

**Use of a Committee/Team Establishment Form for Efficiencies in
Campus Teams**

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Abstract

In any institution dedicated to shared governance, collaborative processes, and participatory decision making, there is a need to form committees and teams. But, committees take time and, in this fast-paced 21st century world, our organizations need to react quickly and be efficient.

Teams and committees are most productive when they are well defined and focused. Whether these groups will be ongoing or short-term in nature there is a need to clearly define the parameters and expectations of the team. In particular, the following must be defined before the committee commences their work:

- Defining the purpose or charge
- Establishing clear goals and objectives
- Determining roles of members such as who will be the leader or chair, recorder, and/or facilitator
- Identifying consultants and/or resource people
- Specifying what training or resource information is available
- Outlining what method of communication will be used
- Identifying the timeframe necessary for the group to complete its work

The answers to these questions, if not clearly defined up front, can cause a team to fail to produce the desired results, or could waste the time and talents of its members.

The solution the UW-Stout campus used to focus teams was to create and use a committee/team establishment form. The form, after being completed by the team sponsor and receiving institutional validation, is shared with the team members as well as the campus so that everyone understands the parameters prior to the first meeting of the group.

There are no significant costs or budget ramifications other than printing costs and that can be minimized by sharing the form electronically. Implementation of this concept is simply a matter of the administration communicating to persons forming teams that the completed committee/team establishment form will be the formal method of establishing a university committee or team.

The primary benefit to using the committee/team establishment form is that teams and committees will be more focused and have a better likelihood of accomplishing its goals within the established timelines, with each member feeling that their time and talents were used more productively and effectively.

Additional benefits of more productive teams are faster and more responsive decision making, cost savings, improved employee morale, and increased customer satisfaction. In addition, when the committee/team establishment form is included in the final report of the group, it provides important documentation about the charge, team membership and responsibilities for future reference. Having a more formal method to establish committees and work groups allows for proactive recognition of their work and accomplishments.

Introduction of the Organization

The University of Wisconsin-Stout is one of 13 four-year campuses and 13 two-year campuses in the University of Wisconsin System. The UW System designates UW-Stout as a special mission institution, forged from the heritage of its founder, Senator James Huff Stout, a Wisconsin Industrialist. Stout believed that people needed advanced education to prepare them for America's developing industrial society.

To implement this vision, Mr. Stout founded a private institution called the Stout Manual Training School in 1891. In 1911, the training school became a public institution named Stout Institute and received teacher-training accreditation in 1928 with programs centered on industrial arts and home economics. In 1932, Stout was accredited as a college and received Master's degree accreditation in 1948. The campus became Stout State College in 1955 and Stout State University in 1964. In 1971, UW-Stout became part of the UW System when a State of Wisconsin law combined its two public university systems under one Board of Regents.

Now, 116 years since it was founded, UW-Stout's 8,200 students attend the School of Education or one of three colleges: College of Arts and Sciences (CAS); College of Human Development (CHD); or College of Technology, Engineering and Management (CTEM). UW-Stout is led by the Chancellor, Charles W. Sorensen, the sixth person to head this institution. The UW-Stout campus is located in Menomonie, Wisconsin, a city of approximately 15,000 persons. The campus is 70 miles east of Minneapolis and 30 miles west of Eau Claire.

The campus vision statement states, "*UW-Stout, a respected innovator in higher education, educates students to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens in a diverse and changing world through experiences inside and outside the classroom that join the general and*

the specialized, the theoretical and the practical, in applied programs leading to successful careers in industry, commerce, education, and human services."

UW-Stout is no stranger to quality and innovation as demonstrated by the university being named as the very first recipient of the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in the higher education category. In presenting the award, Commerce Secretary Don Evans commented, *"Through their passion for excellence and their commitment to employees, customers, students, stakeholders and their communities, they have achieved extraordinary results. They represent the proud spirit of America and our strong resolve to excel."* UW–Stout has since worked with foreign and domestic educational institutions, sharing information and assisting schools that are interested in quality improvement through the application of the Baldrige criteria.

Statement of the Problem/Initiative

In any institution dedicated to shared governance, collaborative processes, and participatory decision making, there is a need to form committees and teams. But, committees take time and, in this fast-paced 21st century world, our organizations need to react quickly and be efficient.

The challenge then, is to identify a mechanism to allow for both collaborative, participatory decision making as well as quick and efficient response time. There are many benefits to the use of these work groups if they are well defined and focused. Whether these groups will be ongoing or short-term in nature there is a need to clearly define the parameters and expectations of the team. In particular, the following must be defined before the committee commences their work:

- Defining the purpose or charge
- Establishing clear goals and objectives
- Determining roles of members such as who will be the leader or chair, recorder, and/or facilitator
- Identifying consultants and/or resource people
- Specifying what training or resource information is available
- Outlining what method of communication will be used
- Identifying the timeframe necessary for the group to complete its work

The answers to these questions, if not clearly defined up front, can cause a team to fail to produce the desired results, or could waste the time and talents of its members.

