Introduction
In November 2012, faculty, classified staff, administrators/managers were given a chance to respond to survey questions pertaining to Hartnell’s organizational structure. 112 persons in total responded. The response rate breakdown is as follows: 60 faculty members responded, representing 53.6% of all respondents; 30 members of the classified staff responded, representing 26.8% of all respondents; and 22 administrators/managers responded, representing 19.6% of all respondents.

Three notes of caution pertaining to the responses and response rate: First, the survey summary provided by SurveyMonkey does not disaggregate constituency group responses per question. Therefore, for none of the five survey questions can one determine the response rate percentage pertaining to a particular constituency group (though, concerning some individual responses, one might infer a respondent’s group affiliation).

Second, although the aggregate summary information indicates that there were 114 respondents (112 who answered questions and 2 who skipped questions*), the disaggregation of responses per question presents a more analytically curious story. For example, for the first question—“What are the strengths of the current organizational structure?”—44 out of 114 respondents (38.6%) answered the question. Put differently, well over half of the respondents chose not to answer this question. At first glance, one cannot determine the response rates per group, per question. A disaggregation of data might yield useful information concerning constituency group representation for each survey question response.

Third, when one compares responses to a particular survey question with responses to the other survey questions, one discerns that, for more than one survey question, the same respondent provides similar, if not identical, information. In some cases, the individual herself/himself indicates as much, by offering comments such as “As state[d] previously” or “See second questions [sic] response.” In these cases—and in others, as well—verification of survey submission dates and times confirms the likelihood that the disparate question responses are being offered by the same respondent. In short, what might at first appear to be two distinct respondents’ indicating a recurring or common concern (e.g.) is, instead, one respondent’s repeating her/his perception in more than one survey question area.
Executive Summary

All of the above cautionary notes notwithstanding, two dominant themes emerge from the survey: One, a number of employees express concern about instability at the college. In particular, these employees express concern about what they see as 1) instability marked or caused by unfilled and interim appointments and 2) instability marked or caused by too frequent changes to the college’s organizational structure itself.

The second dominant theme might best be summarized as follows: The college needs more administrators than it currently has, especially at the middle-management level, and, concomitantly, more evenly balanced administrative duties, responsibilities, and areas of oversight than those in effect presently, as well as clearer and more effective reporting lines than those presently in place. Many of those expressing this perception suggest that the college hire more deans and distribute the deans’ responsibilities evenly. Others recommend more faculty quasi-administrative involvement (though these two recommendations are not necessarily mutually exclusive). Epigraphically capturing the sum and substance of this concern—and perhaps fittingly appearing at the end of the survey document itself—one respondent’s comment is stated thus: “[T]here should be an academic representative for each category of disciplines…. If it is deans, then deans. If chairs are the option, then chairs.”
Summary of Survey Question 1: “What are the strengths of the current organizational structure?” (44 out of 114 respondents answered the question; 70 skipped it.)

Several respondents note that personnel are “dedicated,” “caring,” and “committed.” Interestingly—in light of the number of critical comments appearing elsewhere in the survey that pertain to the organizational structure—some respondents suggest that supervisory levels are appropriate and that reporting lines are clear. Representative comments of this sort include the following:

- “Seems most functions of the college are appropriately assigned to VP’s and the right ones are reporting directly to the Supt/Pres.’”;
- “The dean structure is working much better than the pod system. It is easy to identify the appropriate administrator”;
- “There are clear lines of reporting in most areas. Administration is not too heavy and classified staff have more responsible positions than in the past”;
- “Few elements in the structure between faculty and upper administration so more direct interaction”;
- “The roles are well balanced”; and
- “Clearer reporting relationships with stated responsibilities.”

“Some respondents offer critical views. One such view refers to “multiple (failed?) administrative reorganizations in the last 5 years [parenthetical question in the original], and the recent compaction of four dean roles….“ One respondent suggests that there are “too MANY VP [sic] and directors” (caps in the original) and that there are “missing faculty[,] especially in student services” (an apparent allusion to the need for more faculty quasi-administrative involvement). Another respondent remarks on her or his difficulty in commenting on organizational structure strength “because there are too many empty positions or positions in leadership with interim people in them.” Finally, one respondent remarks, simply, “I think that our structure is confusing.”

Summary of Survey Question 2: “What are the weaknesses of the current organizational structure?” (49 out of 114 respondents answered the question; 65 skipped it.)

