

## NOTES

University of Miami – UCEDD Strategic Planning Retreat – October 12, 2013

### ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Facilitator: Dan Bier

**Why is organizational structure important?** The discussion began by asking everyone to consider why organizational structure is important, and what they want out of the organizational structure. In their summary of replies, participants stated that a good organizational structure can:

- ✓ Assist everyone (internally and externally) to understand how the Center is organized, and where programs and people fit in.
- ✓ Provide clarity and understanding of the up and down of the organization; where things fit in and how it works.
- ✓ Foster effective communications to assist with the operations of the Center, at multiple levels.

#### **Discussion on how participants understand the Center's organizational structure and questions they have.**

1. Everyone is impressed and proud of the type and range of work that is carried on within and by the Mailman Center. They feel good about being a part of a Center that is doing that work. But they are also frustrated with some things.
2. More than a couple of participants stated that they did not know how the Center works internally. If and when they have a question, issue or idea, they don't know where to take it to have addressed. For example, one individual in an academic department was attempting to explore if/how a clinical training experience could be created at the Center. But that person could not figure out who to talk with and/or what they could/should do to make that happen. They ultimately gave up on that effort and went to Miami Children's Hospital, where an opportunity was created. While their immediate need was met at Miami Children's, they are still left not knowing where to go with other ideas/needs because their preference is to work with the Mailman Center.
3. There seems to be a relatively good understanding of what participants see when they are shown an organizational chart of the Mailman Center and hear the Director describe work in the Center. But because the Mailman Center is a component within the Department of Pediatrics, it is not clear to them what elements of the Mailman Center are viewed as its own and under the control/responsibility of the Mailman Center. What is the Mailman Center within the Department of Pediatrics? Is it an organizational entity with its own structure, controls and responsibilities? Or is it merely a combination of grants, programs and collaborations grouped within the Mailman Center, functioning on their own, but also dependent upon the powers that be in the Department of Pediatrics?
4. Everyone recognizes that there is high value to having the Mailman Center within the Department of Pediatrics. But where does the Mailman Center fit into the Department of Pediatrics, and where do the various programs fit within the Mailman Center in terms of mission, identity and vision? People are proud of their work and the work of others. But those same people want to be part of a greater identity and vision, and they are not sure if they are. What is the individual and shared identity? What is the short and long term vision? Where is my place, so I feel less isolation?

#### **What problems do participants see with the current structure?**

The structure is not facilitating effective and ongoing communications, at multiple levels. There was no feeling expressed that that was intentional. It was a constructive appeal to improve communications. Help us to talk, think and work in new ways.

If a family or outside provider wants to access clinical services, what do I tell them to do to access those services?

There is an extreme shortage of administrative support/clerical staff, to the point that it makes working and doing some practical administrative support things a problem. Some of those tasks are significantly delayed, and/or not done as well because they are rushed because of fewer support staff.

There is serious dysfunction in business operations, including billings.

The physical structure of the building makes it difficult to foster the types of exchanges that are desired. It would be very helpful if the building had capacity for use of distance education technologies.

It's about transformation of an organization. We've been through a lot of difficult things and we can't just ignore all that has happened. But it's also helpful to know that disequilibrium can also be viewed and taken advantage of as the force that helps us move in the directions we should move into.

### **What recommendations/suggestions do participants have related to organizational structure?**

We recognize and accept that change is necessary, but as we move forward and find the need to enter into new "business practices," don't go too far with that. We are an academic center, for all of what that means in terms of research, training, service and outreach. We must hold to that, yet find new ways to do so.

The Mailman Center should be an active verb, rather than a passive noun. Let's be on the cutting edge and be the leaders we are, the leaders we want to be, and the leaders others want us to be.

Help us get to know more about what everyone is doing in the Center. Consider an "internal rounds" where there are presentations by internal faculty and staff and consumers who review their services and have open discussion.

Connections with community are very important and they relate to our structure because community agencies and people are part of our structure and fabric. Review each of our community connections and assess how each is going. Maintain and support what is working well, and explore ways to connect to the community in new ways.

We can exercise better judgment and do our part, if we are helped to understand the structure and how things work.

Create a way for anyone within the Center to offer a suggestion or "wish-list" of things they would like considered.

Use the website more to be the mechanism to organize and share information.

There was discussion about the need to flatten the current organizational structure. Less silos. But there was also discussion that the Center needs to maintain its capability to think and work in silo/disciplinary ways. Is there a way to create a new structure that accommodates all the ways that we need and want to work? For example, organize by outcomes, populations, conditions, area of emphasis. Can we adapt matrix models that have been used in high tech companies that foster intersections of disciplines, programs, functions, people, etc.

With regard to organizing by areas of emphasis, Dan explained that if you looked at the Waisman UCEDD organizational chart, you would see that it is organized by units (Health, Early Childhood & Education, and Community Inclusion). But in addition to that, the UCEDD frames and presents its work along Areas of Emphasis, which has helped them think about how various work in the UCEDD is integrated. The Waisman Center UCEDD describes a UCEDD Area of Emphasis as... a programmatic area of focus... that is related to the mission of the UCEDD (to support inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life) ... and encompasses a range of activity across the UCEDD core functions of research, training and service. The UCEDD organized around Areas of Emphasis to:

- Identify the broad and major programmatic areas of the UCEDD.
- Describe the challenges and opportunities that the UCEDD confronts within each area of emphasis.
- Briefly explain active UCEDD initiatives within the area, and identify staff and faculty who are involved with that work.
- Assist to organize key information and resources so that it can be more easily accessible to others interested in such information. (Information is organized by the various programs and individuals working in specialty areas, and access to the information is promoted in cooperation with the Waisman Resource Center.)
- Promote opportunities for individuals working within an area of emphasis to talk with one another in order to learn about their work, and to consider if and how they might work more closely together.

*djb: 10/16/13*