What is needed is a template to better define and focus our teams. In this case, the solution for the UW-Stout was simple - to create and use a committee/team establishment form. The form (see appendix for examples), after being completed by the team sponsor and receiving institutional validation, is shared with the team members as well as the campus so that everyone understands the parameters prior to the first meeting of the group.

Design

The concept of using a committee/team establishment form began in the University Centers department on campus. University Centers at UW-Stout is comprised of departmental operations ranging from those focusing on budget and general administration, to campus recreation, to student involvement and leadership opportunities, to direct service offerings for their customers. University Centers departmental units oversee operations in three campus buildings – the Memorial Student Center, Merle Price Commons, and the Sports and Fitness

Center. Taken as a whole, this diverse operation shares a mission of offering ..."*welcoming gathering places whose employees are dedicated to enhancing life, leadership and learning.*"

Upon realizing the benefits of using the form, the use of the form quickly spread in the Student Life Services unit and then to the university as a whole. The Student Life Services unit (commonly referred to as Auxiliary Services on many campuses) consists of Student Life Services Administration (Budget, Facilities Management, and Technology), Campus Card, Recreation/Athletic Complex, Security, Police, & Parking Services, Student Health Services, University Centers (Conference & Reservations, General Operations, Involvement & Leadership, and University Recreation), University Dining Service, and University Housing.

The only design task for a university wishing to create their own committee/team establishment form tool would be to create the form itself with the categories necessary on their campus. The attached template could be used as a starting point for other institutions. There are no significant costs or budget ramifications other than printing costs and that can be minimized by sharing the form electronically.

Implementation

Implementation of this concept is simply a matter of the administration communicating to persons forming teams that the completed committee/team establishment form will be the formal method of establishing a university committee or team. Examples of committees and team that would use this form would be:

- Standing committees
- Advisory boards
- Project/initiative specific committees

- Short-term task forces

The template could be completed by the team sponsor or be assigned to be filled out by the team leader.

Benefits

The primary benefit to using the committee/team establishment form is that teams and committees will be more focused and have a better likelihood of accomplishing its goals within the established timelines, with each member feeling that their time and talents were used more productively and effectively.

Additional benefits of more productive teams are faster and more responsive decision making, cost savings, improved employee morale, and increased customer satisfaction. In addition, when the committee/team establishment form is included in the final report of the group, it provides important documentation about the charge, team membership and responsibilities for future reference. Having a more formal method to establish committees and work groups allows for proactive recognition of their work and accomplishments.

Retrospect

Not applicable.

Appendix

The following documents include a blank and example of a completed committee/team establishment form.

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STOUT
ADMINISTRATIVE & STUDENT LIFE SERVICES
COMMITTEE/TEAM ESTABLISHMENT FORM**

Committee/ Team Name:	
Sponsor:	
Purpose/Charge:	
Goals/Objectives:	
Chairperson/Leader:	
Recorder:	
Membership:	
Consultants/ Resource People:	
Training/Information Needed:	
Method of Communication:	
Timeline:	

Last Revision:

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STOUT
ADMINISTRATIVE & STUDENT LIFE SERVICES
COMMITTEE/TEAM ESTABLISHMENT FORM**

Committee/ Team Name:	North Campus Master Planning Committee
Sponsor:	Bob Johnson, Executive Director of Student Life Services
Purpose/Charge:	Provide direction, input, and recommendations for the development of a north campus master plan.
Goals/Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provide input to the consulting firm contracted to develop a master plan for the north campus facilities. ❖ Assist with the development, implementation, and interpretation of needs assessments. ❖ Establish criteria for physical facilities as well as the living/learning community environment to be created. ❖ Assist with the development of a program statement to be submitted to the campus and to the UW System Administration for approval. ❖ Recommend a new name (identity) for the north campus that reflects its character and creates a positive image for students, prospective students, parents, faculty, staff, and the community.
Chairperson/Leader:	Dennis Shaw, Assistant to the Executive Director of Student Life Services
Recorder:	Program Assistant, Housing & Residence Life/Student Life Services
Membership:	Director of Housing & Residence Life Representative from University Dining Services Representative from Parking Representative from University Recreation Representative from the Student Health Center 1 Hall Director Representative from Academic and Student Affairs Representative from Administrative and Student Life Services IRHC President 1 IRHC representative 1 SSA representative Campus Planner (ex-officio)
Consultants/ Resource People:	Executive Director, Student Life Services Director, Student Life Services Facilities Associate Director of Housing & Residence Life Assistant Director of Housing & Residence Life Director, Physical Plant Associate Director, Physical Plant State Division of Facilities Development
Training/Information Needed:	Agreed upon ground rules; past JTC Committee information; hall floor plans; north campus grounds layout; previous drafts of possible configurations; information/ articles/studies done on future housing, dining, parking, recreation, and student health facilities
Method of Communication:	Minutes, Email, proposals to be shared with committee and sponsor
Timeline:	To be determined by DFD's timetable for the consulting firm to complete its work.