Many of the comments center on perceived problems related to instability in positions, the frequency of change, and uneven or otherwise problematic divisions of labor. Representative comments are as follows:

- “Rotating administrators and interim Deans”;
- “From an internal viewpoint, the structure changes so frequently, it looks like we don’t have a plan”;
- “Academic affairs [sic] is badly understaffed. There seems to be a lot of confusion about who is in charge of what”;
- “Some of the administrators are overloaded. When all positions are filled, the difficulties should resolve”;
• “The alignment of disciplines into Divisions isn't working”;
• “The distribution of responsibilities for the deans and the disciplines that they oversee is not balanced. In fact, it is grossly skewed. There needs to be a redistribution of responsibilities within the divisions”;
• “Uneven work loads among managers that result in gaps in services. Too many people are serving on [sic] interim appointments”;
• “The structure is not balanced”;
• “While there are five deans indicated on the chart, in reality, two of them are physically remote, and a third is relegated to the management of a small area. The dean structure is too ‘flat’ and does not allow for timely responses. The structure is also unbalanced”;
• “[T]he representation of the instructional side of the college in the administration is very small”;
• “There are not enough administrators to adequately direct, plan, supervise, and communicate between parties. [Rather than needing] more Vice Presidents, the college needs more mid-level managers—deans and directors to work with faculty and classified work groups”;
• “It is unclear who is in charge of many tasks”;
• “There needs [to be] an intermediate between Faculty and Administration, perhaps a chairperson for each department to oversee day to day [sic] matters”;
• “We need to fill the Director of IT vacancies and assistant to the President positions”;
• “Having so many people in interim positions causes uncertainty amongst those they supervise/manage”;
• “Most employees will likely observe that there isn’t a sense of continuity or permanence”;
• “There are no leadership roles between individual faculty and deans who are responsible for many disparate areas. We need to move in the direction of having either department chairs, ‘pod’ leaders, or deans who are focused on one academic division instead of several at once.”

Perhaps the following comment most pithily summarizes a number of the key matters at stake here: “Who is in charge? Who is running things? Why is turnover so high? I miss having deans.”

Several other comments touch upon themes that recur in the survey. For example, there is some concern pertaining to a lack of shared governance. One respondent notes that she/he “feels as if the management and faculty are taking the lead in all decisions.” Elsewhere in the survey, however, respondents are critical of what they see as a lack of administrative involvement in committee work.

Summary of Survey Question 3: “Does the current organizational structure contribute to institutional effectiveness? If yes, provide examples of how it contributes to effectiveness.” (37 out of 114 respondents answered the question; 77 skipped it.)
Of the thirty-seven responses, 13 can be categorized as affirmative or as “qualified affirmative.” Affirmative or qualified affirmative responses include the following examples meant to illustrate the current organizational structure’s contributing to institutional effectiveness:

- “To be effective[,] like functions should be together and I think [that the] org chart does that”;
- “Re-establishing Deans/Directors/Supervisors under VPs allows for greater work flow and increased effectiveness in response time and the processing of paperwork”;
- “[T]he chain of command is clear”;
- “Having Deans for each area is better than having faculty chairs since faculty already have too much on their plates. Also[,] it is good to have someone to report to before reporting to the VP”; and,
- “[E]veryone has clear roles.”

16 of the responses can be categorized as non-affirmative; interestingly, none of the non-affirmative responses appears to be qualified. The following are representative examples purporting to illustrate the current organizational structure’s not contributing to institutional effectiveness:

- “Unfortunately, this year the structure was changed AGAIN [caps in the original] and it became more lean[,] which has placed more responsibilities on the deans[,] thus making it more difficult to be involved in the facilitation of [various important] processes…. There hasn’t been organizational stability here since 2007 or so[,] and[,] without that stability[,] you can almost guarantee that institutional effectiveness is going to be jeopardized”;
- “There are good people trying to hold this place together, but we are burning people out”;  
- “[T]he spareness [sic] of the structure prevents the level of communication and interchange necessary to make good decisions and plan ahead”;
- “With more mid-level managers it could work. As it stands now, no”; and,
- “No, it does not contribute to institutional effectiveness. In fact, it hinders it as it does not allow for the streamlining of activities, efforts and decision-makings [sic].”

At least one response offers what might be considered neither an affirmative nor a non-affirmative view. The respondent offering this view suggests that the current organizational structure is “not hurting institutional effectiveness, but it’s also not contributing to success.” The respondent then offers these explanatory remarks: “The management of faculty has improved with the reinstatement of Deans, but the organization of disciplines does not provide adequate attention to many disciplines.” The latter allegation—concerning the organization of disciplines—represents a recurring focus of responses in the survey at large.
Summary of Survey Question 4: “Does the current organizational structure hinder institutional effectiveness? If yes, provide examples of how it hinders effectiveness.” (40 out of 114 respondents answered the question; 74 skipped it.)

