



A Commitment to Service

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Many of our professional staff divisions recently have distributed their 2012-2013 annual reports. One comes away with a couple of strong impressions after reading the reports—the School's work is supported at a very high level, and our staff is tireless in looking for ways to support us better and more efficiently. Continuous improvement is the order of the day.

Let me share a few examples, and these are just a sample of the good work happening in all of our staff divisions.



The **Facilities and Distribution Services Division** not only converted student work spaces into four new faculty offices, but it completed the projects for 60% of the original estimated cost by carefully selecting the contractors and doing the design work in house. The Division also recycled substantially more material than in previous years by hiring a work-study student to be the School's first recycling coordinator. One of my favorite examples of cost savings is the decision to provide ink pens with refillable ink cartridges rather than ordering entirely new pens when they run out of ink. I don't know how much money it will save over time, but it represents a commitment to efficiency that leaves no stone unturned.



Last year was full of internal changes for the **Human Resources Division**—Maggie Ford and Anna Terry retired and passed the baton to Maura Murphy and Cat Vorick. They didn't miss a beat and their focus on improvement is impressive. The Division surveyed new employees about their orientation experience and is in the process of making changes based on their feedback. Looking to the future, the Division plans to analyze the School and its structure to help assess if we are organized as effectively as possible, and it is committed to supporting the ongoing professional development of our staff. It is great to have an HR team that is focused broadly on supporting our work rather than narrowly on compliance with rules and regulations.

The **Business and Finance Division** continues to do an excellent job of managing the School's money. NetSuite is our business software system and it has never generated good information for operational decisions. Rather than accept its apparent limitations, the Division worked with the IT Division to transfer a technical position that can provide dedicated support for all NetSuite users. Brad Bednar was hired and he has significantly improved our ability to generate useful information from NetSuite. We can more easily track gains and losses from our courses, for example, and Brad is working across the School to provide more people with helpful data from NetSuite. The



Division also has worked aggressively to reduce outstanding accounts receivable balances—a recognition that we need to collect as much revenue as possible.

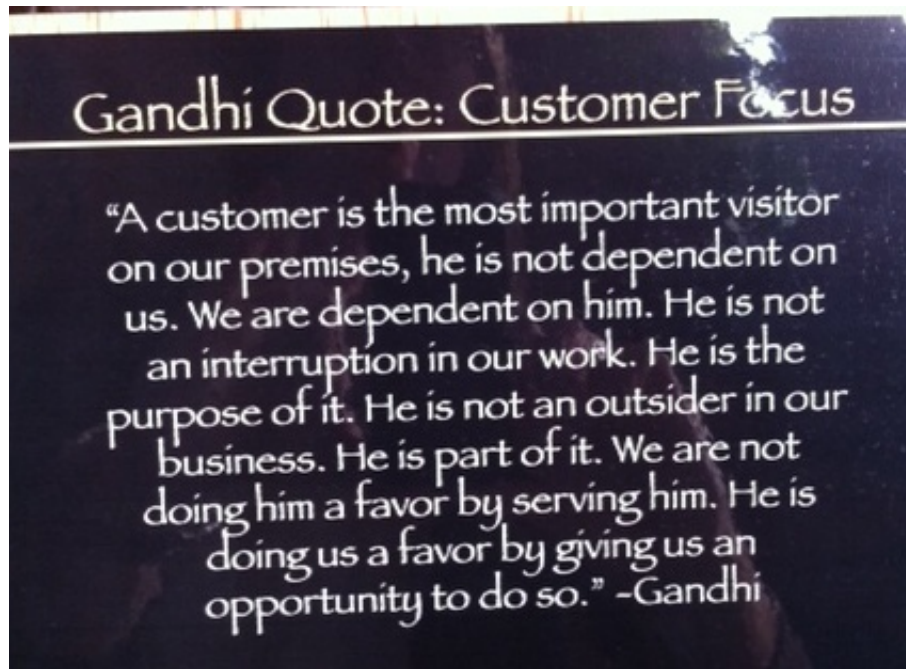


The **Publications Division** exemplifies the philosophy of our professional staff with its goal of “[g]uaranteeing that you receive excellent service during your visit” The Division values flexibility and adapts its processes according to the needs of each project—a standard process is used where it makes sense, but the operation is not necessarily one-size-fits-all. For example, it compressed the process to produce a book for Jamie Markham so that it would be available when a new law became effective and to meet grant deadlines. The result was a publication that was on time, under budget, and high quality. The Division also has transformed our printing by contracting with FedEx Office for many of our printing needs—we are saving money, getting more service, and using fewer School resources, including much-needed space. In addition, the Division has introduced a new service for faculty members—reviewing manuscripts written for academic journals. It realized that offering this service might help faculty get more scholarship published, and so they standardized and promoted it.

The **Program Management Division** played a central role this past year in creating new standard course evaluations and a new process for collecting and compiling feedback from course participants. A standard evaluation form now has been implemented that will give us more consistent and better information. The Division also has encouraged program managers to work on their ongoing professional development and skill building—most are certified or working on their



certification as Certified Government Meeting Professionals. Looking forward, the Division also is working with other divisions to explore greater advanced scheduling of courses as a way to benefit our clients and help the School. All of these efforts are focused on providing the highest possible level of service.



Like all of the other support divisions, **Registration and Support Services** has focused on continuous improvement. I love that we have implemented electronic parking permits for clients attending School courses and meetings (thanks to Brad Volk for helping with this). Our clients have expressed appreciation for not having to retrieve a permit at the reception desk and then return to the parking lot, especially in bad weather. The Division also worked closely with the IT Division to create a new event scheduling system that is better and less expensive. After learning that faculty members had asked for help in updating website content in response to a survey about research assistance, the Division expanded its program support services to offer this kind of administrative assistance.

I know from my direct experience that all of our divisions are deeply committed to improving our effectiveness and reducing costs whenever possible. They are responsive and supportive. I've only mentioned those who have recently submitted annual reports—I apologize if one has slipped through the cracks. The other divisions (Development, Contracts and Grants Administration, IT, Library, Marketing and Communications, and the Legislative Reporting Service) have the same commitment to excellence and improvement. The School is fortunate to have an excellent team of division managers, who as leaders communicate and collaborate effectively with one another to advance our mission.



Katrina Hunt's report for the Publications Division includes two quotes that reflect the attitude of our professional staff across all of the support divisions. From Mahatma Gandhi: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." And from Walt Disney: "Do what you do so well th at they will want to see it again and bring their friends." Those quotes pretty much sum up the culture of the School and everything we do—staff and faculty—and they go far in explaining our close partnership with public officials across North Carolina.



"Do what you
do so well,
that people
can't resist
telling others
about you."

- Walt Disney