ABA Process Redesign Team Recommendations

PURPOSE

The charge to the ABA Process Redesign Team is ”to identify a list of projects to focus on cost-saving measures that reduce staff workload in departments.” There are many other activities on campus that are currently ongoing in this arena. We have tried to ensure that we are not duplicating any of those efforts and truly focus on projects that will make a difference to academic and research departments.

PROCESS

The team convened in January 2009 and met approximately monthly, with many electronic interactions via email and Google Docs to refine ideas and gather information. We first reviewed the list of ideas from the 2008 RPR2 group, and eliminated all items that were already being worked on or had been addressed. Members of the team then went out to their various constituencies to gather more ideas. We put all of these together, eliminated duplicates and issues that were completely out of campus control, and grouped the remaining items into four broad categories: Academic Personnel Processes; Data Access Processes; Financial & Budgetary Processes; and Student Affairs Processes. We then divided into four sub-teams to work on the issues in those areas. The sub-teams were to: more fully define the scope of the issue; identify what the potential savings would be if a process was changed; and determine if there were any insurmountable hurdles. The sub-teams were free to ask other members of the campus community to participate. We’d like to thank Steve Gardepie, Dean Olsen and Kristi Larsen for their work and participation. The full team then met and reviewed and finalized the recommendations.

To finalize this process we would like to know which recommendations the ABA Executive Committee will endorse and would like to participate in, and be kept apprised of the implementation plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

AP-Online – AP Online has been in the planning and development stages for 5 years and is in the process of being rolled out for regular merits. Many of the items that were looked into by the AP team that would help streamline departmental operations are on the list for incorporation into AP Online.

Recommendations:

1) Revive focus groups or some other survey mechanism for getting user feedback on AP Online on a regular basis. The totality of the AP Online program is huge and since it is taking a long time to implement, ongoing feedback is crucial to ensuring the program adequately meets the needs of participating departments.
2) The interface to AP Online should be open enough that departments other than ACT can participate in programming modules for it. An example of one of these is a module to calculate and track leaves and sabbatical credits. These are planned modules for AP Online, but are relatively stand alone and could likely be developed and implemented sooner by a department other than ACT.
3) Improve functionality of AP-Online to allow more flexibility with revisions after a file has been submitted by the department to the Dean’s office. This flexibility is crucial during the interactions between the Dean’s offices and the Departments. Allow files to be flagged as ready for submission

to APS at the Divisional level. This diminished functionality is causing some departments to opt out of using AP-Online.

Impact:
A well implemented AP Online system has the potential to save departments and the academic personnel office a significant amount of staff time. Poor implementation will generate resistance to adopting AP Online in departments and could actually cause departments to spend more time processing academic appointments than they do now.

Lecturer Files - The addition of a course for a Unit 18 lecturer during an academic year does not trigger the need for a new appointment file unless there has been a break in service. If a course is added during a quarter in which a Unit 18 lecturer has an existing appointment, or if a course is proposed for a quarter following an existing appointment (e.g., proposing a course during winter quarter following an existing fall quarter appointment), a new file does not need to be prepared; a memo augmenting the existing appointment will suffice.

Recommendation:

1) Divisional/departmental AP staff work with APS to identify opportunities to streamline or simplify this process, while maintaining compliance with the unit 18 contract.

Impact:
Reduction in duplicative work. Because of the changeable nature of the need for lecturers there is often a break in service in a single academic year causing a new file to need to be prepared which is duplicative work.

CAPE - The Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education is currently exploring the possibility of developing a web-based or other electronic process for conducting instructor evaluations. Development of such a system will be a joint effort, led by the Office of the AVC-UE, in collaboration with Academic Computing Services (ACS), the Office of the Registrar, and other units on campus, as appropriate. Additionally, AP On-Line is being developed to be able to incorporate the output of any electronic teaching evaluation system, in order to allow for further streamlining of the review process. UCSD's general campus employs over 350 temporary instructors and 1,100 teaching assistants a quarter teaching over 1,800 sections. To effectively manage these instructors and TAs and maintain quality many departments have implemented their own evaluations to cover these individuals. If CAPE were expanded to include the evaluation of all courses and sections, including graduate and small enrollment courses, and TA's and instructors that would remove this administrative workload burden from the departments.

Recommendations:

1) ABA emphasize the crucial impact that evaluations have on the academic review process and the evaluation of courses., TAs etc. CAPE should not be eliminated until there is a viable replacement
2) The development effort should examine existing departmental systems to see if they can be leveraged.
3) The CAPE replacement should expand the capability of CAPE to include evaluation of graduate courses and sections, taught by TAs and small enrollment courses.

4) ABA support this effort and requests that departmental input be solicited during the development and implementation processes.

