

New Directions

Quality Improvement in Financial Management at the University of Washington

Vol 2, No 3

HEADLINES

Summer 2003

Letter from the Editor, Summer 2003

by Kristie Dunne

The smell of barbecues and laughter of picnics are in the air! It is summer now and we have a sizzling, hot off-the-press issue of Directions for you to enjoy. See how space is the most constraining factor in expanding the U.W. in Debt Authority. We learn what cost sharing is and why it is so important to Grant & Contract Accounting in Cost Sharing Team. Student Fiscal Services have been working hard to improve their services and you will see how their efforts are paying off in Spring Survey of Customers.

When reading *Becoming Knowledge-driven in Financial Management* we see how the web is changing the work we do. Our sensitivity to diversity is growing and we are formalizing our responses in *Mentoring Program Workshop*. Be sure to have a chuckle with R.Q. Teasdale in *Have a Quality Summer*.

Recognition is alive and well in Financial Management! *Kudos* gives us insight into great things people are saying about our co-workers and the *RQT Roundup* rounds this out by telling us what formal awards have been received. Learn what the leader of the RQT Survey Team has to say about how we feel about recognition and find that we have a new recognition team to promote recognition here in *As the RQT Turns*. Finally, be sure to check out our newest feature *Financial Management 101*. This quarter, we focus on Payables Administration.

Have a great summer from all of us at *New Directions*.



I Need to Know More About This – Becoming Knowledge-driven in Financial Management

by Kate Riley

You probably know that the web is changing the way work gets done in Financial Management. More and more transactions are being done by our customers—they are entering the data that our staff used to be responsible for. If the transactions are being done by our customers, what does that leave for our staff to do?

This question has been at the heart of the Lead Team's work for the past year. How do we move from being transaction-driven to being knowledge-driven? What would we need to do differently to become knowledge-driven? What does "knowledge-driven" mean anyway?

To answer these questions, the Lead Team had to create some knowledge for itself. To better understand the emerging field of "Knowledge Management," we explored many sources. We reviewed books; yes, there is even a *Complete Idiot's Guide to Knowledge Management*. We asked colleagues in Financial Management what being knowledge-driven meant to them. We read management papers to see what experts were advising. To learn more yourself, a helpful web site for information on this topic is Destinationkm.com.

Out of this work emerged a realization for the Lead Team that being knowledge-driven involved two basic steps: 1) the ability to create knowledge; and, 2) the capacity to share it. Being knowledge-driven, then, is the process of constantly learning from our on-going work to better understand what our customers need and what is required to make our processes more efficient. Creating new

knowledge is not enough. We must also be able to share the new learning among ourselves and with campus.

With this two-step model for being knowledge-driven, our team was able to develop activities to ensure that we could achieve these goals. Our first step was to make a presentation to the EIT about our work, the model, and our plans for realizing it. You can see the presentation on-line at (URL). With the go-ahead from our sponsor, V'Ella Warren, and support from the EIT, we are focusing ini-

tially on identifying those policies and procedures which are non-standardized, confusing, and where knowledge by our staff is less than complete. We are inviting campus administrators to participate in identifying these areas through a series of focus groups. From these discussions, we are anticipating that we will learn a lot about how we can better create and share knowledge in some of our key processes. Look for more developments on this strategic initiative later this summer.



Lead Team, from left:

Linda Braziel, Cindy Gregovich, Tami Sadusky, Karen Long, Jane Wiseman, Kate Riley (team leader), Scott Davies, Bill Christensen and Pam Luther

As the RQT Turns

by Zach Luther

Another RQT term is up, and a new team has assembled to take over the responsibility of promoting recognition in Financial Management. Unlike past teams who served for 18 months, this new group will serve a 12 month term with a two month extension to train the following team. This change came out of the results of the RQT survey, which suggested that an 18-month term was too long, and that it would be beneficial for the RQT to receive an infusion of “new blood” more frequently. Based upon this feedback, the previous team decided to shorten the term length for future teams, and this new team will be the first under the new system.

The new team members are **Mai Lin Chua** (SFS), **Lauren Collins** (GCA), **Celia Durham** (Payables Admin), **Lisa Edlin** (Treasury), **Zach Luther** (FM Administration), **Lisa Scheyer** (Payroll), **JR Sloan** (Payroll), and **Kiet Tran** (GCA). The team will be facilitated by **Suzette Ashby-Larrabee** (MAA). **Laura Lai** (Treasury) and **Ruchi Aggarwal** (MAA) will stay on for two months as leader and facilitator respectively, to teach the new team how the RQT works. The new team members are very excited about their roles, and bring a lot of enthusiasm and new ideas to the process.

