

Delta Institute Technology Team

Management Memo || 2013 Delta Institute

Welcome to the team! This management memo will introduce you to the vision, expectations, structures & measures of success for our work this summer.

Delta Institute Vision & Mission:

In the long term, we see a vibrant Delta where students have unlimited choices and opportunities and are able to positively impact their communities as a result of a rigorous and inspiring education.

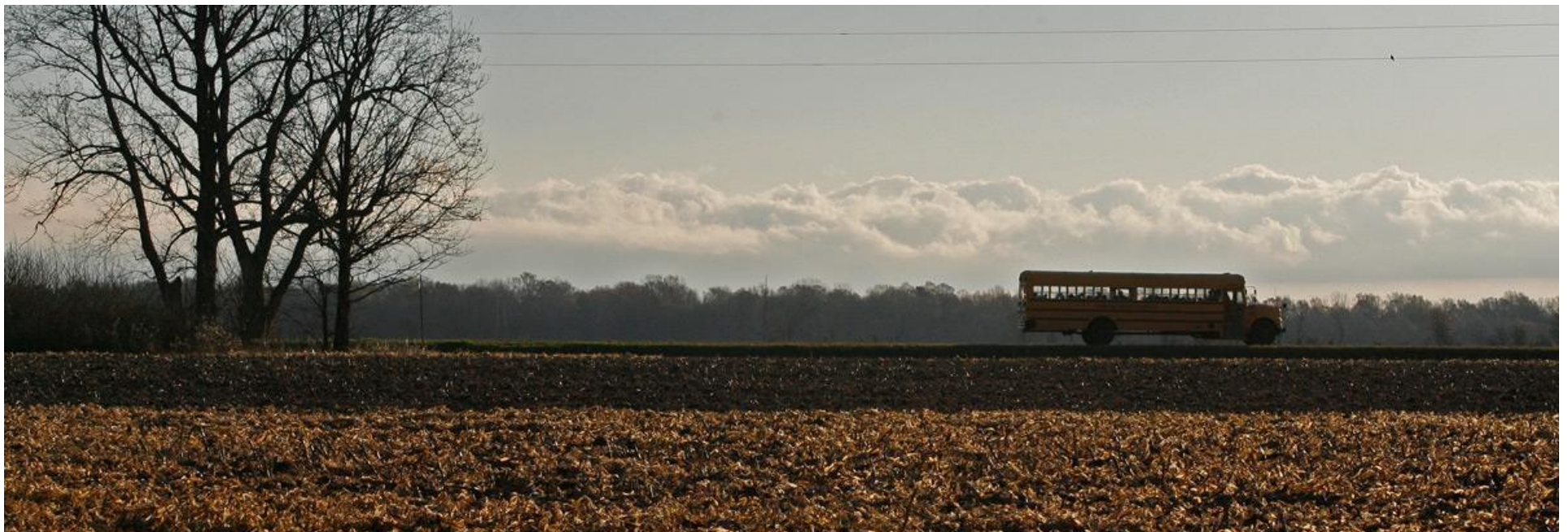
In the short term, our institute will play a vital role in helping to achieve this vision in our local communities each summer by... leading students to meaningful results in summer school, empowering adults in the movement to function out of their why, and authentically engaging our partners in our work

Institute Technology Team Vision

The technology team will equip leaders in classrooms and on the Delta State campus with the technology tools they will need to succeed at institute, and team members will contribute to an institute culture that is grounded in community, driven by a sense of partnership and bolstered by a commitment to reflection.

In This Memo...

2. Authentic Leadership
5. The Operations Team
6. IT Roles & Systems
7. Standards of Excellence
8. Management Principles
9. Communication Plan



Authentic Leadership

Before diving into the WHAT we are doing this summer and HOW we are going to do it, I want to share WHO I am and WHY I am in this work.

We Lead From Who We Are

At Teach For America, we have a set of five Core Values – Team, Leadership, Respect & Humility, Transformational Change and Diversity. Over the past two years, through concentrated effort and many arduous discussions, I have come to appreciate that final value in particular. We all have a history, a personality and an ambition in this life, and when we embrace those pieces of ourselves, we draw power from them. And when we build an organization around that power – the power of leaders engaged in their life’s passion – we are unstoppable. Crossing lines of difference is not always easy, and our identities are many-sided, but celebrating each leader in our work for who they truly are is vital to a strong team.

