CNS /Update Newsletter Feature

Accounting: Fueling the Future

CNS Document ID: u011105a
Last Updated: 10/24/01

UF Information Technology

UFIT

2046 NE Waldo Rd, Suite 2100
Gainesville Florida 32609-8942
(352) 392.2061
<editor@cns.ufl.edu>
Table of Contents

Accounting: Fueling the Future ................................................................. 3
  Customer Friendly .............................................................................. 3
  Models of Efficiency ........................................................................... 3
  Past, Present, Future .......................................................................... 3
Accounting: Fueling the Future

Accounting is one of those functions that rarely gets noticed unless something goes wrong, yet these functions are absolutely essential to the health of any organization. NERDC is no exception to that rule. The work that NERDC's Accounting section does affects every aspect of our organization, as they quietly and efficiently work to assist NERDC customers, put NERDC budgets in place, and keep NERDC's policy leaders informed. They also manage accounts receivable, reconcile expenditures, prepare financial statements, and monitor cash flow.

Sandra Bass, senior accountant, and Liz Villardefrancos, senior fiscal assistant, along with Assistant Director Carol Wucker, make up NERDC's Accounting team. This three-person office works closely with other NERDC sections to accomplish its goals. Coordinator of Computer Applications Jim Arnette makes sure Accounting has the correct actual customer usage of computing time for billing purposes. NERDC's front office personnel, headed by Coordinator of Administrative Services Yvonne Dumas, works with Accounting to track major purchases (items costing more than $1,000)-which can include everything from office equipment to mainframe computers-so that every item is recorded and depreciated correctly. In addition to her other duties, Wucker is responsible for reporting on NERDC's financial health to the Policy Board, NERDC's governing body.

Customer Friendly

A large part of the Accounting team's responsibilities includes direct customer service. If you need to set up or close a NERDC account, make a change to the funding for your account, or if you've just forgotten your password, these are the people who can help you. "The beginning of each semester and after holidays and vacation periods are our busiest times," said Bass. "More people are making changes to their accounts during these times, and they also tend to forget their passwords after time away from work."

Bass and Villardefrancos agree on one thing about the "forgotten password" calls. "We'd rather have people call us when they've forgotten their passwords than have the password written down where someone else might see it."

Bass and Villardefrancos, who are the "front-line" customer service representatives for the Accounting group, also say that a large part of what they do is to direct customers to the people who can help them. "We get a lot of questions about GatorLink, and those we send to CIRCA," said Villardefrancos. Bass adds, "Many people call thinking that we can help them with FLAIR or other outside systems. We try to get them to the right place for their questions."

Models of Efficiency

One of the guiding principles of the Accounting team and their partners within NERDC over the last several years has been a move toward greater efficiency, both within the NERDC structure and with regard to customer service. For one thing, they have been able to sustain their high levels of service with fewer staff members than in previous years. Another example: although more people than ever have NERDC accounts (as measured by the number of active userids), Accounting actually sends out fewer bills than ever, thanks in large part to the implementation of multi-year bulk rate contracts (BuRCs) for NERDC's largest customers.
Past, Present, Future

Wucker is pleased with the progress in information gathering and sharing her group has made over the last year, and she plans to continue this trend. "One of my goals for the future of Accounting at NERDC is to use technology to answer questions more efficiently. Within NERDC, I would like to see us able to provide, not just numbers and reports, but a way to use those numbers and reports to provide real answers to questions management has about where we stand financially and why."

Your Comments are Welcome

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this and all UFIT documentation. Please send your comments to:

UF Information Technology

UFIT

2046 NE Waldo Rd, Suite 2100
Gainesville Florida 32609-8942
(352) 392.2061
<editor@cns.ufl.edu>