

Accounting & Financial Services MSO/CAO Forums
MSO/CAO Survey of Over-Controlled Processes
Executive Summary
November 2009

Introduction

Accounting & Financial Services has been conducting MSO/CAO Forums for several years at both the campus and the Medical Center. The Forums were initiated to inform the chief business officers about the latest financial and accounting issues and to hear about their concerns. We knew this year that the UC budget crisis was a significant concern causing all units to do more with declining resources. We, therefore, thought it timely to survey the [MSOs and CAOs or MSO/CAOs] regarding processes they feel are over-controlled, redundant or inefficient. The web-based survey was conducted in November 2009.

We received 88 responses from 86 employees who identified themselves as MSO (53), Contract & Grant Administrator (7), or Other (26). The 53 MSO's further identified themselves as academic (34), administrative (9), service (4), and other (6).

This executive summary presents a brief report of the actions that we are taking in response to the comments received. The complete comments, with our responses and proposed actions are available on the Accounting & Financial Services website at:

<http://accounting.ucdavis.edu/Surveys/mso1009/index.cfm>.

What We Can Do

Overall

We were pleased to receive many excellent suggestions which we have initiated or are planning to implement. Most of the suggestions involved reducing the need to handle paper and reducing or eliminating redundancy in approval processes. The responses also made it clear that Accounting and Financial Services needs to communicate more clearly the intent of policies so people better understand why a particular step is necessary. The actions we are taking in response to the survey should help ease the workload and reduce administrative costs.

Accounts Payable (10 comments)

Most of the comments about Accounts Payable concerned processes that still require staff to handle paper, particularly vendor invoices and purchasing card receipts. The Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) implemented by A&FS is proving successful at reducing paper handling, and the use of this system is gradually being expanded. The survey indicated a strong interest in handling EDMS scanning at the departmental level. We will look into extending the capability of the EDMS to include departmental scanning.

Based on the survey, we will also be taking action to improve handling of checks, reduce duplicate payments of sales tax, and generate fewer recurring vendor invoices and problems with expired vendors.

Accounting & Financial Services MSO/CAO Forums
MSO/CAO Survey of Over-Controlled Processes
Executive Summary
November 2009

Cash Handling (2 comments)

The vulnerability of cash to theft commands full accountability and there are several ways that could be achieved. Concerns about cash handling appear to arise from a lack of understanding about cash handling policies and permissible cash handling options. Our responses to these concerns will be aimed at better communicating cash handling options.

Contracts & Grants (7 comments)

The suggestions we received regarding contracts and grants were primarily related to research compliance, e.g., payroll transfers, award numbering, cost transfers, billing IDs, effort reporting and receiving authorization to expend funds in advance of the award. Suggestions are being implemented both with DaFIS and with the upcoming implementation of Kualii Coeus, the research administration system, where this will be greatly simplified in the Labor Distribution module. Because Kualii Coeus will be fully integrated with the Kualii Financial System, we will have greatly increased capabilities to further address these concerns in the near future. A DaFIS Service Request has been created in response to survey responses regarding Billing ID problems. The Sponsored Projects Office has also established several ways for customers to contact them for assistance.

Ledger Review (9 comments)

Suggestions focused primarily on enhancing the General Ledger Review System and moving away from the current paper-based reviews of the payroll ledgers. DaFIS Service Requests have been entered to connect the Account Maintenance Document to General Ledger Review plans, enhance auto-annotation of MyTravel and UCD Buy transactions, and to link ledger reviews of Purchasing Card FPD documents to their associated DC documents. The General Ledger review workload will also be reduced by adjusting the statistical sampling parameters and establishing a “floor” amount below which a transaction will not require ledger review.

Payroll (19 comments)

The complexity of Payroll processing and coding transactions combined with the challenge of training staff were significant concerns that support the concept of shared service centers, where these transactions will be handled by specialists as a service to departments. A Payroll concern specific to UCDHS is the need for the UCDHS PeopleSoft system to interface with PPS. Policy clarifications are needed in areas such as honoraria, pay calculations for holidays, and retroactive salary increases. More importantly, PPS and OPTRS are old, out-of-date systems. Efforts are underway to replace them, and we are considering whether the Kualii Labor Distribution system would meet this need. There is also a strong desire to make the timekeeping system developed by the College of Letters and Science available to the campus.

