

# OPTIMIZED ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY AT UC SAN DIEGO

## FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

*The Office of Operational Strategic Initiatives fosters a culture of continuous improvement at UC San Diego that embraces change with the department's tailor-made programs for measurement, assessment, analysis, training and coaching and continuous-innovation projects at the university. The department also shares its expertise with other universities across California and beyond.*

The Office of Operational Strategic Initiatives (OSI) at UC San Diego (UCSD) utilizes a holistic “system” approach to achieving strategic objectives and university mission alignment by asking, “Will what we did or decided today improve the student, faculty or principal investigator experience, and if not, why are we doing it?”

Data driven and human focused, OSI measures, assesses and utilizes analytics to identify divisional and departmental strengths and opportunities. The department also provides training, coaching and leads campuswide continuous-innovation projects. This is achieved through delivering end-to-end solutions, which include:

1. Insights through trended and benchmarked surveys
2. Idea campaigns through crowdsourcing
3. Scholarships for Lean Six Sigma certifications
4. Facilitation and implementation of strategic planning engagements.
5. Leading complex campus-wide projects

More than 1,500 people at UC San Diego have received their Lean Six Sigma yellow belts, 90-plus green belts and eight black belts, driving tens of millions of dollars in savings across UC San Diego. These efforts create engagement, transparency and a common language and understanding around process innovation, helping to shift the culture to one that embraces change as an enabler of success.

The initiatives extend beyond UC San Diego, and more than 10 universities across the University of California, the California State University system and institutions outside the state participate in OSI's benchmarking program. This participation is via customer experience and staff engagement surveys, delivering key metrics for “balanced scorecards,” and other continuous-improvement initiatives, as well as utilizing crowdsourcing to engage entities across the nation in “collective impact” efforts, to solve things that no single entity can solve on its own.

### MILESTONES

October 2013

- Operational Strategic Initiatives department is established by the chancellor as a direct outcome of UC San Diego's Strategic Plan

August 2015

- Lean Six Sigma green belt and yellow belt scholarships, training and culture efforts begin

October 2015

- Two initiatives, the Surveys and Analytics Program and the Ideawave Crowdsourcing Program, win the California Public Higher Education Focus on Efficiency Award

Sept 2016

- The Office of Operational Strategic Initiatives partners with UCSD Health to develop an aligned strategic plan with the UCSD Strategic Plan and also partners with health departments to cascade strategic goals throughout the organization

February 2017

- The Surveys and Analytics Program expands beyond California

July 2017

- Lean Six Sigma yellow belt training and strategic planning efforts are offered to UCSD Health, UC campuses and the University of California Office of the President

## QUANTIFICATION AND RESULTS

Tritonlytics, the analytics program at UC San Diego, currently serves 12 clients, including 10 California universities.

A total of 494 units and departments have participated in the customer satisfaction survey and/or employee engagement survey. More than 240,000 invited participants have had the opportunity to share their feedback so that campus administrative services and the work environment may be improved. Results are benchmarked and shared across clients so that best practices may be communicated.

Since assisting in the development of the UCSD Strategic Plan, OSI has continued to advance the strategic vision by hosting dozens of strategic planning endeavors for high-profile organizations and departments across UC San Diego.

OSI has sponsored 86 green belt and partial black belt scholarships in the past three years; their projects resulted in \$11.3 million in annual savings.

The UCSD yellow belt program has created a culture of efficiency by training more than 2,000 UCSD staff members and leaders, and more than 250 partnering staff members at other UC schools.

The Ideawave program has collected input from staff, faculty and students in 38 campaigns over three-and-a-half years resulting in 1,665 ideas and 4,671 comments, which is close to a 3-to-1 ratio of comments to ideas and signals high engagement with the program. There were 3,125 voters and 10,560 visitors.

## IMPACT AND BENEFITS

The Office of Operational Strategic Initiatives consolidates the necessary business skillsets into a comprehensive, neutral and culturally attuned internal consulting office that may be relied upon to partner with any department or campus team to initiate and deliver widespread and impactful change.

Strategic alignment is achieved through cutting-edge surveying, analytics and benchmarking UCSD's customers, staff and students by OSI's Organizational Assessment and Strategy team.

OSI's Strategic Initiatives Projects team leads large-scale advancements through continuous improvement and change initiatives to create a sustainable, supportive infrastructure for the university operations and growth.

Targeted improvement is sustained through the educational and cultural reinforcement efforts by OSI's Strategic Initiatives Programs team in addition to curating feedback and ideas from all UCSD stakeholders via innovative crowdsourcing techniques.

## PROJECT TEAM

**Bob Neuhard**  
executive director,  
Operational Strategic Initiatives

**Ashley Gambhir**  
senior director of Strategic Initiatives

**Angela Song**  
senior director of Tritonlytics

**Allorah Pradenas**  
managing director,  
Operational Strategic Initiatives

## LESSONS LEARNED

- 1 Executive sponsorship is important for successful initiatives, survey program accountability and implementation of actions from data-derived insights.
- 2 Diversity of educational and professional backgrounds is important for designing and implementing creative campus solutions.
- 3 Instead of relying on the effort of our staff alone, OSI learned to foster scalability through building capacity on campus with training, workshops, templates and resources (such as the Lean Six Sigma green and black belt scholarships and sponsorship of the UC San Diego Business Excellence Community of Practice).
- 4 It is important to have clear and consistent communication with both the customers and the units being rated about the purpose, vision and reason surveys are conducted and what will be done with the results and feedback.

## FURTHER REFERENCES

**UC San Diego Office  
of Operational  
Strategic Initiatives:**

<https://blink.ucsd.edu/sponsor/OSI/index.html>

