



The Operations Function: How Directors are Getting it Done

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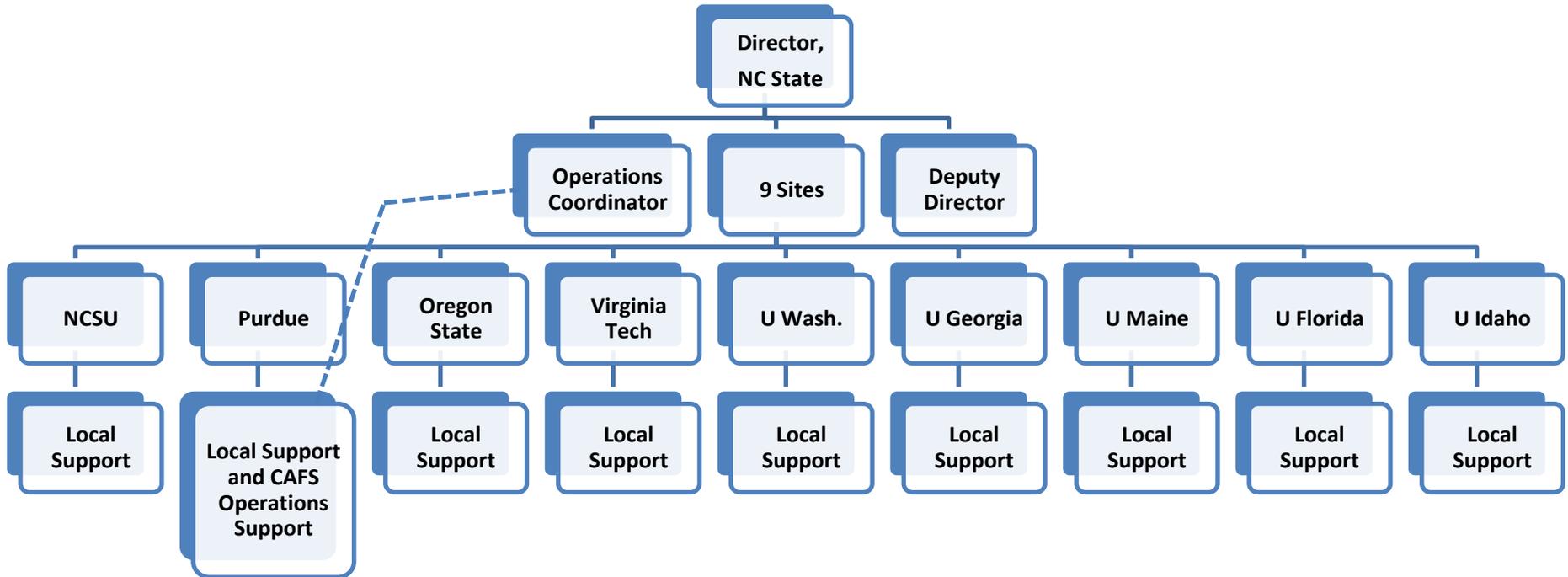


About our I/UCRC:

- Center for Advanced Forestry Systems (CAFS)
- Beginning Phase 2
- Been an I/UCRC 5.5 years
- North Carolina State University—Lead Site
- Other NSF Sites: Oregon State University, Purdue University, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Idaho, University of Maine, University of Washington, Virginia Tech
- Brings together pre-existing cooperative research programs
- The mission of CAFS is to optimize genetic and cultural systems to produce high-quality raw forest materials for new and existing products by conducting *collaborative research that transcends species, regions, and disciplinary boundaries.*



CAFS Organizational Structure: Operations



Our Operations Function:

CAFS' approach to accomplishing the operations:

- Director—NSF reports; communication with NSF, Site Directors, IAB Executive Committee; budget responsibility; university relations; university reporting; strategic planning.
- Deputy Director—IAB reporting; communication with Site Directors and PIs; research working group coordination; facilitate IAB Meetings; strategic planning.
- Operations Coordinator—I/UCRC reporting; communication with IAB and PIs on meetings and voting; website development and maintenance; planning and organizing IAB Meetings; membership database maintenance; document management.
- Operations Support—assist with planning and running IAB Meetings
- Site Directors with local support—NSF reports; promotional materials; recruiting and keeping members; technology transfer; university relations; project management.

