CNS /Update Newsletter Feature

Bridges: One Year Later

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By Dr. Michael Conlon, UF Director of Data Infrastructure and PeopleSoft Implementation Officer

By now we all know the story. The University of Florida chose to implement PeopleSoft and converted from legacy systems in human resources, finance, grants administration, reporting and portal in the largest single day conversion in higher education on July 1, 2004.

The resulting changes were very difficult – reporting did not and to this day does not deliver the stability, performance and results that people need to do their jobs. Other parts of the system have stabilized. Most departments have mastered the basic processes of hiring, payroll distribution, purchasing, grant administration, portal navigation, travel and expense, budgeting, time and labor, asset management and billing. Many elements of the system can be improved. Reporting is being improved. Much of the data in the system can be improved. Work processes can be improved.

The move to new systems was precipitated by the need to provide services being withdrawn by the state. As the University moved from a state entity to a public entity, the need arose to locally provide services previously provided by the state. Treasury function, payroll and general ledger had all been provided by the state and had to be provided locally. Grant administration had outgrown the limiting state accounting system, SAMAS. The University needed to provide increased department access to data to support its diverse business needs. Workflow was needed to speed up business processes and reduce processing costs.

The PeopleSoft system provides all these capabilities and quite a bit more. As the University community adapts to the new business processes, new terminology and new software, there are new opportunities to provide additional information and to simplify processes.

New project reports provide direct access to information needed by all grant administrators. These reports are provided on-line in PDF format for quick access – no time consuming selections, no questions to answer, no cubes to transform or manipulate and no “walking gator.” In the past several weeks, reports have been produced for all projects open during the past seven years – over 19,000 projects in all. Most projects have an expense summary. Active projects have additional reports for expense detail, open encumbrances and payroll cost distribution. Over 30,000 projects reports were generated in June. These reports were designed in a collaborative effort with principal investigators, grant administrators and representatives of DSR, Contracts and Grants, the Controller’s Office and Bridges. Additional reports will be produced in the coming year.

There have been many suggestions for improving the system. Hundreds of improvements have been made during the first year of operation. Many hundreds more will be made in the coming year. Some will make the system faster. Some will make it easier to use. Some will correct errors. Some will provide new services. Some will provide services from older systems to be retired.
The university’s use of PeopleSoft is just beginning. We appreciate the tremendous effort people have made to get through the conversion, to keep things running, to learn and to suggest improvements. There is much that can and will be done to improve the system.

Your Comments are Welcome

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

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