



UCAR

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

**STRATEGIC PLAN
AUGUST 2006**

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Our vision...

Trusted partners, providing financial and administrative services integral to the success of UCAR's mission

F&A

BUDGET AND FINANCE

BUSINESS SERVICES

HUMAN RESOURCES

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

SAFETY AND SITE SERVICES

PHYSICAL PLANT SERVICES

TREASURY OPERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) is internationally known for the excellence of its science, engineering, and educational programs, as well as the quality of community support it provides. UCAR carries out its mission (see box below) through its management and support of the National Science Foundation's federally funded research and development center, the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), the UCAR Office of Programs (UOP), and the UCAR Office of Education and Outreach (EO), which UCAR Finance and Administration considers to be its customers and internal partners.

Finance and Administration (F&A) is responsible for managing the administrative services and facilities of UCAR. F&A is committed to providing high-quality and cost-effective services, which are critical to ensuring the financial integrity of the organization and are essential to the long-term success and viability of the national center. For an organization chart of F&A functions and services, please see *Appendix A*.

This document sets forth a flexible strategic plan that will guide us, in partnership with our colleagues in NCAR, UOP and EO, as the organization faces exciting opportunities, changes, and challenges. The plan describes F&A's mission, vision, and broad goals for the next five years. F&A staff will use this plan in the ongoing management of a wide variety of financial and administrative services designed to best serve NCAR, UOP, and EO.

F&A MISSION

Finance and Administration is a service organization responsible for the planning, management, and accountability of the business, financial, human, and physical resources of UCAR, with a collective emphasis on excellence in customer service.

UCAR's Mission

To serve and provide leadership to the atmospheric science and related communities through research, computing and observational facilities, and education programs that contribute to the betterment of life on Earth.

CONTEXT FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

UCAR's leadership in advancing the atmospheric and related sciences is complemented by its commitment to excellence in management and administration. Finance and Administration, as the central provider of administrative services to the organization, is integral to UCAR's success as a leader in implementing state-of-the-art business and management practices. F&A will continue to exercise its leadership role in the community of federally funded research and development centers by actively engaging its FFRDC colleagues in dialogue concerning common issues and sharing its best practices throughout the community.

F&A also works extensively with its university colleagues to support research collaborations linking NCAR, UOP, and EO with the university community. F&A's expertise in managing complex funding arrangements, shared networking resources, joint intellectual property, and field project logistics helps meet the needs of these scientific collaborations.

Developing this plan has been a journey involving the entire F&A staff, in consultation with our internal partners. We started with an assessment of both the internal and external factors that influence what we do and how we do it, now and in the future. Through discussions with our staff, as well as with key internal partners, we assembled a picture of F&A based on their perceptions and experiences. Using this as the current state of F&A, we began to envision where we would like to be in the next five years as we continue to fulfill our mission. Mapping the future we want assisted us in more clearly defining our goals and values.

To ensure that our core strategies were properly focused, we undertook an assessment of the external factors that could have a significant impact on our organization. Some of the major challenges that we considered include:

- The National Science Foundation (NSF) announcement that the cooperative agreement for the management and operation of NCAR will be competed for the first time in NCAR and UCAR's history.
- The increasing size and complexity of the NCAR program and its recent reorganization, which not only changed its basic organizational structure but also redefined leadership roles and lines of authority.
- NSF's recent reorganization of contract and grant functions, which created a new division with new personnel providing oversight of the cooperative agreement.
- Ongoing budget constraints that put pressure on keeping indirect rates low.
- Increasing demands for automation and online services as well as facilities upgrades and development.

In addition to reviewing external impacts, we took an introspective look at our current mentalities, behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses. We identified a need to build upon our traditions of functional excellence and routine solutions by working closely with our internal partners to deliver comprehensive, multi-disciplinary solutions. To support our vision of proactive leadership, we are committed to creating an environment in which processes can be continuously improved.

