



# Anticipating Change in Higher Education

Shared Services as a Strategic Tool



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[huronconsultinggroup.com](https://huronconsultinggroup.com)

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- Worked in higher education for 25 years
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Why are we  
here?

# The Future Isn't What It Used to Be



## Economic Pressures

- Uncertainty of state support
- Inflation volatility
- Demographic pressures on enrollment



## Changing Nature of Work

- Virtual/hybrid work
- Technology enablement by AI
- Rapid change in context processes, and technology



## Shifts in the Workforce

- Competition for talent
- Workforce mobility
- Breadth of expectations in a diverse, inter-generational workforce



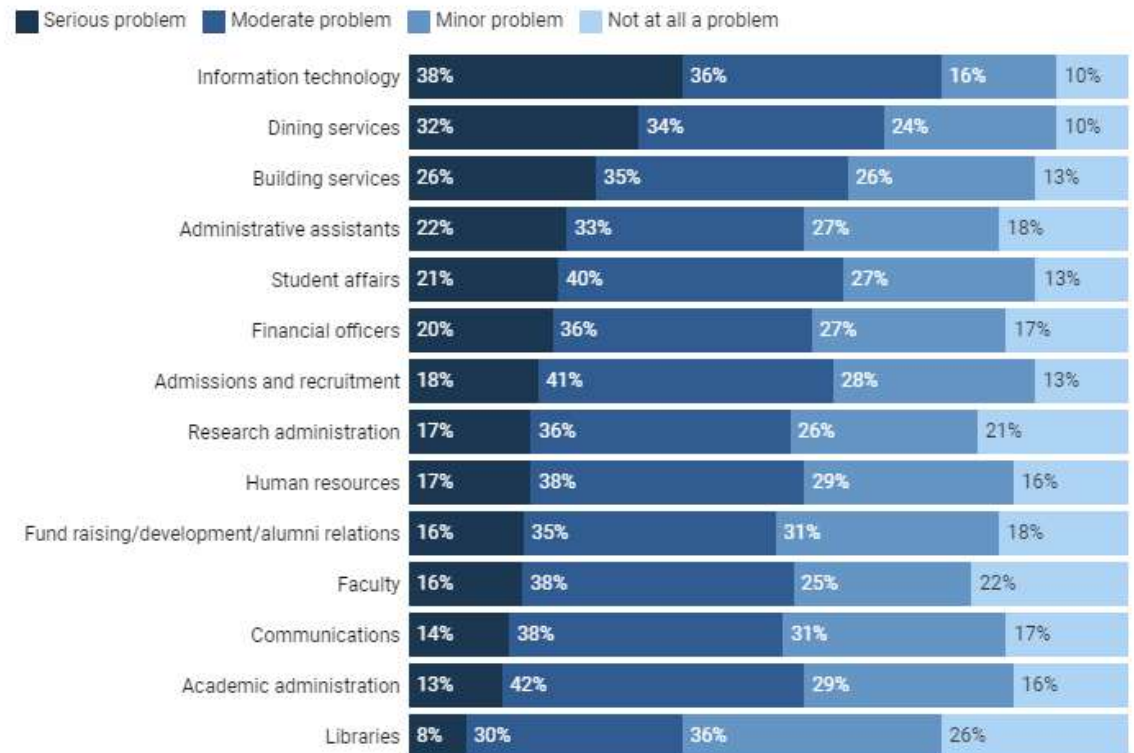
## Organizational Challenges

- Leadership turnover
- Change fatigue
- Eroding employment value proposition for higher

# The Talent Challenge Persists

- Serious or moderate problems in hiring persist or have gotten worse across the range of core support functions.
- The causes of the problem may vary for different functions.
- **Many institutions report that their competitive landscape has changed.**

Q: Compared with 2022, how problematic has it been to hire employees in the following areas during January, February, and March of 2023?



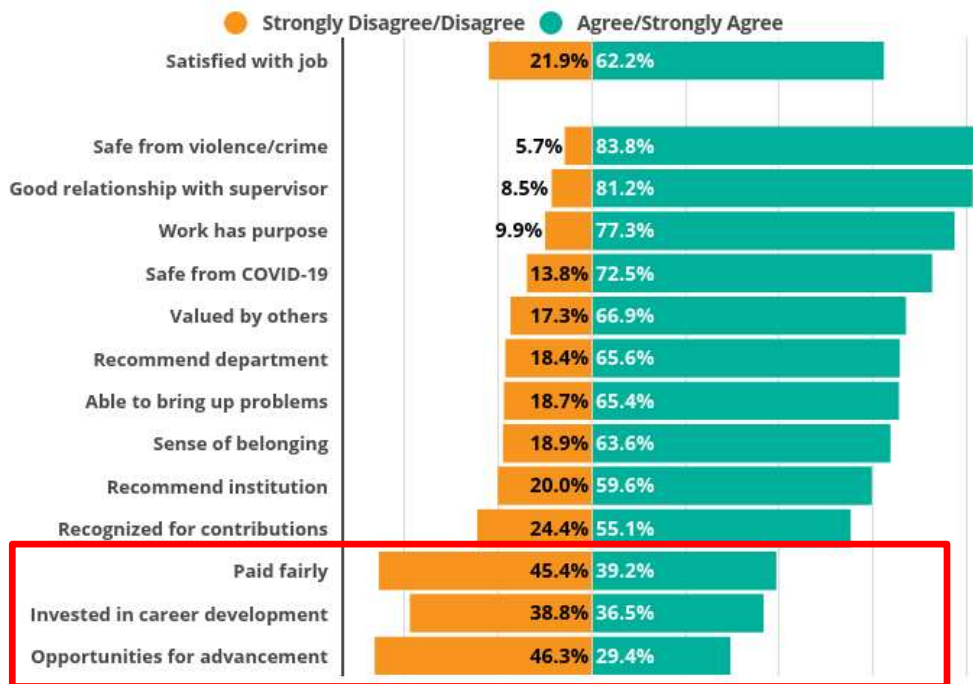
*Higher Ed's Hiring Challenges Are Getting Worse ([chronicle.com](https://www.chronicle.com))*