In the short time the new team has been active, they have begun promoting the BRAVO award (a

brainchild of the previous team), and have orchestrated multiple formal award ceremonies. They've also been meeting frequently with previous team members in an effort to benefit from their ideas about marketing, communications, the Person-to-Person Breakfast, and other issues. The team has a number of projects in the works, so expect to hear about more new developments in the near future.

The new team is receiving a terrific number of formal award nominations. It's a tribute to the hard work and extra effort people put in, and proof that people notice when they receive high-quality assistance. One of the projects the new team is working on is redesigning the nomination forms for the TOPS, LINQ and QSTEP awards. The content and requirements of the awards will not change,

but the forms will be laid out in a new format that will make them easier and more intuitive to fill out. Once completed, the improved forms should make it more convenient than ever to nominate someone.

The RQT website has changed along with the team, and now offers a new layout, RQT meeting minutes for those who like to keep informed, and an improved system for viewing award photos. The site is updated after every meeting and every formal award, so there's always something new to see. Visit it online at <http://www.washington.edu/admin/finmgmt/qi/rqt/>.

Your RQT representative is always willing to talk to you about the program, and answer any questions you have about recognition. Feel free to stop by his or her desk, or drop your rep a line at any time!



Recognition Quality Team, rear, from left:

J.R. Sloan, Kiet Tran, Zach Luther, Lisa Scheyer, Lauren Collins, Mai Lin Chua and Rosemarie Valencia

front, from left:

Celia Durham, Lisa Edlin, and Suzette Ashby-Larrabee

New Debt Authority a Real Space-Maker

by the Debt Financing Group, Treasury Office

What is the single most constraining factor in expanding the UW and remaining nationally competitive in research? Space. As NIH budgets continue to grow, promising UW research to be funded by grants is either being left unfunded or postponed until space becomes available. This puts the University at a distinct disadvantage with competing research institutions. Unfortunately, given intense competition for State of Washington capital dollars, the State is less able to provide funding for new research facilities through direct capital appropriations.

The University addressed this dilemma in low profile legislation submitted earlier this spring. This legislation gave the UW and WSU authority to enter into financing arrangements to help fund research facilities. This financing authority will enable the two research Universities to leverage private gift and grant funds by substantially reducing the time to finance research facilities and increasing the certainty that a transaction will be completed. Additionally, the new legislation complements au-

thority that was granted last session that allows the Universities to issue their own long term bonds to be paid back with indirect cost revenue.

Financial Management personnel partnered with Government Relations, the Budget Office, and the Attorney General to develop the draft legislation, shepherd it through the legislative process, and answer questions from legislative staff. It was a great relief to all involved when the word came from Olympia that the proposed legislation will become law in July of 2003.

The impact of this change on the future of research at UW is measured in turnaround time and research dollars. It will soon be possible for administrators to identify a need, develop a financing plan, and fund a research building in a much shorter time period. The months and years saved could mean the difference between a large research grant staying at UW or going to another school. This vital improvement will help carry UW's "margin of excellence" into the future.

The Debt Financing Group is Doug Breckel, Scott Davies, and Chris Malins.

Mentoring Program Workshop:

The First Steps

by Erick Winger

More than a year of hard work by the Mentoring Diversity Team has gone into developing the Mentoring Program for Financial Management. After the long wait, the first group of mentoring pairs took their initial steps in their venture. On May 14th, 17 pairs gathered together in the Ethnic Cultural Center to participate in the inaugural Mentoring Program Workshop. This workshop put the mentors and mentees side-by-side for eight full, exhilarating hours. They spent the day learning about the mentoring experience and, more importantly, about each other.

Ruth Johnston, master of ceremonies for the day, received eager and undivided attention from the mentors and mentees from beginning to the end of the workshop. The pairs started off by getting

to know each other and sharing what brought them to where they are today. They also learned the mechanics and value of a mentoring relationship. Eric Davis, diversity consultant and adviser at UW, provided a diversity lesson which honored the diversity focus of the program. Furthering the diversity focus, Ruth guided the group through an exercise that split participants into small discussion groups according to three particular characteristics. The characteristics were: age, gender, and whether English was a first or second language. The groups heard revealing, entertaining and rarely mentioned views from each other. The true value of the workshop is the lasting effect it will have on the pairs and their growth. With the seed planted, it is now up to the participants to begin their journey.

The expectation that mentors and mentees meet a minimum of once per month was clearly established and many pairs planned to meet more fre-

quently. Mentees began the process of establishing goals, with the help of their mentors, and discussing how to accomplish them. More importantly, they were given the tools to continue this process. Mentors were given a blueprint to effectively assist the mentees throughout their growth process.