Our work this summer can bring more than just the satisfaction of a job well done. Work in operations does not affect students directly, but it does impact their teachers directly and it does take place in a community context, which gives us a wealth of opportunities: the opportunity to build relationships with more than 800 of the country’s most passionate young leaders; the opportunity to learn from communities that have been hailed as the quintessential America; and, if we choose it, the opportunity learn more about who we are and why we are here.

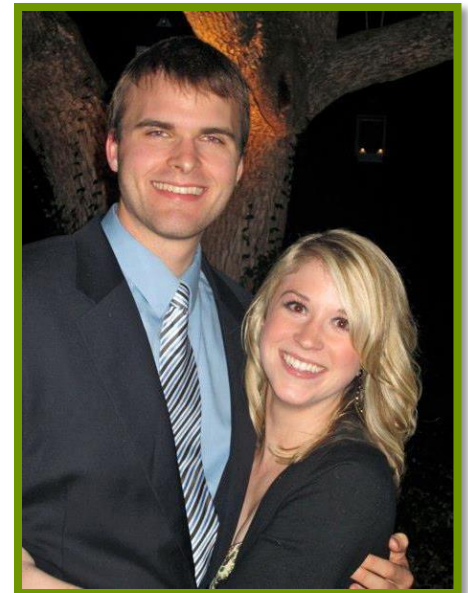
Learning who we are starts in our history. In that spirit, I would like to share a brief narrative with you – a piece of my own “story of self”.

Stephen’s Story of Self

My wife and I got engaged in the middle of our senior year of college. She had already received an offer from Teach For America to teach in Alabama, and I had recently completed my interview. I was an ideal candidate: graduated summa cum laude with majors in chemistry & philosophy; served as vice-president of my fraternity; ran a wildly successful campus-wide service day. I was confident that I had interviewed well. My wife and I were set: we’d be spending our first two years together as teachers.

I read the rejection letter in an internet café in Costa Rica. I was more confused than upset. They meant a different Stephen Bailey. Certainly... but as the days went by, it was clear they did not. Then, a ray of hope came: a staff position in Alabama was opening up, and I could interview for it. The next five months should have been some of the best days of my life – last semester of college, newly engaged – but instead were depressing, dragging on and on. Finally, in May, I was rejected again.

If I am honest, I was disappointed to be denied an opportunity to be a part of the education reform movement, denied the chance to lead students to bold new futures. It would have been great, so *meaningful*, to have taken two years “off” before medical school and been a part of something “big”, a “movement” for the



greater good of America and students everywhere. If I am *truthful*, though, my misery lay in the fact that without a job, I had no purpose. No passion.

I am fit, tall, straight, smart, white and male. The culture I live in has been designed by people like for people like me. The struggle of my life has not been against an institution, a person, prejudices or failure. It has been with, in a word, definition. What I fear more than anything is emptiness and regret. I am terrified that I will look back on my life and say, “I could have done so much more.” Rejection and joblessness are difficult, but they are struggles that people all across the world live with daily. For me, five months of brooding revealed how shallow much of my life was, even in the midst of other successes.

Two days after my final rejection, I got another call: the Alabama regional team did want to hire me after all. And I, suddenly, was no longer jobless. Of course, I still didn’t know anything about education reform, teaching, low-income communities, structural racism, answering 100 emails a day... and I was bad at the job initially. But in the welcoming, probing, energetic, purposeful environment of Teach For America, I began to heal.

Now, it’s clear: the privilege I grew up with does not imply purpose. Comfort cannot create happiness. Busy hands are not indicative of a fulfilled heart. My job at Teach For America did not bring me fulfillment in itself. But it allowed me to rediscover and reframe my passion for learning and for people. Working in schools and alongside teachers catalyzed my thoughts – it made me remember that so much of what I cherish is the result of my education.



I believe that learning, creating, reasoning, relating are the essence of being human. Insofar as an organization, a school, a teacher, or a parent makes a person more curious, more critical, more capable of reason, it ought to be praised. Insofar as a government, a society, a religion, or a person discourages a person’s intellectual growth it ought to be confronted.

