What Is Strategic Consulting?

We are the University of Washington’s management consulting team: a small group of experienced consultants, skilled analysts, and certified Lean coaches who support the University’s schools, colleges, and central administration with strategic planning, change management, continuous process improvement, organizational design, program evaluation, and business plan development.

Independent from the units we serve, we bring a neutral and holistic view to our work; embedded within the University, we know its history, structures, and systems, and have a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities it faces.

Leadership: LuAnn Stokke, Associate Vice President

Vision: Strategic Consulting is the UW’s internal systems leader for managing change. A continuous resource, we address root causes, help units adapt to complexity, and produce collective impact.

Mission: We strengthen central administration and the academy by delivering measurable change and developing a culture of continuous improvement to enable a fiscally sustainable UW.

Trends

Strategic Consulting’s two functional areas (Consulting Services and the Lean Team) were created in response to the financial crisis of 2008-2009, as the University had to grapple with budget cuts and layoffs and a need to perform more with fewer resources.

A decade later, both the academy and central administration continue to operate with constrained funding and staffing levels. They face increased staff turnover and an increasingly challenging University infrastructure, and respond by centralizing or sharing services, combining/reorganizing legacy departments, and creating more focused operational plans and efficient processes.

Strategic Consulting provides leadership and expertise in all of these areas to client units across the University – in schools and colleges, central administration, and the clinical enterprise. Demand for this support has increased in recent years, and Strategic Consulting supports the University at client request.
Current Major Initiatives:

1. **2019 TAP Central Administrative Unit Customer Service Survey.** Follow on the success of 2017 TAP survey by managing design and delivery of 2019 iteration; coordinate 100+ services across 24+ units and collect feedback from 70,000+ potential respondents; gather feedback that informs improvement efforts of individual units at all three campuses.

2. **School and College Organizational Design.** Support deans in design and development of new departmental structures based on need; consolidation of three academic departments to two in School of Nursing, staff reduction in Evans School of Public Policy & Governance’s Finance & Administration business unit; lean room scheduling improvement for the Foster School of Business.

3. **Academic Center Strategic Planning.** Staffing needs assessment to support long-term growth of #5 ranked Heath Science’s Program in Neuroscience into a nationally recognized research center; strategic planning to support the College of Arts & Science’s Center for Studies in Demography & Ecology in developing fee-based consulting services; facilitate strategic planning process for the College of Engineering’s Department of Human Centered Design & Engineering to address emerging challenges of the 21st century.

4. **Student Life Organizational Alignment.** Assess 10+ year-old organizational structure in the Division of Student Life to determine fit with the division’s current mission. If the current structure is not optimal, develop recommendations for an alternate structure that will better meet the needs of the division and University.

Three important things to know about Strategic Consulting:

1. Our unit was launched in 2010 as the Organizational Effectiveness Initiative, under the direction of the provost.

2. In 2017, the provost’s Organizational Excellence unit and Finance & Facilities’ (F2) Lean Team united as a single management consultant group, under the EVP for Finance & Administration, to leverage our combined expertise.

3. Strategic Consulting supports University initiatives and school-wide changes as well as individual, department-driven improvement opportunities.

Additional information: fa.uw.edu/sc/home