Thus begins a journey for 34 Financial Management employees. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire before departing. The questionnaire is intended to reveal some of the attitudes, concerns, goals, and aspirations of the mentors and mentees before beginning the mentoring experience. They will again be surveyed

upon completion of the program. At that time the initial and final responses can be compared. The workshop ended with a reminder that the Mentoring Diversity Team is available to assist participants throughout this process. If the success of the workshop is any indication of the end results of the program, it will be very exciting to see the progress and growth of the Mentoring Program's first participants.

For additional information about the Mentoring Program please visit the website at: <http://www.washington.edu/admin/finmgmt/pmp/>.



V'ella Warren and Denise Lim



Paul Jeganathan and Stepheny Bonner



Karem Martinez and Cindy Gregovich



Frannie Gladney and Brenda Grayson



Scott Davies and Erin Courtney



Ruth Johnston at the Mentoring Workshop

Summer Event by Zach Luther

The annual Summer Event is once again in the works! Each year, the Executive Improvement Team (EIT) works with the RQT to put on this Financial Management-wide event. It's an informal event, and its goal is to recognize all FM staff for

their hard work and commitment throughout the year. This year it will be on September 9th from 1:00–4:00, at the Physics/Astronomy Plaza. More details will be forthcoming as the planning progresses. There will be lots of food and fun, so we hope to see you there!

Cost Sharing Team Provides Information, Saves Time

by Suzette Ashby-Larrabee

What is Cost Sharing?

Cost sharing is a requirement by a sponsor that the University share in the cost of research. Recording and reporting cost share accurately are federal requirements. It is important for GCA to track cost sharing to enable grants to close in a timely manner. Careful tracking also ensures a high level of customer service by providing accurate data to departments.

The cost sharing team in Grant and Contract Accounting (GCA) was originally formed in the fall of 2001 to develop a measurement for the strategic plan. The team subsequently took on responsibility for several other cost share projects.

The team is currently composed of **Suzette Ashby-Larrabee** and **Cecilia Pittman**, co-leaders, **Brenda Grayson**, **Lauren Collins**, **Joe Nguyen** and **Lily Gebrenegus**.

The team has four major accomplishments that are either completed or nearing completion.

- The first project was the development of a measurement for the strategic plan. Since there was a significant number of expired budgets with cost share that had not been documented, the team decided to measure the percent of budgets expired more than 90 days that had unmet cost share. From March 2002, when the first measurement was taken, to March 2003, the number of expired budgets with unmet cost share decreased from 40% to 13%.
- In part, this decrease was due to another improvement made by the cost share team with the help of **Sam Senturia**. An unmet cost share database was developed in Access. This database enables individuals working on cost sharing to create reports on demand and to add progress notes to document communication with departments.

This database is being tested and the team will soon offer training to areas of GCA that would benefit from access to this data, primarily those concerned with closing grants. In addition, quarterly letters will be generated from this database to inform department administrators and principal investigators of the status of all their cost sharing commitments.

The database has also been helpful in providing the team with information about the problems encountered when cost share is found to be unmet on expired budgets. The team has compiled a detailed list of these problems and has developed possible solutions. Some of these have already been implemented, increasing the ability to close budgets in a timely manner.

- The team has completed writing comprehensive cost share articles for publication on the web. These pages provide departments with detailed information and instructions regarding setting up and reporting cost sharing. The web pages can be located at the following web site, <http://www.washington.edu/research/gca/webpage/spend.html>.
- The last major project that the team is completing is a manual of cost sharing policies and procedures. This manual will contain both general policy and information about cost sharing, as well as detailed instructions for GCA and Management Accounting and Analysis on how to set up and document cost sharing.

New Directions is published quarterly by the Office of Financial Management at the University of Washington.

Please visit the web site at:

www.washington.edu/admin/finmgmt/qi/directions/july03/ for the on-line version of this newsletter.

Have a Quality Summer! Using QI Principles to Increase Summer Fun

By Dr. R.Q. Teasdale

Sung to the tune of “Frere Jacque”:

*Days are longer, sunshine’s stronger.
Summer’s here! Summer’s here!
Lets jump through the sprinkler,
And make pareto diagrams.
Summer’s here! Summer’s here!*

The sun is staying up later and getting up earlier... summer must be here! Summer days are lazy, relaxing days, times when barbeques and swimming and boating with friends become the priority. Summer almost always means fun and we’d all agree that more fun is better than less.