# Investing in Our Workforce

2022 EMPLOYEE RETENTION SURVEY

## Satisfaction With the Higher Ed Work Environment



© College and University Professional Association for Human Resources



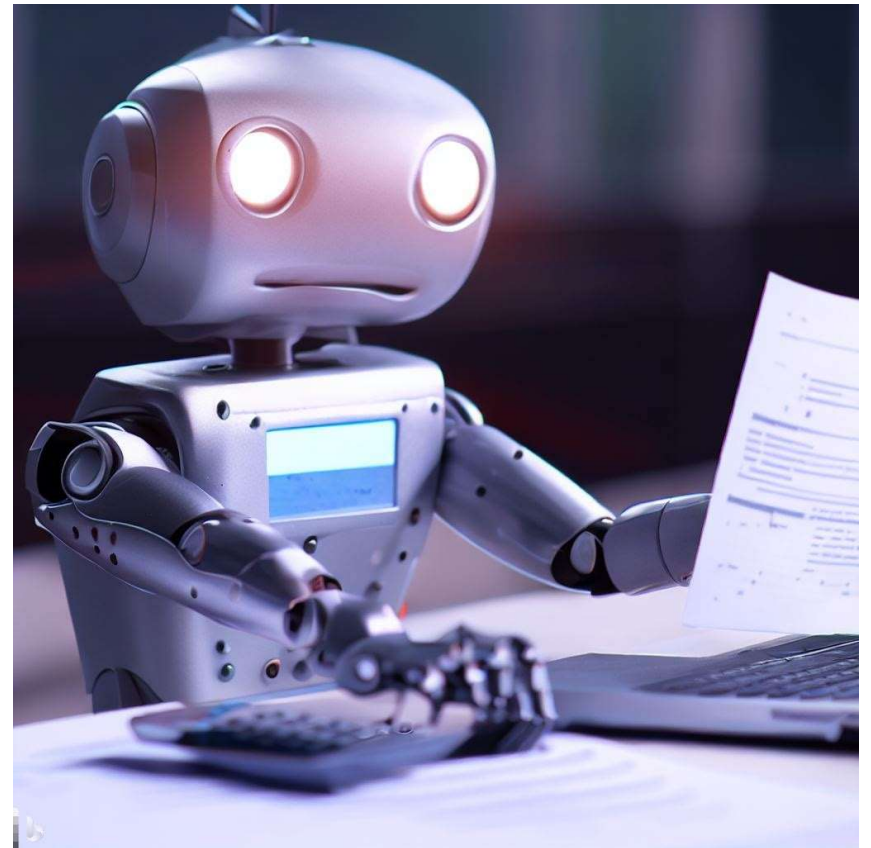
- “Purpose” ranks as a much more frequent driver of satisfaction.
- Pay, career, and opportunities for advancement were at the bottom of the list for factors driving satisfaction.
- **The perception and value of these factors may vary for different parts of the workforce.**

# Work Will Evolve

We can't fully anticipate the way that work is going to evolve.

- Task automation
- Work augmentation
- “Smart” triage and curation
- Virtual presence

**Work that is traditionally associated with a “shared services center”—rule and process based—could change the fastest.**





What external factors are you most concerned about as it relates to the sustainability of your institution?

Wordcloud Poll    69 responses    49 participants





What can we  
do?

# The Overall Process

Decide  
“The Business Case”



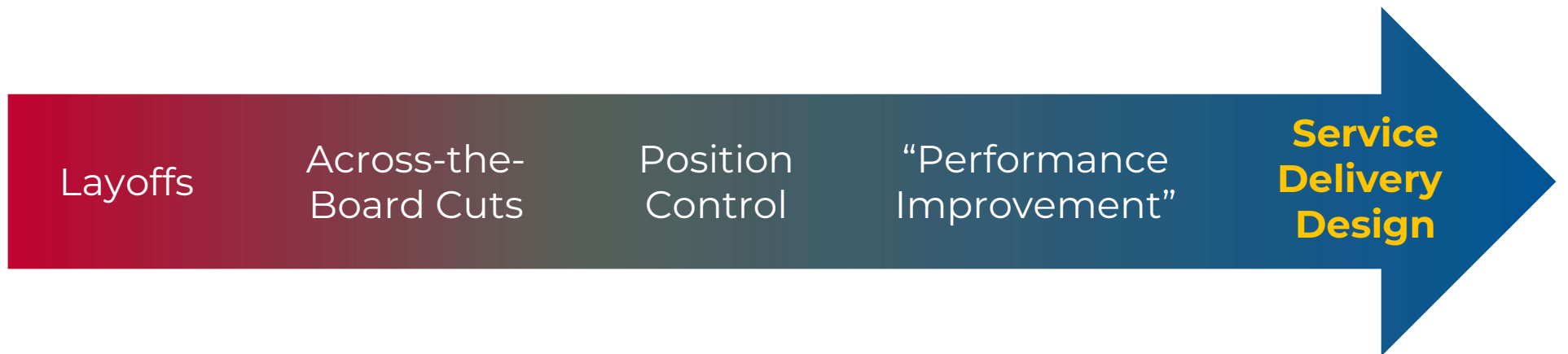
- What are the possibilities?
  - What could the future look like?
  - What would be required?
- What are the tools, processes, roles, structures, and practices to deliver services in a new way?
- How do we transition to the new way of working?
  - How do we sustain and continue to improve?