Purchasing (8 comments)

Suggestions focused primarily on low value purchases, including the Purchasing Card and UCD Buy. Paper handling was the primary cause of difficulty. A DaFIS Service Request has been created to enable

Accounting & Financial Services MSO/CAO Forums
MSO/CAO Survey of Over-Controlled Processes
Executive Summary
November 2009

departments to scan in Purchasing Card receipts, reference the Feed Payment Distribution (FPD) document number(s), and allow retrieval of the documents from Decision Support. Policy clarifications were needed for low value consulting agreements and purchases. Suggestions from this survey will also be factored into the next update of UCD Buy.

Travel & Entertainment (18 comments)

Comments focused mainly on the MyTravel System. While it is considered an improvement over the former TEV process, MyTravel is thought to be overly complex. It is highly likely that a travel and entertainment module in the Kuali Financial System will likely replace MyTravel. As partners in developing Kuali systems, we have provided suggestions from this survey for addressing MyTravel concerns in areas such as delegations, routings, and department specific policies. Survey responses included to enhance the current process for academic removals, and we are working with the Chancellor's Office to develop a better form. A DaFIS Service Request was created to allow account managers to look at an account and see the projected travel expense even on pending expense reports. To ease the difficulty with pre-trip deposits, we are looking into creating a variation on the VI document (e.g., a T-VI and E-VI) that could be used to pay against a DPO and thus close it automatically, while still capturing the required Travel or Entertainment data required by the federal tax code.

Other (15 comments)

DaFIS: Service Requests have been created to add the ability to sort queries alphabetically and by Last Run Date, and to improve the process of moving DaFIS transactions from the default account to a sub-account.

Equipment: We are reviewing the UC Davis inventory process to improve efficiency. Enhancements include reducing the number of required signatures through electronic routing of inventory certifications. We are also considering discontinuing physical inventories of equipment that is fully depreciated and will work with UCOP to determine if this is possible. Department selling equipment through the Bargain Barn will be encouraged to save money by using the Bargain Barn's Drop-Off Service, which includes electronic recycling, neutralizing stored data, and sales or re-use of items with remaining usable life. The suggestion received to use electronic inventory tools including network scanning or GPS devices to facilitate inventory is excellent and will be included in our analysis of the implementation of the Kuali Capital Asset Management System (CAMS) module.

Human Resources: In response to concerns regarding training for the Aggie Job Link: classes will continue to be available through Staff Development, instructions will be added to more places (such as our FAQ section and various Help files), and we will add contextual help screens about how to specify more than one recipient of application submissions. The "Resume Receipt" field has been expanded with a more detailed explanation of each available option. In response to concerns about recruitment

Accounting & Financial Services MSO/CAO Forums
MSO/CAO Survey of Over-Controlled Processes
Executive Summary
November 2009

management, HR will be working with the PeopleAdmin vendor to explore how we can avoid duplication of requested information to further streamline and ensure user satisfaction.

Academic Personnel:

Many suggestions received fit with new ideas that are being tested in the most recent version of MyInfoVault (MIV) released January 20, 2010. Academic Personnel agrees that the use of MIV will reduce redundant workload and staff time, and urges departments and review committees to use MIV. Academic Personnel is not requiring paper copies of dossiers that are submitted in MIV. MIV allows routing to College/School Personnel Committees and review by central review committees (CAP, Federation, and Joint). The School of Veterinary Medicine, for example, uses a merit template that downloads data from MIV into a concise summary, eliminating the need for a multi-page department letter for merit reviews. Last spring, Vice Provost Horwitz convened a workgroup to examine ways to streamline the process for Academic Federation appointments and review. As a result, deans were delegated more authority for Specialist and Project Scientist titles and the requirement for extramural letters was eliminated or reduced dependent upon the appointee's rank. Templates were developed to facilitate the process appointments, and for merits and promotion for those who are not currently using MIV. Academic Personnel is hoping to add the appointment process to MIV in the near future pending additional funding and appreciates the support of users.

Several electronic voting modules are also available for departments to use with MIV without the need for integration. The resulting vote can be uploaded into the department letter included in the MIV dossier. Allowing departments to choose from an existing voting module also provides the flexibility to adapt and customize any of the voting modules currently available.

Reorganization Due To Budget Reductions: This and all the survey responses were shared with the Chancellor's Organizational Excellence Initiative team.