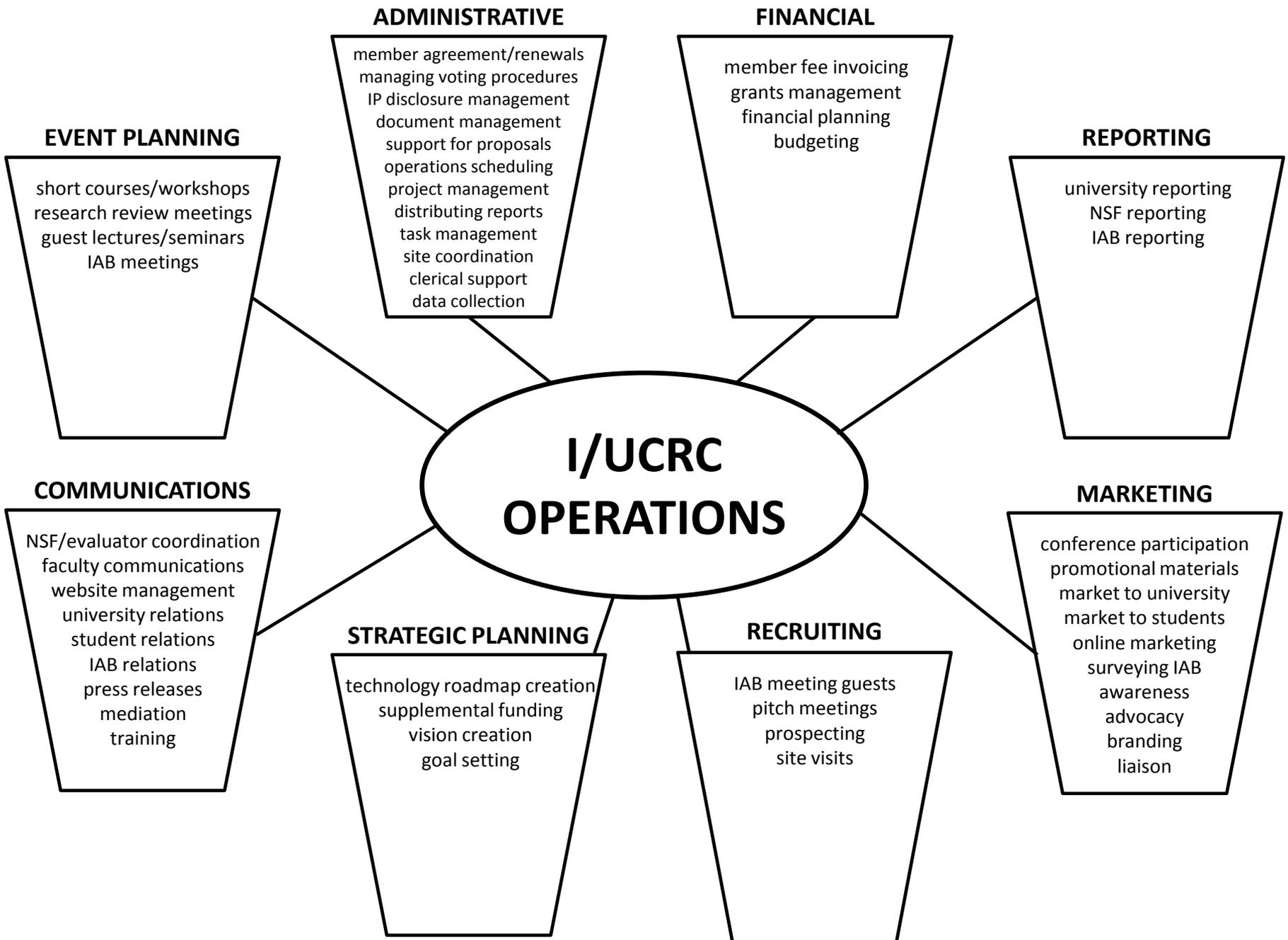


Our Operations Function:

CAFS' approach to accomplishing the operations (cont...):

- We utilize existing department and college support for—financial transactions and budgeting; registration service for IAB Meeting; student services for graduate students
- Funding for operations personnel:
 - Deputy Director—part-time, all funds from NSF
 - Operations Coordinator—half-time on Center with funds from NSF
 - Operations Support—one-fifth-time on Center with funds from NSF
 - Local Operations Support—varies by locale, including university and industry dues support
- Director day-to-day involvement: day-job as Head of a large academic department





What works well for us using this approach?

- Strong working relationships between Site Directors and members
- Productive IAB Meetings
- Good working relationships among all those with operations responsibilities
- Decentralized approach leads to Site individuality, creativity and responsiveness to members



What's not working so well?

- Decentralized approach:
 - Doesn't fully capitalize on joint marketing opportunities
 - Doesn't sufficiently result in highly coordinated collaborative research
 - Reduces researchers' responsiveness to requests coming from CAFS Central Operations
 - IAB tend to rely more on communications with their Site Directors rather than CAFS Central



To Summarize...

- CAFS is a large, but atypical center, resulting from bringing together pre-existing research cooperatives.
- As a result, we have a decentralized model, both for research and operations.
- Decentralization has both benefits and disadvantages.
- Because of the large size, operations support, coordination and communication are extremely important.
- Greater operations support could take CAFS to the “next level.”