I’ve seen a lot of summers in my very long life (I’ll be 93 on Tuesday!) and have learned that the enjoyment of this warmest of seasons can be greatly increased if just a few simple QI principles are used.

As sure as suntan lotion and mosquitoes, Independence Day is going to come. Inevitably, Fourth of July fireworks come right along with it. Lighting firecrackers is a perfect opportunity to implement an **error free attitude!** If you don’t believe me, I can put you in contact with two of my colleagues: Steve “one-hand” Madson and Lucy “no-face” Carter.

Summer just wouldn’t be summer without barbecues. And vice versa. As the famous grilling guru George Foreman once said, “No barbecue, no summer”. Getting the food cooked just right requires vast knowledge, high level skill, and intense concentration. In short, a **total commitment.** And what is the cornerstone of quality improvement? That’s right, total commitment. Commit yourself to the grilling process, from the size of your apron to the weight of your tongs. Don’t skimp on the sauce and remember, flip it twice to eat it once. Make Foreman proud!

If someone tells you to go jump in a lake in the summertime, you thank them. Lake swimming is one of summer’s great joys and another opportunity to integrate the Quality ethos into your warm weather life. As all swimmers know, proper technique is vital to self propelled water travel. The book, Swim Right or Don’t Swim At All by

Wade N.Z. Waterman is available in a waterproof format (\$499.95 at inflatablebooks.com). Purchase a few copies of this book and strap them to your back when swimming. Then, if you see a swimmer who is using incorrect technique, throw one of the books at him while calling out, “Hey buddy, learn how to swim!” Remember, **Quality is everyone’s business.**

Another summer tradition perfect for incorporating Quality is the venerable road trip. Most of us have fond childhood memories of sweating in the backseat of a hot car, eating greasy food, and traveling great distances to a campsite with nothing but pit toilets. But now that we’re all grown up, we’re doing the driving. But what do driving and QI have in common? You guessed it.... **Dashboards!** When preparing for a long road trip, I always tape my QI dashboard right over my car dashboard. Then I am able to study it while driving in heavy city traffic. It’s also great to read to youngsters instead of letting them play hand-held video games. Although my own kids have grown up, retired, and passed away (did I mention that I’ll be 93?), I know that young children are fascinated by **gap analysis** and perk right up when the topic is **strategic planning.**

Have a great summer and always keep in mind: **When you find a process, by golly get busy and improve it!**



Dr. Teasdale received his doctorate in Television Viewing and Cellular Biology from the College of Universal Life at P.O. Box 3763, Loma Vista, CA.

Paying More With Less

Payables Administration

by Kristie Dunne

Financial Management, like the UW, is a large and diverse organization. On any given day, there are more than 200 people working hard to fulfill the mission and goals of the division. Reading Directions and looking at departmental dashboards gives us a peek into the improvements and accomplishments of other groups. But often, the articles and measurements leave us wanting more. What exactly is an RST? Or a CTI? How do we all work together to support the university? What you are about to read is the first in an ongoing series of “Fin Man 101” articles on a specific department within Financial Management. These feature articles will provide background and context on the department being discussed and will give the reader a better appreciation of any future improvements the department may undertake. This quarter, we invite you to get to know **Payables Operations**.

Do you need to get something paid or your accounting question answered? Payables Administration (PA) can do it! The one thing PA strives for is to improve our processes where we can. The Rapid Improvement Process Team set up manual processing as a team. The new process introduced ownership of the entire process from start to finish as opposed to the old way of just specializing in one part of the process. The result was tremendous and it has improved the time it takes to process a manual order. Currently, manual payments with a purchase order are processed within 6 days of receipt in PA. We are in the process of converting the payment of our express mail to the Procurement Card. It is streamlining processing time, decreasing research we do and improving customer service with departments and vendors. In the past years, it has been necessary to work overtime to accomplish all of our year-end processing. Process Improvement has enabled us to complete the year-end processing without having to do any overtime in the 99-01 biennium and the current biennium.

The Imaging System is the new, paperless method of scanning invoices after they are processed. Once the invoice and the batch cover sheet (recap) are scanned there will be no paper files. It will save us time and manpower because the paperless image will be accessible to us on our desktop which will eliminate our need to have to retrieve current documents from storage. Even though the number of invoices has increased 41% since 1990 the number of staff has decreased from 65% to 47% (a reduction of 26%). The average processing time for invoices was 40 days in 1990, but in 2002 the average was only 22 days! Journal vouchers, field advances, and petty cash reimbursements are processed within 5 days.