# How Have Institutions Responded?

While responses to the pandemic were naturally reactive, we are seeing more institutions take proactive approaches to organizing their work.

**Reactive**

**Proactive**



# What is Shared Services?

Shared services is still often associated with the idea of a “call center” or “transaction processing center.”



## Old Definition

Centralizing support and processing of transactions to reduce costs through standardization.

*“Fax it to the warehouse and someone will key it in.”*

**New Definition:**  
**Realizing opportunity through commonality.**



# Commonality?

Shared Effort

Shared Expertise

Shared Tools

Shared Programs

Shared Data/Assets



# Commonly Scaled Services



## IT

- Security Expertise
- End-User Support
- Application Development
- Network/Infrastructure
- Database Administration



## Finance

- Financial Modeling
- Treasury
- Payroll
- Accounting Services



## HR

- HR Helpdesk
- Talent Acquisition
- Transaction Processing
- Leveraged HRBPs
- ER/LR Expertise
- Comp Expertise



## Procure-to-Pay

- Payables and Receivables
- Travel and Expense
- Purchasing
- Contracts Management
- Independent Contractor Mgmt.



## Research Administration

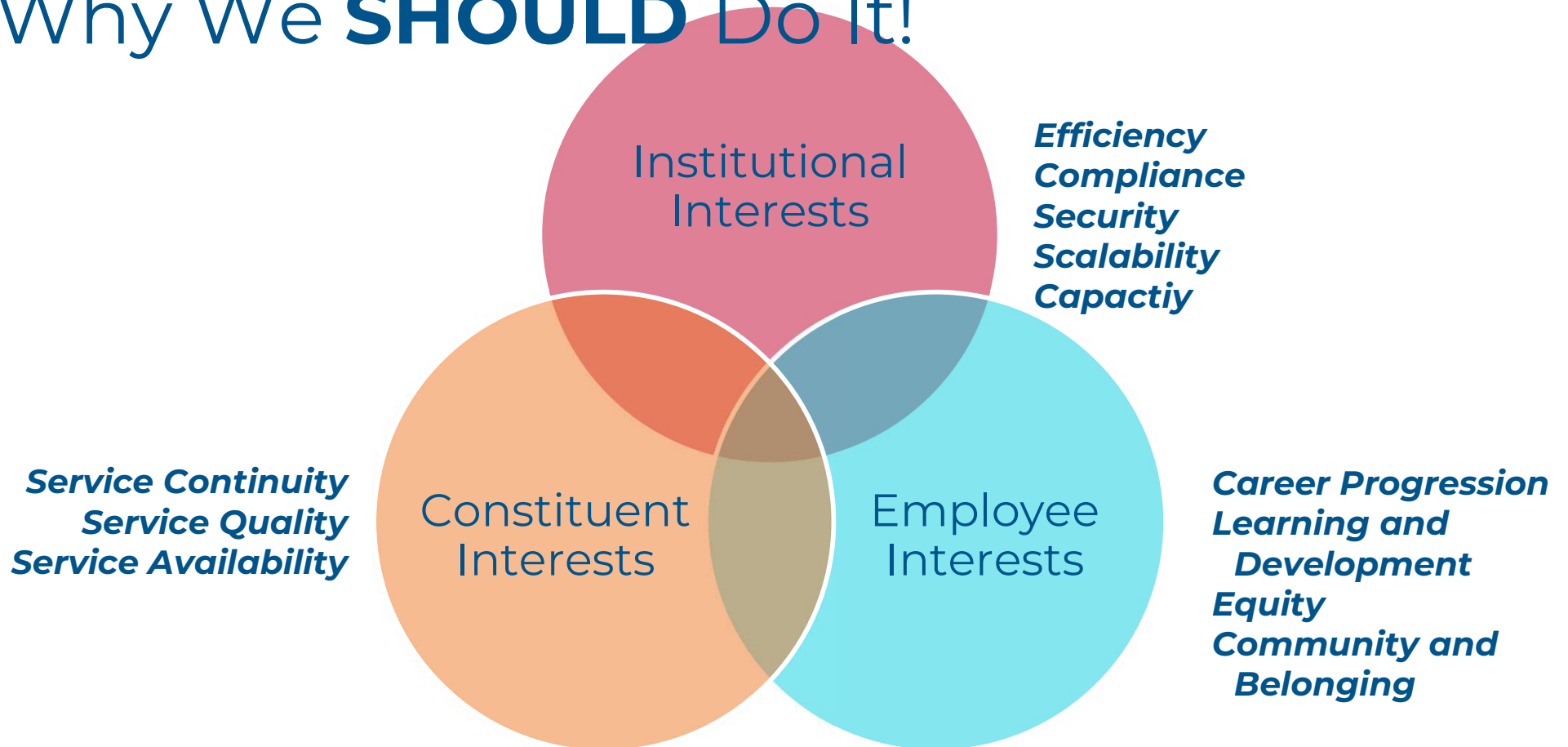
- Pre-Award Support
- Post-Award Support
- Clinical Trials Admin



## Marketing and Communications

- Creative Services
- Web Design and Administration
- Analytics
- Media Management

# Why We **SHOULD** Do It!



At this point, what potential benefits are most motivating to you to explore shared services in your area?