By analyzing our strengths and weaknesses, the needs of our internal partners for administrative services, and the challenges facing the organization, we have developed a set of core strategies designed to reinforce our commitment to excellence in management and administration. This plan provides the framework through which we will strengthen existing and new partnerships, both internally and externally, develop our staff to their maximum potential, and continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all of our business practices and processes.

F&A's highest priority is to provide the National Center for Atmospheric Research, a National Science Foundation (NSF) federally funded research and development center, with the highest-quality services and facilities at a reasonable cost. We share NCAR's commitment to cultivate an environment of organizational excellence and innovation, where science and education programs thrive.

F&A takes pride in its stewardship of resources—human, physical, and financial—that furnish essential support, infrastructure, and leadership to advance the scientific mission. We possess particular expertise to address the needs of increasingly complex scientific, technical, operational, and educational programs.

F&A partners with NCAR to forge strategic partnerships with NSF, other sponsoring agencies, and the community—most notably, providing oversight of the NSF cooperative agreement. We employ innovative financing alternatives and best practices in the development and maintenance of facilities. Our human resources professionals support NCAR's goal of recruiting and retaining world-class scientific and technical staff, representing diversity in people, backgrounds, and ideas. We also use our significant legal and technical expertise in the areas of compliance, technology transfer, and safety to support a wide array of NCAR applications, activities, and field projects. Finally, our business professionals work in close collaboration with NCAR staff to streamline management and administration and to provide total business solutions that allow NCAR to maintain the programmatic health of the center.

F&A VALUES

We are guided by the following core values, which serve as anchor points in every decision we make. Our core values also assist us in assessing our operations, our planning, and our vision for the future.

OUR VALUES

Leadership – We value leadership at all levels of the organization and encourage our team of dedicated professionals to use their individual knowledge and skills where they can best be applied.

Integrity – We act with integrity and exhibit behavior that merits public trust and confidence.

Partnership – We value partnerships with our colleagues and constituents to improve our effectiveness and meet our commitments.

Excellence – We value excellence in providing administrative services and facilities to all of our internal partners.

Innovation – We value innovation and creativity—exploring, learning, and disseminating new approaches in support of the mission of UCAR.

Diversity – We value our employees and embrace diversity of ideas and backgrounds, respecting all persons and behaving with civility in all interactions.

Balance – We value a healthy work environment with reasonable expectations and workloads, allowing for a balance between our personal and professional lives.

Openness – We support and encourage open and honest communication in all interactions.

HOW WE OPERATE

We enable employees to succeed by supporting creativity, innovation, and diverse solutions, enhancing employees' professional development.

We are straightforward and honest in our business relationships and do not allow bias, conflict of interest, or undue influence by others to override our professional judgment.

We partner with a dynamic and diverse community, striving to be trusted partners while complying with applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards in support of UCAR's mission.

We document and communicate our values, plans, and projects so our internal partners know what to expect of us, promoting professional and effective communication.

We encourage employees to find a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives by cultivating an optimistic outlook, flexibility, and a sense of humor in the workplace.





We celebrate our successes together and refuse to let each other fail by supporting each other's efforts and learning from all our experiences.

THE PLAN

Encouraging and sustaining excellence in F&A activities is critical to the achievement of the missions and goals of NCAR, UOP, and EO. F&A leadership must respond to the growing complexity of the organization's work while optimizing resources and sustaining reasonable indirect cost rates.

Most important, our success depends on fostering an exceptional, versatile, and results-oriented workforce that operates in an environment of continuous self-assessment and process improvement.

This plan sets forth four major strategic goals that F&A will pursue in the next five years. They provide a framework for making broad decisions and serve as a point of reference for subsequent detailed action plans.

-  **BUILDING INTERNAL ALLIANCES**
-  **BUSINESS REENGINEERING**
-  **BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**
-  **EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT**

There is considerable synergy among F&A's strategic goals. For example, our business reengineering initiative involves partnerships between various F&A teams and representatives from NCAR, UOP, and EO programs. As another example, a key focus of our employee development initiative is to help all F&A staff build effective relationships within our working groups, which will, in turn, increase our ability to develop strong external alliances.