Accounting Operations and Accounts Payable have joined forces to become PA led by director, **Karen Long**. **CeCe Redila** is the Accounting Supervisor of downstairs PA, the former Accounting Operations office. **Pramilla Chand** is the Assistant Director in upstairs PA, the former Accounts Payable office.

Downstairs PA	Upstairs PA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manual Invoices• Check Processing & Vendor Control• NRA/1099• Petty Cash/Journal Vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative Services• Invoice Processing• Customer Service

The manual processing group processes all manual orders, reimbursement to individuals, honorariums, blanket spreadsheets, foreign vendor invoices, and wire transfers. Check Processing handles everything pertaining to checks e.g., cancellations and reissues of checks, stop payments, special ‘hand-typed’ checks, returned checks and checks needing to be remailed. In the Vendor Control area, information about vendors is processed and entered online so invoices can be paid. The tax accountant handles all paperwork relating to non-resident aliens (NRA) and tax form 1099.

Mail is received and invoices are logged into our document logging module by our Administrative Services Team. If there are any problems with the

invoice delaying payment they are resolved by this team. Invoices are processed by date order and type of invoice by our Invoice Processing Team. In addition to processing online invoices and credit memos, they also increase encumbrances, liquidate balances and close orders. Customer Inquiry is the customer service area of Accounts Payable. This area helps customers in person and on the phone to resolve inquiries, reconcile statements, change budget numbers, educational outreach and lead functions.

Payables Administration has a great organization chart on the web site:<http://www.washington.edu/admin/finmgmt/neop/scl/orgchrt/payadmin.pdf>.

With our continual process improvement and the encouragement we receive from our leaders, we are living our vision. Yes, Payables Administration can do it! We are doing it—one transaction at a time, one day at a time.

Wow, an 84% Approval Rating From SFS Customers

by Diane Cooley

Student Fiscal Services (SFS) is continually improving our services to students and each spring we ask them how we're doing. For the last three years we have surveyed students in line in 129 Schmitz during the first week of the quarter when aid is being disbursed and again the third week when tuition is due. We also offer an online version of the survey during the entire first three weeks of the quarter.

The statistic that we're always most eager to see is the response to the statement "Overall, I am satisfied with the services I receive from Student Fiscal Services."

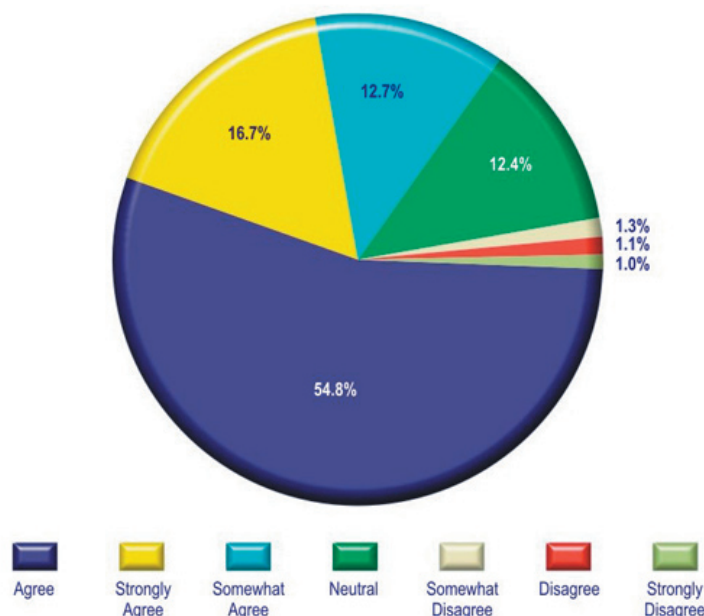
Last year (2002) we had a 75% approval and the year before (2001) we had a 64% approval. The 84% approval this year is a dramatic improvement and greatly surpasses the 2001 AAU Bursers benchmark survey of 64% that we set as our dashboard target.

A lot of the communication we send to students is via email so we also ask how often they read their mail. Currently 78% read it daily.

We're also interested in the use of online services such as account look up through MyUW (65% check their account balance) and whether students find these services easy to use (84% say yes.)

The feedback we receive helps us to measure our progress and plan for future improvements.

"Overall I am satisfied with the services I receive from Student Fiscal Service."