Multiple Choice Poll 59 votes 59 participants

Effectiveness - 20 votes



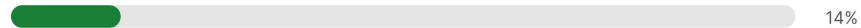
Compliance - 14 votes



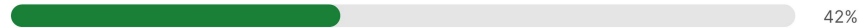
Service Quality - 18 votes



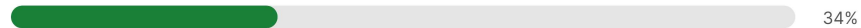
Business Continuity - 8 votes



Cost Reduction - 25 votes



Talent Management (Recruit, Hire, Advance) - 20 votes



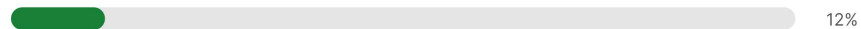
Process Improvement ("less waste") - 36 votes



Capacity Gains - 7 votes



Employee Engagement - 7 votes



# Sounds Great... Why Don't We?

The reasons for not finding commonality or not changing the way we work are ubiquitous.

“People don’t want to do the same thing all day.”

“Relationships are very important.”

“The work varies during the year.”

“We need to be responsive.”

“We’re unique.”

“This just pushes work to the departments.”

“People’s identity is really with the college.”

“Our people wear many hats.”

“We rely on the departments.”

“I don’t have time to be following up with Shared Services.”

“We’ve got our own system.”

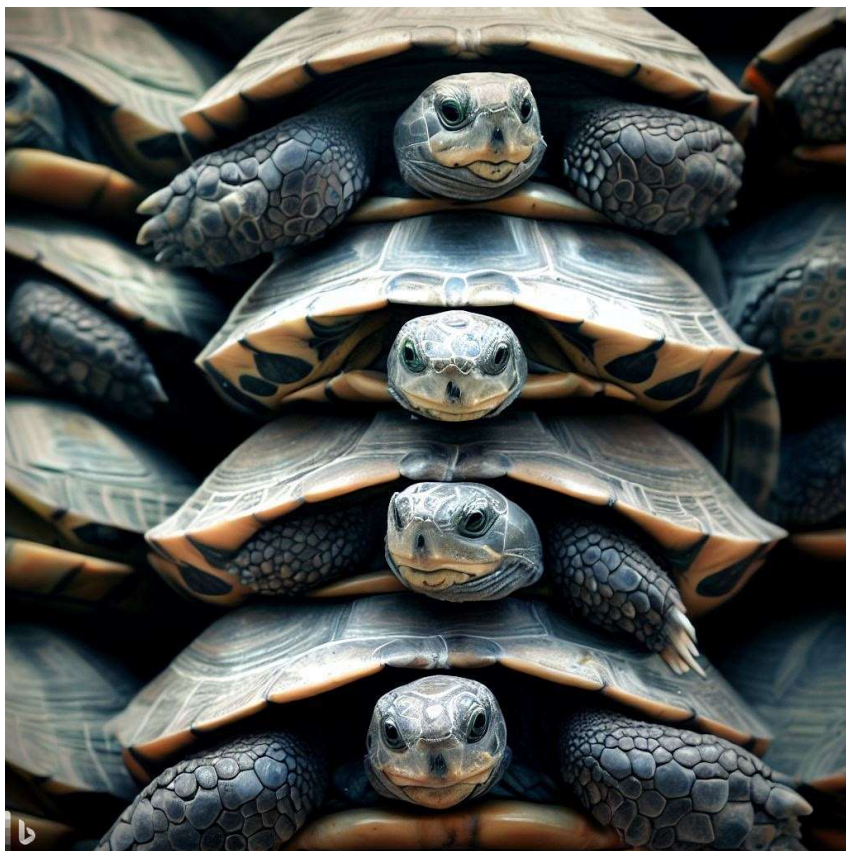
**“I need my person.”**

“Central doesn’t understand our business.”

“There’s no way to know what we need.”

“Our faculty like things a certain way.”

# Turtles All The Way Down



The organizational opportunities and challenges repeat at multiple levels of the organization.