BUILDING INTERNAL ALLIANCES

DEVELOP STRONG RELATIONSHIPS AND CREATE ALLIANCES WITHIN F&A AND WITH OUR NCAR, UOP, AND EO COLLEAGUES TO OPTIMIZE THE SERVICES THAT WE PROVIDE.

Sustaining and strengthening active partnerships is essential to meeting UCAR’s administrative and management challenges.

Through an increased focus on building alliances between F&A groups and our internal partners, we will achieve superior solutions by being more externally focused and deeply networked. We seek to foster best practices and address organizational challenges by building on our strong functional expertise to create effective, cross-functional teams.

We will kick off this effort with an *Outreach Initiative*, which will engage our internal partners to determine their concerns and needs across all F&A functions.

GOALS

- **Foster ongoing dialog with senior UCAR, NCAR, UOP, and EO management on how best to respond to organizational challenges.**
- **Engage internal partners to improve our understanding of their needs.**
- **Develop shared expectations and priorities with our internal partners for successful outcomes.**
- **Provide timely advice, in-depth explanations, and viable alternatives as necessary.**
- **Determine the right things to do, and do them at the right time.**
- **Increase awareness of the skills, competencies, and services that the F&A team can provide.**
- **Build trust and confidence so that our customers will involve us in their planning processes.**

Highlight: HIAPER

As the single largest acquisition in NCAR's history, HIAPER (the High-performance Instrumented Airborne Platform for Environmental Research) presented NCAR and UCAR with major challenges. Finance and Administration provided key fiscal and contractual support from 2002 to 2005, tackling such issues as the administration of a highly complex subcontract with Gulfstream Aerospace Corp. and construction of a new hangar.

“The establishment of a strong partnership between UCAR F&A financial and contractual experts and NCAR technical personnel was absolutely essential for conduct of the highly complex HIAPER program. By maintaining a strong and consistent spirit of teamwork throughout the project, NCAR and UCAR personnel (and our subcontractor partners) were able to ensure that programmatic issues were dealt with professionally and efficiently. The effective and under budget completion of the program demonstrates that NCAR and UCAR can—together—successfully provide complex project management services to NSF and the community.”

Krista Laursen, NCAR HIAPER Program Office

BUSINESS REENGINEERING

PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, AND STRATEGICALLY ALIGNED BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES THAT INTEGRATE AND LEVERAGE OUR INVESTMENTS IN PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY TO ACHIEVE OPTIMAL SOLUTIONS.

F&A business processes and services incorporate a wide range of applications, tools, facilities, and infrastructure accessible to UCAR staff in support of their mission.

Through the Business Reengineering strategy, we will leverage strategic investments in people and systems to deliver optimal, cost-effective, and well-integrated solutions while maintaining internal controls to ensure financial integrity. Through continuous process improvement, we will streamline business interactions, enhance organizational productivity, and utilize new and emerging technologies.

In our *Business Process Reengineering Initiative*, F&A will continue to identify and prioritize business processes that are candidates for streamlining. We have already developed a reengineering methodology and delivered training to participating staff.

We have also launched a *Technology Roadmap Initiative* to define a broad vision for technology and administrative computing. Based on a high-level assessment of technology objectives, the roadmap will guide F&A's investments to advance administrative computing and technology services.

GOALS

- **Identify and develop innovative and efficient total solutions and tools.**
- **Redesign processes in order to make them more efficient and use resources more effectively.**
- **Implement a self-assessment program as a foundation for measuring processes and continuously improving them.**
- **Strengthen relationships within and outside of F&A by fostering a greater awareness of our business and regulatory environment.**
- **Prioritize needs and plan services based on customer input.**
- **Provide cross-training for critical functions within and across departments.**
- **Meet the growing demand for complex services without increasing costs.**

Highlight: Event Reengineering

The Event Reengineering Committee consisted of 13 staff members representing a diverse cross-section of UCAR and NCAR. The goal was to make the planning and staging of UCAR/NCAR-organized events more efficient and cost-effective by providing better guidance for staff. Over the course of a year, the committee designed and developed a "one stop shopping" web site for meeting and event planners. The site (https://www.fin.ucar.edu/internal/event_planning/) includes checklists for the planning process from beginning to end, a mentor list, travel and transportation options, helpful hints, and links to all relevant internal UCAR sites.