This fall, I will begin a PhD program studying educational neuroscience at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. I plan on researching the biological basis of reading comprehension – with the intent of applying my findings to classroom practice. I chose to work at institute this summer because Teach For America is developing leaders who will unlock doors for thousands of children in Mississippi. Befriending, supporting and learning from these teachers is an honor – and a joy.

Who We Are Dictates What We Do

We will revisit the Story of Self this summer, and I will ask each of you to construct and share your own with the team. As you begin to reflect on your own story, remember: you are the leader you choose to be. Struggles & obstacles – or privileges! – that you have endured do not define you; how you choose to relate to them does. I am excited to begin working with YOU and finding out WHY you are in this work.

Who We Are: The Institute Technology Team

OC: Benny Chavez

College: University of Massachusetts - Amherst

Studies: Mathematics & Psychology

Hometown: Springfield, MA

In Three Words: Ambitious, Creative,

Knowledgeable About: Mathematics, Football, Current Events,
Educational inequality

You'd Never Suspect... I write poetry, I'm kind, and I am a Mexican American

Quote: Ambition is the path to success. Persistence is the vehicle you arrive in. - Wale



OC: Rachel Wang

College: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Studies: Psychology, Linguistics & TESOL

Hometown: Madison, WI

In Three Words: Quirky, hard working, sized"

Knowledgeable About: Structure of language/how it works, being prepared for any situation by carrying around everything one might need

You'd Never Suspect... I would make an excellent cat.

Quote: It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all - in which case, you fail by default...We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better. - J.K. Rowling



OC: Kait Boss

College: University of Wisconsin - Madison

Studies: Film/Digital Studies & European Studies

Hometown: Middleton, WI

In Three Words: Compassionate, Pragmatic,

Knowledgeable About: Disney movies, Harry Potter, dance, French Film, ice cream & sailing

You'd Never Suspect... I have an identical twin!

Quote: If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write things worth reading or do things worth writing. - Benjamin Franklin



DIT: Stephen Bailey

College: Samford University

Studied: Chemistry & Philosophy

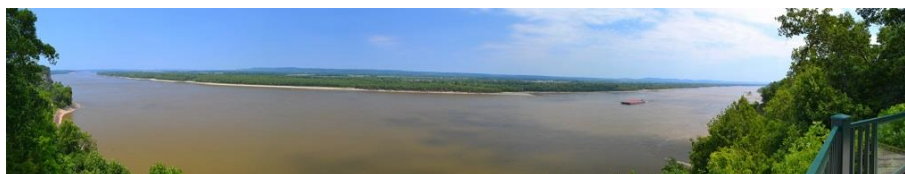
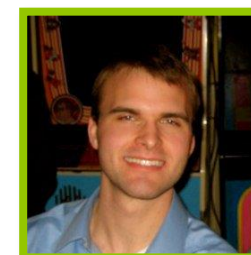
Hometown: Brownsburg, IN

In Three Words: Curious, Genial, Thoughtful

Knowledgeable About: 19th Century Continental Philosophy

You'd Never Suspect... I've driven a Dodge Caravan since getting my license eight years ago.

Quote: The highest and most beautiful things in life are not to be heard about, nor read about, nor seen but, if one will, are to be lived. - Soren Kierkegaard



The Operations Team

Vision for Operations

Delta State is the community epicenter of our institute; it is the place where our entire institute comes together and therefore must be a place that is welcoming for all of our corps members and staff and that allows opportunities for our entire community to connect to and interact with one another. The space must allow opportunity for all participants to bring their own personality and experiences to the table in order to push us all closer to embodying our core values and achieving our vision. The university site will also be the focal point of our community outreach, providing information on opportunities to learn more about or connect with the greater Delta community and the local Cleveland community.