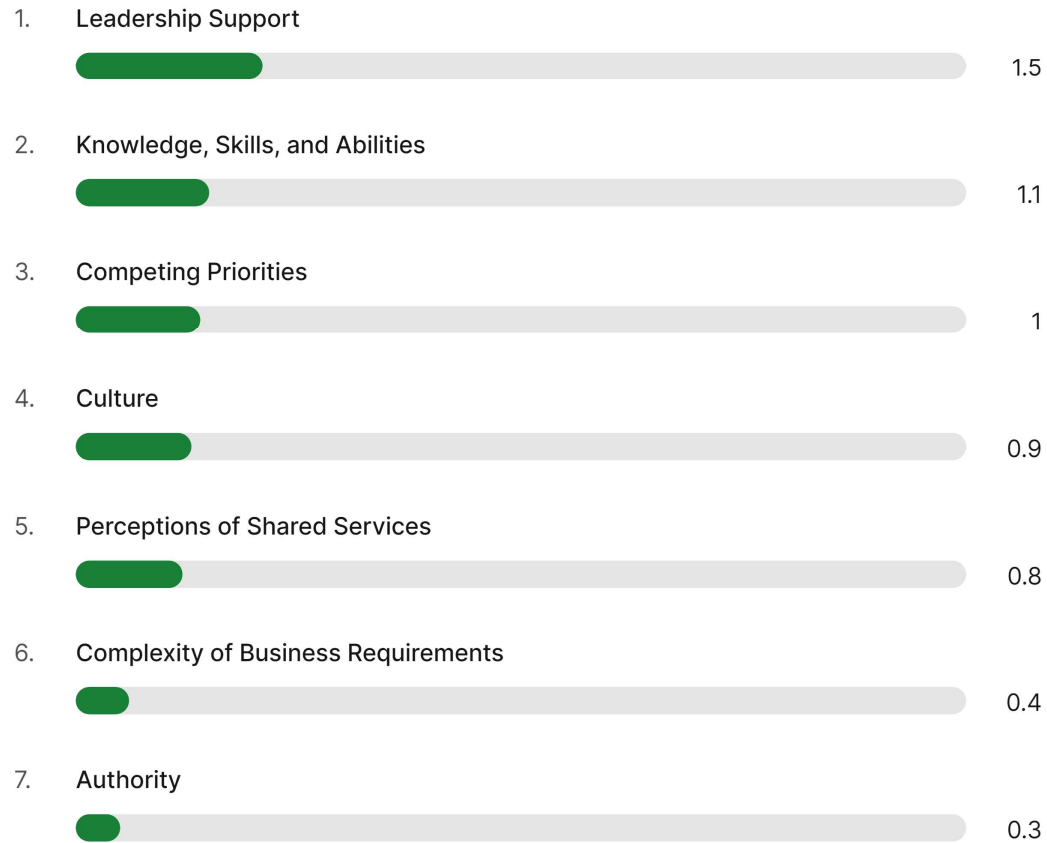
**The Department  
The College/Unit  
The Campus  
Across Institutions**





### What institutional success factors are you most concerned about regarding the design and implementation of shared services?

Ranking Poll 57 votes 57 participants



# Big-10 Shared Services Center

## Context

Institution with extensive college and unit autonomy sought greater efficiency and consistency in transactional work for HR, Purchasing, and Finance.

## Action

A separate Shared Services organization was created to provide these services to all units based on service level agreements.

Common service management technology (TeamDynamix) was used to manage requests and services.

## Result

While the initial rollout faced change management challenges, the model has continued to expand with additional services—in some cases beyond just transactional support.

Automation is now an area of focus.

**Lesson Learned:** With the right foundations, even more traditional shared services centers continue to expand and evolve.

<https://ssc.umich.edu/>

# Public University System

## Context

Geographically-dispersed public university system sought opportunities to better leverage resources.

Institutions all have varying systems, policies, and even core programs (like benefits).

## Action

An assessment revealed fragmentation of activity across multiple institutions and challenges retaining staff.

Some commonality was found across colleges in similar geographies and of similar types (e.g., community colleges).

## Result

The System continues to identify and implement opportunities for targeted shared services.

Early prioritized areas included focusing on sharing expertise in employee relations and information security.

Lesson Learned: Shared services in a tight talent market do not have to be limited to transaction processing.

# Big-10 IT “Virtual Teams”

## Context

Institution with multiple campuses wanted to gain efficiency in information technology without major organizational restructuring.

Other functions were moving to a more traditional “operations center model.”

## Action

Dual-line reporting created more formal connection to central IT while keeping IT leads “in” their units. Virtual teams were created around services. Shared practices, like development standards and project management enabled rapid collaboration.

## Result

While still being rolled out, approach is increasing engagement of IT professionals across the organization.

**Lesson Learned:** Sharing expertise and effort does not always require pulling people out of their units. Creative organizational models are possible.

<https://peak.umn.edu/it>

How do we  
get started?



**Start with  
the work !**

# Starting with the Work

The first impulse is usually to decide where the shared service center will be located and who it will report to...



What do our constituents need to get done?