Kudos*compiled by Randi Adair**Kudos given by FM colleagues
from outside the division.*

Ann Anderson, Assistant Controller, Financial Management: “You’re such a star! [The administrators that I have spoken to] lauded [your communication efforts] as an example of someone listening. I don’t know the details—I just know that however you handled it helped.” *Patricia Woehrlin, Office of the Executive Vice President.*

John Cady, Grant and Contract Accounting: “Thanks for your help and patience, as usual. You have been mentoring me since I started working with grants. Just want you to know that you are appreciated.” *Jennifer Raines, Urban Health Initiative.*

Lauren Collins, Grant and Contract Administration: “I want to thank Lauren for doing such a fabulous job on the cost share!” *Dvorah Oppenheimer, International Studies.*

Lauren Collins, Grant and Contract Accounting: “I want to let you know how wonderful it is working with Lauren Collins on my cost sharing accounts. Lauren has been very patient, understanding, and quickly responds to my questions. Her assistance has helped to dissipate the fog for a clearer understanding. Lauren has great customer service rapport.” *Pamela Eisenheim, Electrical Engineering.*

Teresa Crisostomo and the Travel Office: “As always, you guys ROCK! Kudos to you and the whole team for your progressive thinking and actions!” *Wendy Durant, Dean’s Office, Undergraduate Education.*

Jeff Follman and the Financial Accounting Department: [In regards to Financial Accounting’s new website,] “it is a good design and the focus is obviously on assisting those who access the site. Nice work by the team who designed it.” *Weldon Ihrig, Executive Vice President.*

Brenda Grayson, Grant and Contract Accounting, and Joyce Carlson, Grant and Contract Services: “I sincerely appreciate your processing of the

extension for the Mcintire Stennis series of budgets at record speed. Given the current federal closing situation, your consideration and cooperation in fulfilling our needs to meet the payroll deadline is doubly appreciated and acknowledged!”

Geetha Sukumaran, College of Forest Resources.

Diane Harker, Travel Office: “Thank you so much for presenting such a great class on CTA reconciling. I have attended three of your travel related classes now, and have enjoyed every one. I appreciate so much that your presentations are organized, clear, and comprehensive. Also, your kindness when answering questions is apparent, and this helps us all to relax and learn.” *Joyce Halwas, Primate Center.*

Karen Long, CeCe Redila, and Ana Duppen-thaler, Payables Administration: “Thank you very much for taking the time during your busy days to process these rush revolving fund reimbursements. We were not expecting so many reimbursements to staff in so short amount of time. Your efforts were greatly appreciated and saved a lot of extra concern on behalf of our research and technical staff. Thank you for your help.” *Tom Kerrigan, Applied Physics Laboratory.*

Andrew Pernsteiner, Alvin Chau, and Payables Administration: “I have come across several instances lately where our invoices were processed and paid in time to take advantage of the vendor early pay discounts. This is really a nice service Payables Administration provides for campus departments; any reduction of costs is certainly welcome. In addition, I am impressed with the friendly and efficient service I receive when I call over to Customer Service, or have questions for Andrew and Alvin regarding FedEx or UPS. It makes my job much more pleasant.” *Heidi Carlton, Chemistry.*

Judy Peterson, Ann Sarna, and Paul Jegathan, Treasury Office: “I want to tell all of you how much I appreciate your help on the gift of silver. You are truly terrific and are helping us a great deal more than you know.” *Nadine Faith, Office of Development.*

Cecilia Pittman, Grant and Contract Administration: “Thanks, as always, for your willingness to go that one extra step even when the item in question is not yours!” *Geetha Sukumaran, Associate Administrator, College of Forest Resources.*

Kyra Worrell, Diane Cooley and Frannie Gladney, Student Fiscal Services: “I have been working with Student Fiscal Services to do some Money 101

personal finance presentations in Spanish to our students and their families. I’m extremely thankful for the support I have been receiving from the ladies in Student Fiscal Services. They have customized presentations to meet the different groups’ needs and have constantly offered their services during campus tours, conferences, etc.” *Victor Calderon, Office of Minority Affairs.*

RQT / AWARDS

RQT Roundup

Zach Luther & Kyra Worrell

QSTEP

Monique Bradley (GCA) was recognized with a QSTEP award for the Collaborative quality on April 3, 2003. Monique personifies the word “Collaborative.” Monique always volunteers to do whatever it takes to get the job done. She steps in whenever she is needed and is always pleasant about it. She is willing to help others at all times. She is very knowledgeable about her job and always follows through on whatever task she is given. If there is any kind of problem, her approach is, “This is a problem for you and a problem for me, so let’s fix it.” The consensus among those who work with her is that she is friendly and helpful without exception.

Mai Lin Chua (SFS) was given the QSTEP award for the Collaborative and Committed qualities on June 16, 2003. She is relatively new to FM, having been with the department for less than a year and a half, but in that time she has already taken on many new responsibilities, and discovered ways to improve processes she was initially assigned. She’s motivated to learn new processes, and quickly masters them. She applies this same commitment outside of work as well: She speaks five languages, and continues to work on improving her English. Mai Lin is always happy to volunteer, and is well known for her cheerful demeanor and positive attitude.