The operations team will ensure that the basic needs of our corps members and staff are met so that their full energy and attention can be placed on our students' learning and progress and their own development toward that end. Not only will these basic needs be met through resources and services, but also through partnering with each other to problem solve through challenging situations. All staff and corps members must see themselves as owners and stewards of these systems and work to strengthen them through that lens. Through our systems and interactions, the operations team will also model mindsets and skills essential for TAL teachers. We will model efficient and effective teachers. We will model efficient and effective procedures and reinforce mindsets of ownership, problem-solving, partnership, and continuous reflection and improvement. Through our systems and interactions, we will also continue our institute-wide work of grounding adults in the why of their work, helping to provide the fuel that will drive their work for students this summer and beyond.

Cultural Priorities

Community

We learn about and are part of a shared space. We seek to build relationships with stakeholders and explore ways to work with our communities.

We recognize that there are many people and organizations that are, and have been, working towards educational inequity in the communities we serve. Given the gravity and nature of our work, aligning with other people and organizations is essential in making traction towards 'One Day.'

Partnership

We engage with others in our work as partners rather than customers. We care deeply for those with whom we work, and because of that can remain firm when necessary.

We do not seek solely to make corps members and staff happy in the short-term. Instead, we seek to establish a meaningful relationship that will allow us to jointly work together and problem-solve towards a joint mission.

Reflection

We create space to pause. We recognize our partners as leaders and believe that reflection is a key action in the process of personal and professional growth.

We will work to create space for partners to deeply consider themselves and their work. When done well, this will lead to a culture of deep critical thought, often in a way that leaves room for complexity.

IT Roles & Systems

The Institute Technology team's role is to equip and support with the technology needs they require to succeed this summer. Our efforts this summer will focus on eight different areas, outlined below.

Institute Print Lab

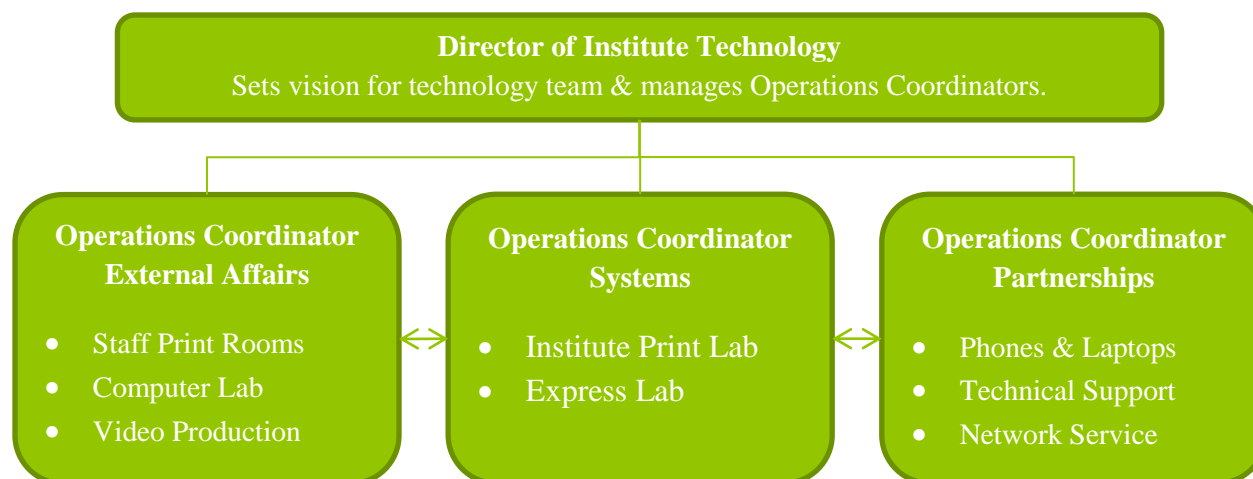
The Institute Print Lab is where corps members will collect all documents printed through Delta State's network. In conjunction with the copy center, this system provides the services required for CMs to produce and distribute effective lesson plans, handouts and visual aids. It will be frequented by nearly every corps member throughout the summer.

Express Lab

The Express Lab will provide an alternate printing option for CMs who need to check and correct documents and/or print from jump drives or email addresses. CMs will remain standing in the Express Lab as they finalize their projects for printing.

Technical Support

We are committed to providing prompt support to corps members and staff throughout the entire summer. All issues should be resolved within 24 hours. Our DSU partners will provide support for the tech team, although their services should be used sparingly.