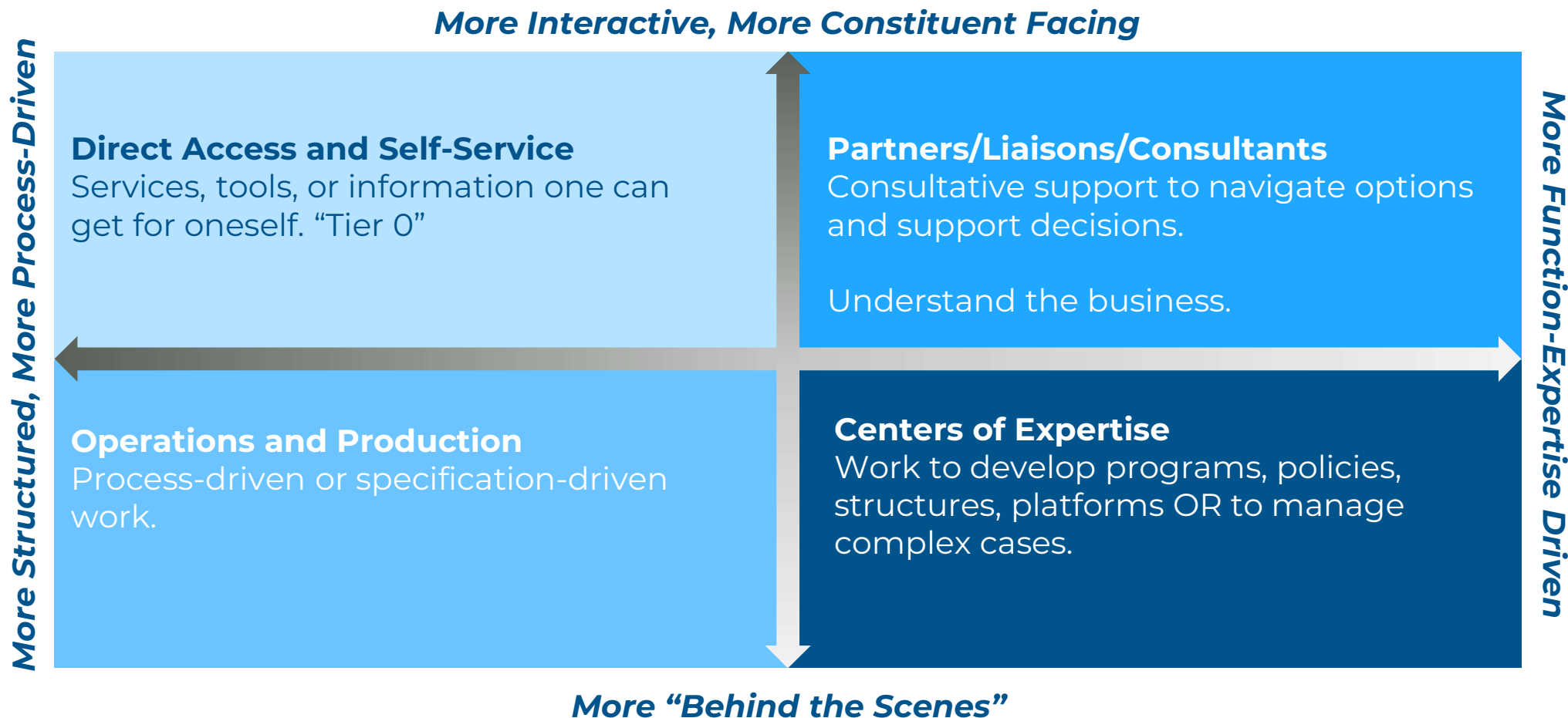
What services and levels of service could we provide?

What roles, staffing, and resources would it take to deliver those services?

How could we most effectively organize those resources?

- Structure
- Tools
- Management

# How Do We Think About Work?



# How Does This Apply to Shared Services?

## **Direct Access and Self-Service**

- Shared tools or tool development
- Shared information repositories
- Shared service management

## **Partners/Liaisons/Consultants**

- Shared or leveraged consultants
- Network of practitioners
- Virtual teams

## **Operations and Production**

- Shared processes
- Shared transactional support
- Shared Tier-1 (“helpdesk”) support
- Shared out/co-sourcing

## **Centers of Expertise**

- Shared experts
- Shared program or structure development
- Shared audit or assessment services
- Shared learning and development

# How Does This Apply to Your Function

**Direct Access and Self-Service**



**Partners/Liaisons/Consultants**



**Operations and Production**



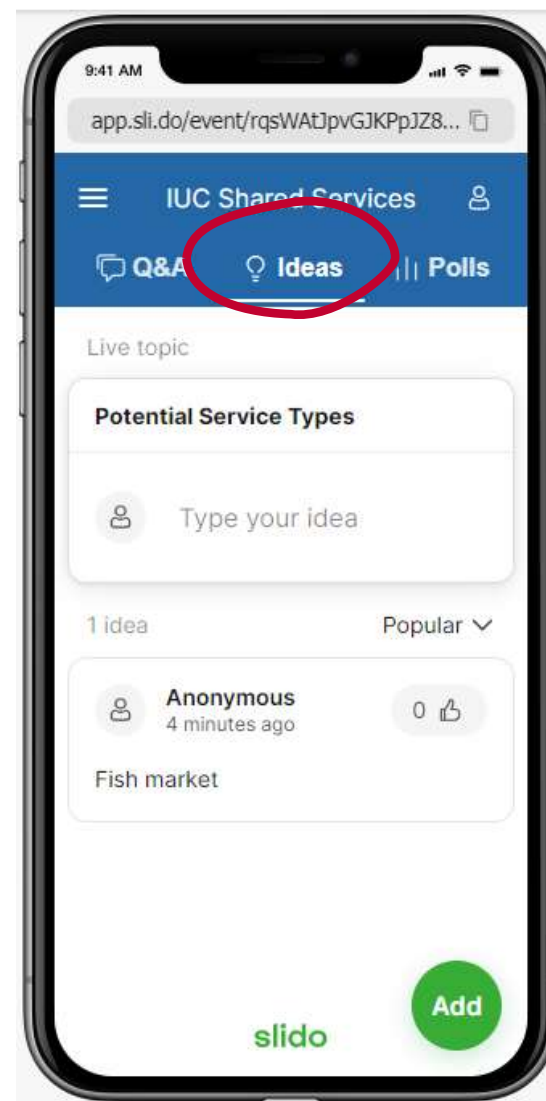
**Centers of Expertise**





# Add Your Ideas

- Go to “Ideas” tab in Sli.do.
- Type your idea and “Add.”
- Upvote ideas of others that resonate with you.
- We’ll keep the ideas tab open for the whole meeting.