LINQ

Hoang Ong (GCA) received a LINQ award for the Trustworthy quality on April 25, 2003. Hoang is

very knowledgeable about technology, and created a database that lets departments view receivables information on their budgets. Hoang also brought Nebula to GCA. He focuses on improving processes while also satisfying the customer. Hoang takes steps to correct mistakes before they become problems, and is dedicated to error-free work (“I have never gotten a report from him that is wrong,” is a comment frequently heard about Hoang). He keeps up with the latest technology, finds ways to implement new technology in GCA, and supports development among his staff.

TOPS

Andrew Pernsteiner (Payables Administration) was awarded the TOPS award on May 6, 2003 for creating a system wherein a budget number and department name are automatically attached to FEDEX invoices, saving up to two hours a day. Every Monday, 500 to 1000 invoices are downloaded and have to be approved individually. Under the old system, the budget number and department name had to be entered by hand. This innovation has reduced the number of unidentified and outstanding charges through its efficiency, as well as reducing the labor and processing time required.

The Travel Team (Teresa Crisostomo, Cindy Gregovich, Diane Harker, Alma Prepotente, Suzie Rodriguez, Barbara Schielmann, Kevin Wald, Nigel Heinsius (Publication Services), AJ Lowe (Publication Services)) was recognized with a TOPS award on June 11, 2003 for their work in creating a new online TEV. With this new tool, and guided by the Dashboard, Travel has dramatically increased the number of reimbursements that are

being paid within five days of TEV receipt. The percentage has jumped from under 45% in April 2002 to 92% currently.

EXPRESS

GCA – 4/2/03

Travel/EIO – 4/9/03

Bravo Everyone!

by Kyra Worrell and Kevin Wald

We are all aware by now of the importance Financial Management gives to ensuring that people feel recognized for their contributions in the workplace and how we are working hard to build a supportive and positive work environment.

In keeping with this goal, the RQT team has recently introduced the BRAVO award, “Another important way we can all express how much we value our coworkers and their contributions,” says **Kevin Wald**, former leader of the RQT Team survey team.

The Bravo award is the first new award to be introduced in over 10 years and is the direct result of the recent RQT survey, in which a number of people highlighted the need for a new way to acknowledge their peers. “We needed a tool for those endeavors too great for a Recognition Treat but also not meriting a TOP, QSTEP or LINQ,” Kevin recalled, reflecting on some of the survey comments. “It was something that came up on a number of occasions, and we used many of the ideas people gave us in the survey to construct it.”

The end result of the award is an email announcement sent out to the recipient’s department detailing the nominee’s achievement(s) and a \$10.00 gift certificate given to the recipient; the award requires no validation process and can be given by anyone to anyone with a maximum of ease. This ease of giving and receiving awards is something which both Kevin and the RQT team believe is important if recognition is to grow within Financial Management. “In designing this award, our key goals were to have something which was meaningful, adaptable, relevant and timely,” he added. “So the process is simple. Once the nomination form is submitted to your RQT representative, an email highlighting the achievement will be sent to

everyone in the department and the individual can then step forward and receive their award.”

Another important need the Bravo fulfills is as a source of examples when nominating someone for a QSTEP, LINK or TOPS award. “One of the key problems we noticed from the survey was that people find it hard to come up with relevant examples when developing nominations for these awards. The Bravo awards can be used as an informal record of achievements and a useful storehouse of information when nominating someone for a larger award. Indeed, when you see someone receiving a large number of Bravos, maybe it is time to start thinking about a QSTEP or a LINQ.”

Kevin also believes it is important to understand how the awards all fit together. “There is a place for each award we currently have,” he contends, pointing to the Recognition Pyramid to clarify this idea. “The Recognition Treat is the basis of all recognition. It is the most frequently used and is an informal way to say ‘thank you’, as in when someone helps you, or goes out of their way to get something done. The Bravo is for those singular achievements or endeavors which deserve more than a simple ‘thank you’. Completing a big project or showing outstanding customer service are two good examples. Then of course, there is the QSTEP, LINQ and TOPS. These are to publicly announce those long term, consistent, outstanding achievements or qualities vital to the work of Financial Management as a whole. I know the RATT team is set to start their road show soon and the distinction between awards is something they will cover,” he was quick to point out.