Computer Lab

The Computer Lab will be a relaxing place to complete work. This will be an ideal workspace for teachers who do not have access to laptops or are lacking particular functionality like Microsoft Office, etc.

Staff Print Rooms

Staff printers will be set up in a private space available 24 hours a day. They will give staff a space to print the necessary materials to perform their duties. OCs will be responsible for ensuring the printers and computers are functioning properly and that the printers are stocked with paper and toner.

Staff Laptops & Cell Phones

The Delta institute provides laptops and cell phones for specific staff positions over the

summer for work purposes. Cell phones will be programmed with voicemail and contacts for staff members. All laptops will be equipped with the necessary programs for staff to excel in their roles as well as basic functionality like internet and video ports.

Network Service

A functioning internet connection is a crucial tool to running a successful Institute. Corps members rely on it for lesson planning, communicating and staying connected to world outside DSU. The Tech Team will handle communication surrounding network service.

Video Production

The Tech Team will support other functional teams with video production services throughout Institute, beginning with the Operations Tour video prepared during the setup weeks.

Standards of Excellence

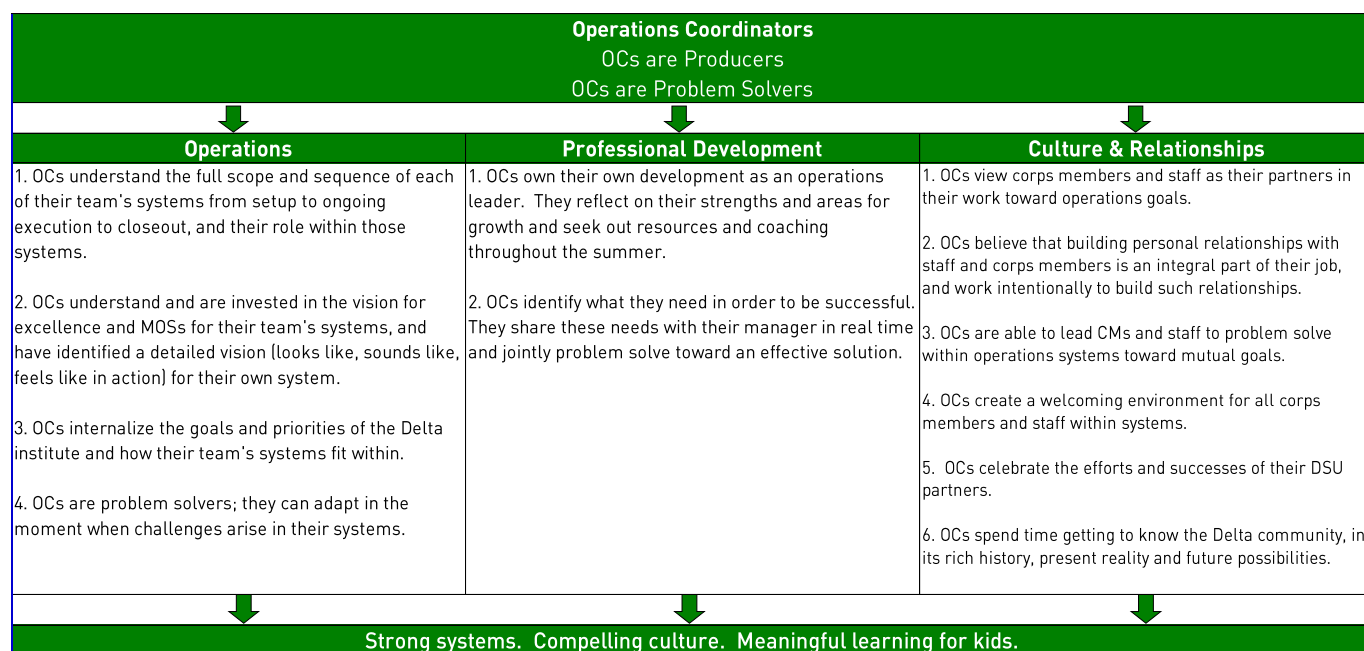
Institute Technology Goals

Print lab wait time:	00:00:00
Average time to respond to technical request:	2:01:35
Average time to resolve technical request:	3:39:36
Percent of CMs that will rate the survey question "I had convenient access to the internet capabilities I needed in order to operate effectively at the university site" as a 6 or better	45% *
Percent of CMs that will rate the survey question "I had convenient access to the printer services I needed in order to operate effectively at the university site" as a 6 or better	95%

Percent of CMs that will rate the survey question "I had convenient access to the computer services I needed in order to operate effectively at the university site" as a 6 or better	95%
Percent of CMs that will rate the survey question "I had convenient access to the tech support I needed in order to operate effectively at the university site" as a 6 or better	84%

* This number may seem low, but it is based on historical data.