# Ideas

Idea	Upvotes
Digital Accessibility - working with vendors to require independent accessibility evaluations and roadmaps for addressing issues	9
Staffing	0
Cost reduction	0
Cyber	0
Benefits and employment at the national scale, focused on being competitive for remote hires	3
Training center for mandated staff/faculty/student training. Shared technology, shared content, shared trainers.	6
Contract Approval Routing	3
Shared contracts	0
Recruitment Strategies	0
Telepsychiatry for institutions that don't have medical schools to provide psychiatry to students.	2
Supplier Diversity Analytics and facilitating Diverse Certification for vendors	2
Focusing collectively on smaller scale IT system contracts that are still high expense, i.e. Card Systems, Event Management, Housing and Occupancy Management	2
Accessibility software such as Kurzweil and otter.ai	0
Include every department and individual that is affected when a change is implemented	0
Technology	0
Collaborate	0
Centralized Diverse Supplier Database, including EDGE, MBE, and other sorts of vendor diversity types for the State of Ohio	1

# We Have Things In Common

“We’re a Patchwork Quilt.”



“But many of us have circles...”



Nature of the work  
Goal of the process  
Need of the constituent

# And We Can Accommodate Difference

Assume we're sharing, how might we address difference?

Different  
Teams or  
Assignments

Shared Resources  
with Dedicated  
Client  
Assignments



Photo by [Miki Fath](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Different  
Services

Shared Resources  
that Support  
Different Service  
Levels by Client



Photo by [Alice Pasqual](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Different  
Processes  
and Tools

Shared Resources  
that Support the  
Same Service  
Levels With  
Client Tools

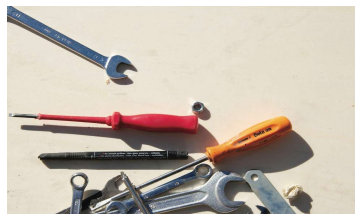


Photo by [Elena Rouame](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Different  
Navigation

Different  
Navigation



Photo by [Jamie Street](#) on [Unsplash](#)

How Can We  
Succeed?

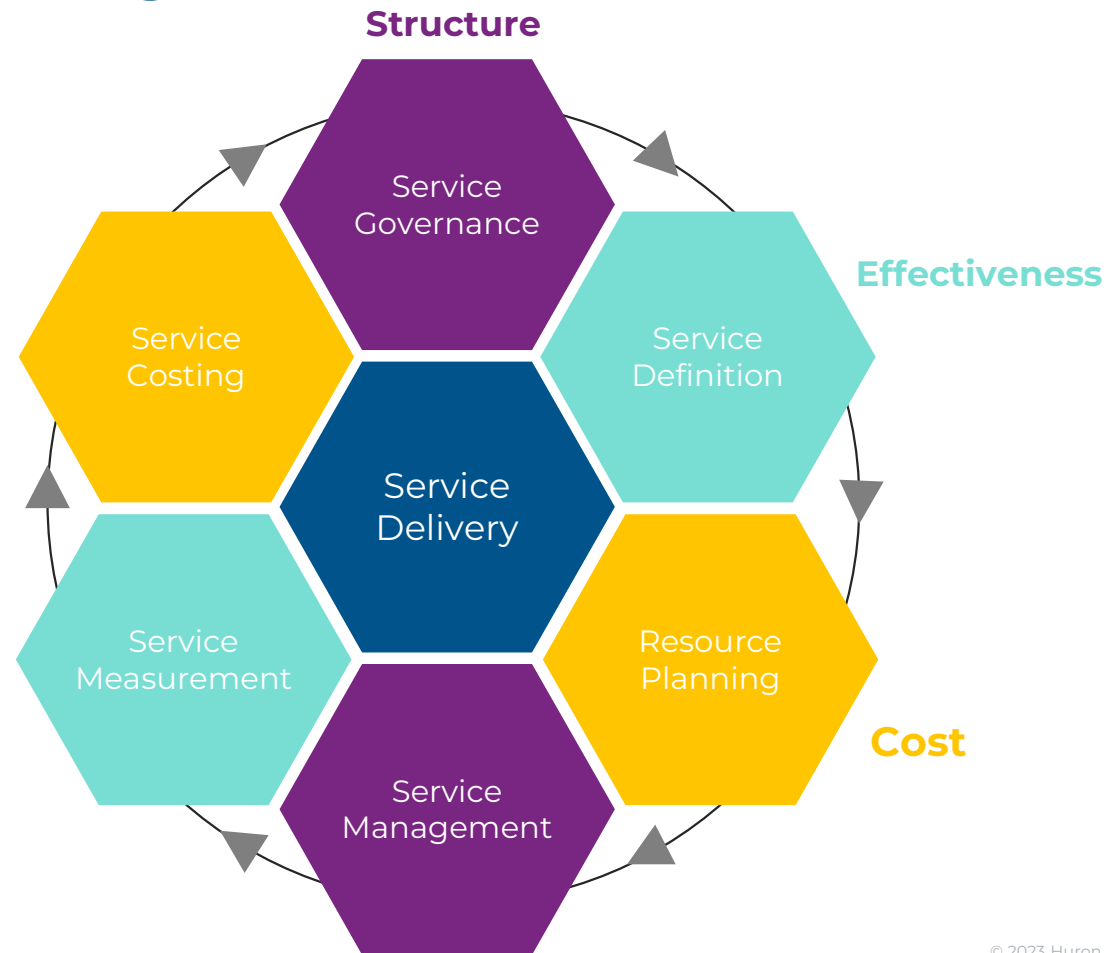
Good design  
prevails.

