to participate because they have significant administrative responsibilities.

It indicates what is working well and where we have opportunities for improvement. The report is a starting point for a deeper examination of our policies, procedures, and practices in some key focus areas.

What's Working

Passion for students: KSU employees are very passionate about the university and go the extra mile to help support successful outcomes for our students.

Market strength: In benchmarking KSU versus 15 USG-identified peer institutions, KSU has a strong market position based on its admission acceptance and yield rates.

Investing in success: KSU has the second lowest core expenses per student full time equivalent (FTE), while investing more as a percentage of core expenses in institutional support, academic support and student services.

Operational strengths: Input from staff and students indicated that processes within Information Technology, Payroll and Benefits, Student Life and Services, and Safety were all rated as "best in class."

What Needs Focus for Improvement

The report highlights some key areas for improvement. Administrative leadership will focus first on these key areas in the coming months:

Spans of control and organizational layers: Although there is no "right size" that fits all organizations, too many or too few spans of responsibility or layers can affect organizational and operational effectiveness. The report identified this as an area of opportunity for KSU to evaluate the best structure to meet our needs. Administrative leadership are beginning work on this project immediately.

Strategically, we need to understand how to best structure the organization and, once this structure is determined, we can then continue with the Comp and Class project ensuring that we are evaluating roles and responsibilities within the context of our new structure.

Culture and communications: Campus stakeholders, while highly passionate about and committed to KSU, widely reported a sense of fatigue and low engagement due in large measure to consolidation, leadership turnover, and a lack of strategic direction. Additionally, an increase in internal and positive external communications was sighted as a need. The Office for Strategic Communications and Marketing, along with the President and her Cabinet, have made some immediate strides in this area since Dr. Whitten's arrival on campus in July and are building out an even more robust internal and external communications plan for the University.

Operational improvements: While some processes were noted as "best in class," other procedures in Human Resources, Purchasing & Travel, and Space Management were commonly identified as areas in need of improvement. There are projects being identified and worked on in these areas to address these concerns.

In Summary

KSU had strong participation in the CAR process and our team provided honest and very helpful feedback. We are committed to improving our administrative operations with the goal of providing the highest quality education to our students in the most cost-effective manner.

With the report as a guide, the administration has begun to act on the local opportunities identified for KSU. The actionable items are in all areas of the university, and efforts will be focused on enhancing our efficiencies while continuing the commitment to our student's success.

In an effort to keep the campus community informed of the progress on the review, a dedicated web page is being developed to provide updates on these actions. When the web page is completed and activated, notification will be provided to all stakeholders.

Thank you for all of your efforts and for your ongoing commitment to the success of Kennesaw State University.