"This is EXTREMELY helpful! The checklists are very thorough, clear, and useful! I think you've made sensible choices about how to break down the many tasks and considerations into manageable steps. Thank you very much for these tools! They help allay my fears that I'm overlooking something big. I also like the idea of the "meeting planning mentors" available for consultation and the other stuff about local things to do and places to stay will be helpful for communicating these to visitors. Well done!"

Quote from a user

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

DEVELOP AND ENHANCE UCAR'S LEADERSHIP THROUGH BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, OTHER SPONSORS, AND EXTERNAL ENTITIES.

F&A relies on many external partners to accomplish strategic goals and perform routine operations. It is critical that F&A demonstrate leadership in all business and community partnerships, including with funding agencies, most notably the National Science Foundation, and other sponsors; business partners and professional organizations; other federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs); universities; and federal, state, and local government agencies.

Through the Business and Community Relations strategy, we will identify top-priority strategic alliances and determine the steps needed to create or enhance these over the next several years.

Under an *External Partnership Initiative* each F&A department will identify its most important strategic partnerships and how it will initiate and strengthen them year by year.

GOALS

- **Develop and strengthen relationships with NSF, other funding agencies, and the Office of Management and Budget.**
- **Develop and strengthen relationships with vendors, professional and service organizations, and government and community agencies.**
- **Understand and proactively integrate new legislation and regulations affecting our operations, and respond to proposed new legislation and regulations.**
- **Demonstrate leadership in the FFRDC community and professional organizations.**
- **Develop and implement a clear, coordinated plan for transition and succession by involving subordinate staff in meetings with sponsors, partners, and other key contacts.**
- **Enhance and maintain effective, regular communications with external partners.**

Highlight: NSF and NOAA

In the course of performing its mission, UCAR works with a large number of sponsors. The National Science Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, respectively, are the two largest sponsors of research programs at UCAR. UCAR has worked with both agencies on an array of programs, and in the process we have mutually dealt with a host of business and financial issues. To be effective, UCAR F&A and the agency must develop a deep mutual understanding through a partnership built on trust, integrity, and open communication.

"I have worked with F&A staff members for many years as part of NSF's role in the oversight of UCAR's management of NCAR and other NSF-funded programs. UCAR, including and especially F&A, is almost always the example we look to for best practices in business and financial management. They set the standard, and they set the bar high. What is notable about UCAR F&A is that you know you have a partner working with you to find mutually acceptable solutions to whatever issues we're dealing with. They understand the big picture."

*Brian Mannion, Deputy Director
Grants Management Division
National Science Foundation*

"One of the hallmarks of the staff of UCAR's Finance and Administration is that they are always looking to build bridges with our agency and strive for win-win solutions. We certainly don't always agree on everything, but it is refreshing to work with people who listen and at least attempt to put as much effort into understanding NOAA's needs and limitations as they do into presenting and expressing their own. The UCAR F&A team possesses integrity and good management sense, and it is always a pleasure to work with them."

A NOAA Management Official

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

CULTIVATE A DIVERSE, AGILE, AND RESULTS-ORIENTED ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE COMMITTED TO ADVANCING THEIR EXPERTISE IN SUPPORT OF THE UCAR MISSION.

F&A has remarkable strengths in its staff. Investments in people improve the quality and reach of F&A's services and ensure that we can continue to satisfy increasing demands in a cost-effective manner.

F&A has consistently made staff development a priority. As a part of our strategic plan, we will enhance our staff development activities through a new *Developing Staff Initiative*, which will identify core competencies that we develop at all levels within F&A.

F&A will build on its experience in developing and overseeing the UCAR Leadership Academy (see highlights) by providing a shorter, tailored version of this highly successful program for F&A staff.