**“We had to hire someone to be the liaison to shared services...”**

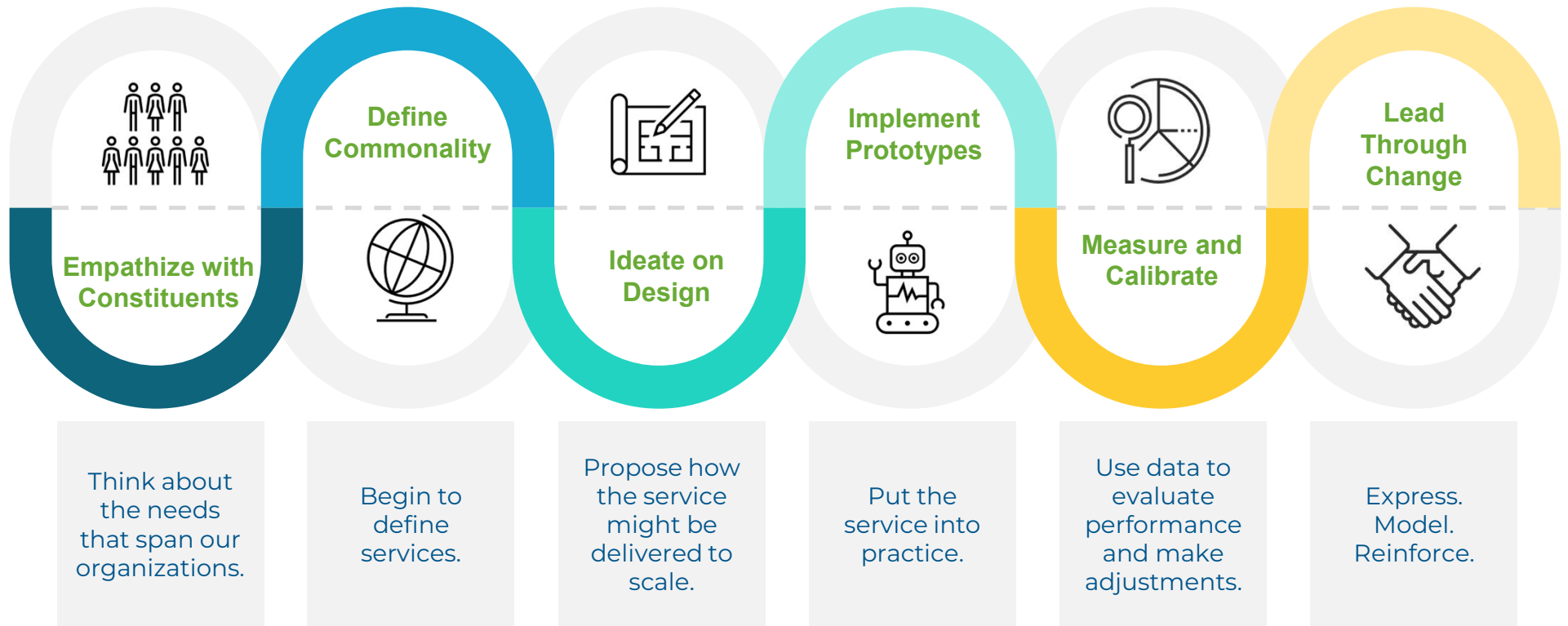




# Service Management Framework



# Design Thinking



# Guiding Principles

Behind our guiding principles is the idea of advancing change through effectiveness.

- 1. Consumer Centered** – Create services that address real needs in relevant ways.
- 2. Fully Flexible** – Recognize that not every service will be right for every school.
- 3. Designed to Deliver** – Only go live with services that can be successful. Resources services effectively. Deploy when ready.
- 4. Active Advocacy** – Service participants must be involved in promotion and calibrating services.
- 5. Future Forward** – Create mechanisms to adjust, grow, and sunset services in an organized way.



## What concepts or ideas resonated most with you from this presentation?

HURON | 39

- Good Design
- Based on member needs, commitment to doing what's needed
- "Start with the work"
- Collaboration
- "How do we start?"
- "The Change Management issue. Leadership support within the schools.
- Starting with the work, not the location or leader.
- Focus on the work
- Process Matters
- Thinking in broader terms, not just my own service
- Gradual approach. Quilt with circles.
- Design Thinking
- Design Thinking
- Collaboration on shared issues
- Good design prevails.
- Open Communication
- Collaboration
- Do not fear the UFO
- The design process... follow the guiding principles to have a better shot at success
- Collaboration
- Design of the process
- Design thinking
- Focus on the work and Collaboration
- Focusing on the work
- Like the idea of process quality improvement, streamlining, consistency, and continuity of operations
- Centers for expertise
- Focus on the work
- Collaborate on services
- Collaboration
- Start with the work
- Designs
- Service management framework
- Collaboration, showing value
- Design thinking
- Collaboration
- Starting with the work, focusing on the functionality of the work, makes so much sense
- People first

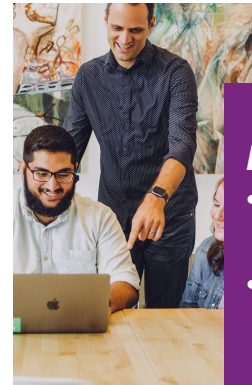
# The Future Can Be Something More



## **Economic Opportunity**

- Sharing resources
- Having the ability to change to meet demand
- Freeing capacity.

Photo by [Alexander Grey](#) on [Unsplash](#)



## **Evolution of Work**

- Taking advantage of common technology
- Using technology to create more engaging jobs

Photo by [Jud Mackrill](#) on [Unsplash](#)



## **Empowering the Workforce**

- Creating growth and development opportunities
- Drawing upon wider pools of capability, capacity, and interest

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## **Organizational Sustainability**

- Balancing work and workload
- Providing greater continuity of functions

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Thank You!

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