So who decides what award is appropriate? “We welcome and encourage all award nominations, no matter how big or how small,” Kevin says. But if the RQT representative believes the achievement could be better highlighted using a different award,

they will offer their suggestions, he added. “In the end we want people to feel that recognition is for them. Everyone has a vital role in the organization and their contributions are important and worthwhile. These awards are ways to call attention to that.”

Financial Management Speaks – RQT Listens

by Kyra Worrell and Kevin Wald

One of the most important things we can ever do in the workplace is to recognize each others achievements, contends **Kevin Wald**, leader of the RQT Survey Team. “The evidence is overwhelming. Recognition increases the self-esteem and initiative of whomever it touches, making a lasting improvement in both the organization and the individual.”

Kevin, it appears, is not alone in his opinion. The idea that praise and recognition are an essential element of a great workplace is an ideal that many in Financial Management share and seek to encourage through the RQT program.

I recently caught up with Kevin to ask about the RQT Survey, conducted earlier this year.

Kyra: So Kevin, why did RQT conduct the survey?

Kevin: Basically, we wanted to ensure the program was still effective in meeting the recognition needs of everyone in Financial Management. We were also concerned with the lack of nominations that were being submitted when we assumed our responsibilities some 18 months ago. And as it has been over 10 years since the program’s inception, we thought now was an appropriate time to take stock and evaluate. In the survey we asked employees what they wanted from the program and sought to understand what was working well and what needed improvement. From this information we can ensure that we are not missing the great

And it does seem to be working. In the month following its introduction, close to 45 Bravo awards have been given out. Kevin, however, is quick to point out there are still many opportunities available for recognition. “It is our sincere hope that with this new award, everyone will take a greater personal responsibility in creating a culture that recognizes and values each individual.”

opportunities we have for recognition.

Kyra: What was the most significant result of the survey?

Kevin: We were delighted with the level of response. Over 85% of those in Financial Management completed the survey and therefore we believe that the feedback we received is a good reflection of everyone’s opinions. We were also very encouraged by the finding that a healthy 87% of leaders and 57% of staff believe that the program is effective in promoting recognition. Of course, there is still room for improvement, but the results would seem to indicate that we all share a belief in the need to be recognized as individuals and feel a sense of accomplishment in our work. The RQT program is helping to achieve that goal.

Kyra: What are some aspects of the program that need improvement?

Kevin: There are a number of concerns. The survey clearly indicated that leaders are far more active in recognition than staff. This seems to stem from the difficulty staff are having in finding relevant examples to support their nominations and the time it takes to complete the paperwork. It’s difficult because while we want a program that is easy to use, it is also important to have a well-balanced one. You don’t want to have the process and criteria so difficult that no-one is acknowledged, but you also don’t want it all so easy that the awards don’t mean anything. Both situations are ineffective and will do a lot to harm morale. The Person to Person Breakfast was also highlighted as being in need of

a fresh makeover. The concept itself seems to be valued, but there was an indication from people they would prefer it to be more focused in its discussions and held frequently. Moving it to a lunch was also mentioned several times.

Kyra: What are your plans to deal with these concerns?

Kevin: Perhaps our greatest challenge is to build the visibility and vibrancy of the program. Every day there are so many worthy achievements that seem to go unnoticed, simply because it never occurs to us to recognize each other. We envision both the RQT Team and the RATT Team coming together to proclaim the message that recognition really is a powerful thing that does so much to transform our work. Also, we want to empower every employee by offering a wide selection of tools they can use to acknowledge each other. As an example, we have just introduced the BRAVO award, which is a \$10.00 gift certificate has no validation process, and can be given by anyone to anyone for those endeavors which are too

great for a recognition treat and may not merit a QSTEP, LINQ or TOPS. We hope this will mean there is an award to cover all achievements – large or small. We are also presently evaluating several new scenarios for the Person to Person Breakfast, which we believe will make it a more enjoyable and informative gathering. I know I can speak for the RQT Team as a whole when I say we are very excited about these changes, and are looking forward to them being implemented in the near future.

Kyra: Thank you. Is there anything else you would like to say to our readers?

Kevin: Only to say thank-you to all who participated in the survey and to the EIT. We genuinely appreciate your help and support and look forward to doing all we can to make recognition a reality in everyone's work experience.

If you would like to view the full survey results, the findings are available on the RQT Website at www.washington.edu/admin/finmgmt/qi/rqtnew

CALENDAR

EDP Workshop

#142 Gerberding Hall

August 21 (10:30-12:30)

September 3 (10:00-12:00)

Process Improvement

To be scheduled in late Summer for teams. Contact Kate Riley at kater@u.washington.edu for details.