GOALS

- **Identify required and desired skills, outcomes, and competencies.**
- **Develop and implement targeted training and development programs.**
- **Initiate teambuilding programs to enhance partnerships within F&A.**
- **Better link competencies to performance evaluation, recognition, and rewards.**
- **Enhance orientation programs for F&A staff.**
- **Develop staff competencies and leadership skills for current and future needs.**
- **Encourage temporary and special assignments that enable individual growth and development.**
- **Recognize and reward innovation through formal employee reward systems.**

Highlight: The UCAR Leadership Academy

In 2003, F&A launched the UCAR Leadership Academy *“to increase UCAR/NCAR/UOP’s capacity for excellence through developing our current and future leaders.”* The program is designed to be an experiential, individualized, and relevant learning process rather than a rigid set of classes. Each year 24 participants are selected by directors to participate in the six-month, on-site program that seeks to increase organizational knowledge, personal effectiveness, communication, and skills in leading and managing people.

“. . . the experience can be career and life altering. It was for me, both.”

“It has defined leadership for me. It doesn’t necessarily mean, “taking charge.” There are many different ways to lead; e.g., setting an example, helping to settle differences, introducing new ideas. The result is helping people to work together to achieve a goal.”

“UCAR’s top management’s job just got easier, because of my participation in the Leadership Academy.”

Quotes from Leadership Academy graduates

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Without tools and measures in place to assess performance, it is difficult to maintain momentum in the fulfillment of any strategic plan. F&A has identified indicators of success for each of our goals (see “F&A Strategies at a Glance,” following page) to assist us in evaluating our progress.

F&A departments will monitor and assess their progress in meeting the strategic organizational goals and objectives through a Performance Measurement Program. This program will encompass financial and internal business operations, as well as the satisfaction of employees, internal partners, the community, and stakeholders.

Our measurement of performance is guided by “Measuring the Productivity and Quality of UCAR and NCAR Programs: A Report of the UCAR Metrics Committee.” In conjunction with the implementation of this plan, each of the eight F&A functional areas will develop specific measures for their activities to assess productivity, quality, and impact. Our metrics will be evaluated against university, industry, and federal benchmarks, as appropriate. F&A has compiled a series of productivity metrics to track trends in demand for services over time (see *Appendix B*); these will serve as a baseline for future measures of productivity.

F&A is also launching a project with the administrative departments in other federal labs and facilities to establish benchmarks and best practices. This activity will begin in November 2006 with a three-day workshop.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The true measure of the success of the F&A Strategic Plan is the satisfaction of those who rely on our services, both inside and outside UCAR. We will regularly consult with our internal partners to get their input on how well we are succeeding.