Of the forty responses, 31 can be categorized as affirmative or as “qualified affirmative.” Affirmative or qualified affirmative responses include the following examples meant to illustrate the current organizational structure’s hindering institutional effectiveness:

- “The multiple signature requirements bogs [sic] down the process”;
- “Because the core of the organization keeps changing every year (deans, major departments, etc.)[,] it makes us less effective, I believe”;
- “[W]e do not have enough systems in place to keep things running smoothly…. Somehow we need to decide what is important, stick to it, and not keep putting out fires. I don’t know how to do that when we are spread thin”;
- “[T]he Academic Affairs Org Chart demonstrate[s] that there are six competing areas and does not point to how the core function of student learning is supported by each of the area[s]. The areas appear independent of each other”;
- “[T]here [are] unevenness and gaps…. [Whereas] some areas have lots of directors or managers, they don’t have anywhere near equal responsibilities….”;
- “Our processes are not streamlined in all areas…. You have some employees over loaded [sic] while others are not”;
- “Planning is not evident. For several years, there has not been an institutional researcher…. There is no infrastructure support for the collecting and maintaining of data. There is not a culture of institutional effectiveness at Hartnell”;
- “With two [deans] off site and thus not available, two of them working multiple jobs, and one of them the dean of the specialized Allied Health area, there is very little instructional leadership on key committees related to institutional effectiveness”;
- “[T]here is not enough support at the administrative dean level to support everything that needs to be accomplished”;
- “Lines of communication and supervision are unclear…. [Also, shared governance and Academic Senate standing committees that] I serve on… have administrators assigned, but the administrators never show up. Often they are ‘double booked’ with meetings. Current organizational structure has not allowed for meetings in my department”;
- “The supervisors above the academic units have way too much to do to be effective”; and,
- “Having one person oversee many departments means we are relying on administrative assistants to run things. There is less oversight. We don’t have a clear chain of command.”
Additionally noteworthy comments address perceived problems concerning communication, as well as problems pertaining to a backlog of part-time faculty evaluations and to perceived employee stress.

Only three responses were non-affirmative. Only two of these responses provide corresponding illustrations of evidence; both are brief, and neither is altogether clear:

- “Helps disperse responsibilities; team-oriented”; and,
- “[I]t will work if we follow the design[.]”

One other comment is worth noting: “Without support and guidance, departments suffer academically[,] and the faculty of these departments are always adjusting to a new individual vision.” This comment seems to allude to the perceived problem of the college’s instability that is caused by, as the respondent notes elsewhere, “[r]otating administrators and interim Deans” (see the first bullet point for Q2).

Summary of Survey Question 5: “How might a different organizational structure eliminate or improve on weaknesses in the current one?” (40 out of 114 respondents answered the question; 74 skipped it.)

A number of the comments in this section reiterate recurring themes in the survey responses as a whole. For example:

- “[A] Dean of Math, Science, [&] Engineering should be created and spun off of the Dean of Instruction/Accreditation/Liaison”;
- “We…need a research office…. [Also,] [w]e have had too much in the way of interim positions over the last two plus years”;
- “We need more deans”;
- “Some people seem to be doing more than one job. Advertise for positions to be filled, i.e. [e.g.?], VP of Academic Affairs”;
- “Clear delineation of responsibilities”;
- “A clearer organizational structure, one with deans and directors in place, would provide for a more efficient and effective operation and instill more confidence in all employees, and result in better service to students and the larger community…. [Additionally,] [m]id-level managers would not only attend meetings[,] but [also] encourage and allow classified employees the opportunity to serve the college through participation in shared governance”;
- “Greater participation is needed. A larger body needs to be formed. Rac needs to be restructured”;
- “Develop a relational structure that would show the functional dependencies and relationships of the critical areas of the College—Academic Services, Academic Support Services and Institutional Support Services—as they support the core function of the College, that is[,] student learning and success. Consolidate deans [sic] responsibilities
and then create the equivalent of the assistant dean positions to monitor and evaluate faculty”;

- “The only way that we can function well without [having] more academic deans seems to be to have faculty taking on a leadership/evaluative role that is commonly done with academic chairs”;
- “[W]e should consider designating department chairs”;
- “More deans, with fewer areas”;
- “[T]here should be an academic representative for each category of disciplines…”;
- “For academic purposes, a structure that provided for deans of the major areas…provided a more responsive structure for faculty and staff (and, therefore, students)…. We have had turnover in virtually all management positions in the last five years. As a result, we are unstable and are limited in leaders who have institutional history…. Furthermore, filling positions on an interim basis contributes to a lack of permanence and commitment”;
- “The organizational structure should reflect the priorities of the institution…. A more evenly distributed structure would enable the college to efficiently use resources, yet still get work done in key areas…. [Also,] the instructional deans’ responsibilities are unevenly distributed”;
- “Hartnell College does not need a top[-]heavy Administration”; and
- “Having deans would allow departments to know who is in charge and be confident that someone is overseeing how things are run…. Too few people are running too many departments. It’s chaotic.”

Several respondents also comment on the need for improved communication, and several indicate a need for stability pertaining to restructuring and reorganizing per se. Concerning the latter issue, the following responses are pertinent:

- “Create at least a core organizational structure that isn’t going to change (as other colleges do) to keep at least some consistency; and,
- “[W]e need to stabilize the structure long enough to know what works and what does not. With a stable structure, we will be able to develop procedures and communication channels that are more efficient and effective.”

*In the aggregate, the survey summary notes that 112 respondents “answered question” [sic] and that 2 “skipped question” [sic]. For each question, the sum total of responses is 114: e.g., 44 respondents are reported to have answered question #1, and 70 are reported to have skipped the question. The sum total of responses for each of the other questions is also 114.

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