Operations Coordinator Vision of Excellence



What this chart means: YOU ARE A LEADER.

Management Principles

As Your Manager, I Will...

1. Clarify. I will provide direction and clarity on all projects and work responsibilities. I will strive to ensure you always know WHAT the big goals that we as a team are striving towards and WHY those are the targets.
2. Catalyze. Constant growth is essential to personal and professional fulfillment. As your manager, I am positioned to provide you feedback and perspective on how you are performing and to identify possible areas of growth. I hope to be one of the first people you turn to when you begin looking for ways that you can improve yourself.
3. Contextualize. The Tech Team's work, however vital, is only one component of our operations systems and of Teach For America's work in the Delta this summer. I will help keep our team abreast of the progress we are making and ensure that no project strays from our fundamental mission.
4. Connect. Teach For America's big idea can be boiled down to this: bring the best leaders in the country into schools. The operations team alone is a rich source of knowledge and experiences, and I want to connect you, a potential leader in our movement, to incredible people and exciting ideas in our broader organization.

As Leaders on the Technology Team, We Will...

1. Learn. Students, teachers, OCs, ODs... all are in the learning business, and we must treat every person and place as a source of new knowledge, experience and perspectives. Throughout the summer, we will devote team time to sharing new knowledge, practices and ideas about our work and the communities we are living in.
2. Improve. We will operate with the shared mindset that success is not determined by where we are at the end of the summer but how far we have gone. Mistakes are opportunities to grow in the future, and a person who makes no mistakes is a person who is not reaching high enough.
3. Empower. We will use our own strengths to make others more effective leaders. The Tech Team is invested in the idea of improving the leadership of each CM, staff member & partner that we meet.
4. Befriend. We will enjoy this summer. Even though we take our achievements and development seriously, we will operate with a sense of joy and love. We celebrate the differences that give our team strength. Through strong friendships, we will build a deeper understanding of ourselves and our own identities, uncovering the values that drive us, as well as the biases and assumptions that may hold us back, in order to do our work better.



Communication Plan

Spring

- **OC Blast:** Posted on the Google site, contains updates, logistical information, call pre-work, reminders, important documents, etc.
- **All Ops Call:** Call is offered twice, each OC selects the call that works best with his or her schedule; Call covers introduction to your position (Teach For America, the institute model, team norms, etc.)
- **Tech Team Call:** Call led by OD, used to build team culture and introduce OCs to summer projects. You will receive the time of the call, the phone number, and pre-work in an e-mail from your OD.
- **One on Ones:** Used to build the manager/team member relationship and train the OC on the individual DOL and responsibilities of his/her system.



Institute – Setup (Weeks -1 & 0)

- **Kick-Off Training:** Upon moving into Delta State University, all OCs will receive a university tour, participate in a team dinner, and attend a brief kick-off session. OCs will also receive a variety of training sessions during the week, including sessions on Teach For America's branding standards, operating within the OC shift model, action planning, etc. These are designed to provide both information and professional development relevant to the OC role this summer.
- **Week 0 Training:** All institute staff will receive anti-harassment, risk management, and mental health training.
- **Action Plans:** Action plans are like detailed to-do lists. They include your schedule for the upcoming week and the tasks you'll be working on each day. We will be using David Allen's Getting Things Done theory to align around best practices during the first weeks of Institute. Strong action plans also include space for notes and questions that come up while you are working. All Teach For America staff members complete action plans weekly and upload to the Google site.
- **One on Ones:** This time will be used to check in on progress towards goals with each OC, get updates on their systems, identify areas for growth in systems, and in OC and OD performance, and build out a plan for OC professional development.