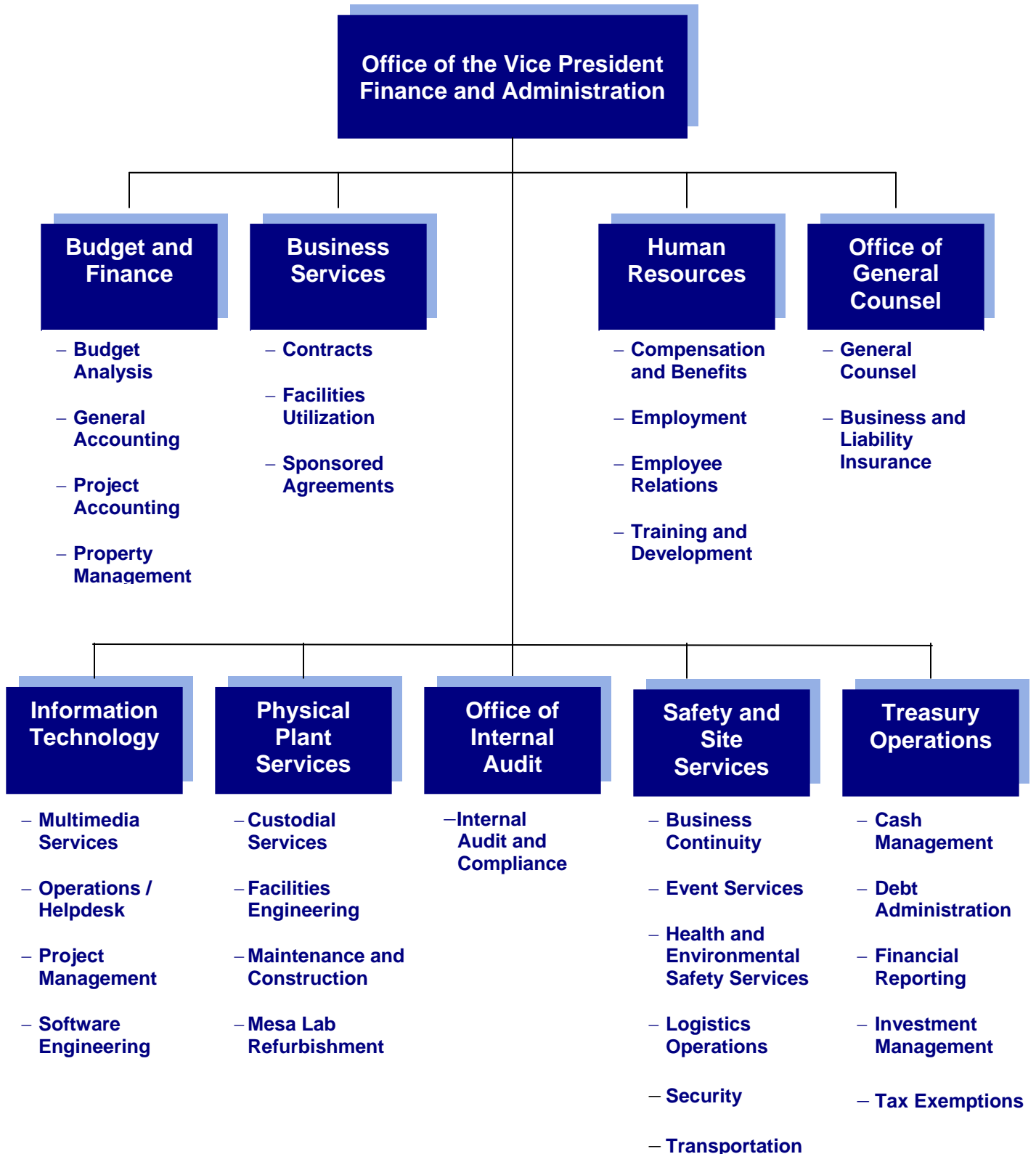
To implement this plan, each F&A department will develop its own strategic initiatives and action plans that correspond to each of the F&A strategies. For example, to achieve the goals we have set for business reengineering, we have already identified 26 processes and solicited volunteers to participate in cross-functional reengineering teams. These teams have begun work on the top six processes selected, with F&A logistical support and trained facilitators. For each process, goals and objectives will be defined and an action plan developed with specific activities, a timeline for completion, resources required, and indicators of success that will be used to measure performance.

F&A STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

BUILDING INTERNAL ALLIANCES	BUSINESS REENGINEERING	BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS	EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
GOALS			
<p>Foster ongoing dialog with senior UCAR, NCAR, UOP, and EO management on how best to respond to organizational challenges</p> <p>Engage internal partners to improve our understanding of their needs.</p> <p>Develop shared expectations and priorities with our internal partners for successful outcomes.</p> <p>Provide timely advice, in-depth explanations, and viable alternatives as necessary.</p> <p>Determine the right things to do, and do them at the right time.</p> <p>Increase awareness of the skills, competencies, and services that the F&A team can provide.</p> <p>Build trust and confidence so that our internal partners will involve us in their planning processes.</p>	<p>Identify and develop innovative and efficient total solutions and tools.</p> <p>Redesign processes in order to make them more efficient, or use resources more effectively.</p> <p>Implement a self-assessment program as a foundation for measuring processes and continuously improving them.</p> <p>Strengthen relationships within and outside of F&A by fostering a greater awareness of our business and regulatory environment.</p> <p>Prioritize needs and plan services based on customer input.</p> <p>Provide cross-training for critical functions within and across departments.</p> <p>Meet the growing demand for complex services without increasing costs.</p>	<p>Develop and strengthen relationships with NSF, other funding agencies, and the Office of Management and Budget.</p> <p>Develop and strengthen relationships with vendors, professional and service organizations, and government and community agencies.</p> <p>Demonstrate leadership in the FFRDC community and professional organizations.</p> <p>Develop and implement a clear, coordinated plan for transition and succession by involving subordinate staff in meetings with sponsors, partners, and other key contacts.</p> <p>Enhance and maintain effective, consistent and routine communications.</p>	<p>Identify required and desired skills, outcomes, and competencies.</p> <p>Develop and implement targeted training and development programs.</p> <p>Initiate teambuilding programs to enhance partnerships within F&A.</p> <p>Better link competencies to performance evaluation, recognition, and rewards.</p> <p>Enhance orientation programs for F&A staff.</p> <p>Develop staff competencies and leadership skills for current and future needs.</p> <p>Recognize and reward innovation through formal employee reward systems.</p>
SUCCESS INDICATORS			
<p>We anticipate and address internal partner needs in a timely and effective manner.</p> <p>Our internal partners acknowledge our services as a contributing factor in their success, consult with us earlier, and utilize expanded F&A leadership.</p> <p>F&A staff exemplifies excellence in building and maintaining effective relationships.</p>	<p>Individuals from divisions and programs are involved in reengineering and acknowledge the added value.</p> <p>Business processes are noticeably improved, evidenced by reduced cycle time, cost savings, or a more effective use of resources.</p> <p>A “culture of reengineering” exists, where staff feel free to question the efficacy of processes and are committed to identifying improvements and alternatives.</p> <p>Peer groups and sponsors recognize UCAR for best practices.</p>	<p>The entire institution has an improved reputation and higher visibility.</p> <p>UCAR provides timelier and better responses to external partners.</p> <p>Sponsor relations are improved and uniformly excellent.</p> <p>Improved communications bring about cost efficiencies and more effective use of resources.</p> <p>F&A teams are recognized as leaders in “best practices.”</p>	<p>Staff demonstrates skills in required competencies.</p> <p>F&A is able to meet prioritized needs with excellence and without increasing costs.</p> <p>Staff members understand their role in achieving F&A goals and can work independently to achieve those goals.</p> <p>Performance excellence is rewarded and key staff are retained.</p>

APPENDIX A

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION ORGANIZATION



APPENDIX B GROWTH IN DEMAND

	FY1987	FY2000	FY2005
Business Services			
Number of UCAR purchasing card orders	N/A	6,782	9,858
\$ Value of UCAR purchasing card orders	N/A	\$3.0M	\$4.5M
Subcontracts and purchase orders	4676	7711	9851
\$ Value of subcontracts and POs	\$15M	\$42M	\$53M
Direct awards	4	268	392
Interagency agreements	51	220	236
Facilities			
Net square footage: Government owned	265,712	265,712	300,756
Net square footage: UCAR owned	N/A	279,516	386,967
Net square footage: UCAR leased	41,883	37,761	42,195
Total square footage	307,595	582,989	729,918
Finance			
Contract-required financial reports	8	415	553
Accounts receivable invoices	706	1304	1836
Travel authorizations	3600	6513	7168
Patents			
Number of patents Issued	0	33	59

APPENDIX B
GROWTH IN DEMAND
 (CONTINUED)

	FY1987	FY2000	FY2005
--	--------	--------	--------

Information Technology

Supported workstations	N/A	427	529
IT Helpdesk tickets	N/A	2395	3925
Multimedia Services			
Video conferences	N/A	12	216
Webcast events	N/A	0	78
Access Grid seminars	N/A	0	126
Meeting support requests	N/A	1080	2328
Special events	N/A	12	48

Personnel

Employment applications	6,145	2,775	3,498
UCAR jobs priced in market	37	180	192
Total UCAR, UOP, & NCAR staff	791	1,216	1,446