Impact:
On average it takes a department 1 hour per temporary instructor per quarter to manage their in house evaluation process. At the University level this translates to approximately 350 hours per quarter that is being spent on this manual process. If this were automated it is estimated that this time could be reduced by 2/3, a time savings of 235 hours per quarter. Managing TA evaluations are more automated, it takes approximately 40 minutes per section per quarter to distribute and process evaluations. We estimate that the campus spends approximately 1,200 hours per quarter doing TA evaluations. This time could probably be reduced by ½ if it were incorporated into the normal CAPE process saving the campus approximately 600 hours per quarter.

Generalized Access to Data in the campus Data Warehouse – ACT, DSA's and data stewards spend far more time than is necessary processing specialized requests for data access for data that is campus public. ACT has done a good job of automating the approval work flow process however changing the fundamental process could save significant staff time. If the DSA's could grant access to all data, **except** that explicitly defined as private by HIPPA, FISMA and PII, the number of these requests could be significantly reduced probably by close to 75%. New requirements for DSAs to write lengthy justifications for staff to access any data seem to be moving campus in the opposite direction of streamlining the access process.

Recommendation:

1) Campus should implement a working group that is comprised of departmental and ACT representatives and data stewards that would review data structures for legally restricted data and segregate that data into specialized structures so that generalized access could be granted to all other data.

Impact:
The University could save over 75 hours of staff time just in the processing of these requests alone (300 requests per year @ 15 minutes per request 5 minutes DSA, 5 minutes ACT & 5 minutes Data Steward). There are also countless hours of reduced productivity that results when staff do not have the access when they need. It may only take 15 minutes of processing time for the request but elapsed time is much longer, usually days before the person requesting the access gets it. Additionally better access to data could reduce the need for departmental shadow systems. Currently many departments build and maintain shadow systems so that they can have ready access to data that is in campus systems (especially in the student area) but that they do not have easy access to.

PPS Access - Currently PPS is the most training intensive system on campus. Improvements have been made by making the inquiry training course on line, but getting update access still requires approximately 30 hours of training spread over a 3 week period. Courses only start every other month. The training requirements and the timing and availability of the training cause many hours of staff time to be lost or not used effectively.

Recommendations:

1) Convert all, or a portion, of the various Policy, Procedure & Activities (PP&A} modules to web-based training.

2) Train “trainers” in a department or division to conduct the PP&A modules, or certify that training objectives have been met by departmental trainers, so that training can be administered in a timeframe more in-sync with the actual work environment and in a timeframe more responsive to department needs.
3) Allow departments access to the “training database” so they can augment their own in-house training with practice using the training database. Do this to give supervisors a venue to allow employees to practice or in combination with #2.
4) Require only the fundamentals course for PPS access and offer that training more frequently (once per month instead of every other month).

Impact:
The University could reclaim 46,760 hours of lost or diminished productivity annually by streamlining the training and access process for PPS. Data for the 2007/2008 fiscal year tracked hire dates and PPS course completion dates showed a median of 443 days between hire date and PPS course completion date. There is probably a margin for error here as many people assume PPS duties after they were hired for something else. However if someone is specifically hired for PPS duties the most optimistic assumption is that a person could have the access to do their job in 3 weeks, under pessimistic hire timing (but still optimistic assumption that classes are not filled) assumptions it could take up to 12 weeks. Given this spectrum the average is probably 7 weeks. If UCSD hires 167 new personnel with PPS duties annually this means that the university experiences 46,760 hours of lost or diminished productivity annually.

Recharge Statement Available OnLine Via FinLink - Campus has over 50 recharge units that have more than 100 inter-departmental charges per year. Of these recharges only 12% (6) are available on line in Financiallink. The lack of online statements availability causes significant extra work for departments.

Recommendations:

1) All current recharges that charge inter-departmentally must make their statements available via Financiallink.
2) All new recharge units as part of the approval process should be required to produce electronic statements.

Impact:
Departments could save over 100 hours of staff time per year. For fiscal year 2009 there have been 2,724 problems recorded for sampled transactions. Of those 79% were related to incomplete documentation and of those 15% were from recharges that don’t have statements available via Financiallink. If it takes, on average 20 minutes, to track down manual documentation for a recharge departments could save over 100 hours per year by having statements available online.

Eliminate Balancing Permanent Budget (sub-1) FTE – Currently departments have to balance both their permanent FTE and their permanent dollar based budget. This appears to be redundant work since the dollar based permanent budget must also be balanced. It appears that the critical component to OP and most campus processes is the dollar based budget. If campus focused only on the dollars and not FTE , UCSD would receive significant time savings by eliminating this redundant work.

Recommendation:

1) Set up a working group with broad campus representation to work through the details on how/if to shift to a dollar budget – only, balancing/reconciliation process.

2) As an interim step eliminate the month key controls requirement to balance and institute a bi-annual reconciliation process.

Impact:

The impact of simplifying the sub 1 staffing and budget process could be significant. It is challenging to estimate the current workload since this process influences many others – in addition to simply balancing the reports monthly how much time is spent adjusting distributions in PPS, monitoring these adjustments, correcting RGS lines, in the upkeep of shadow systems that assist in balancing staffing, strategizing how to maximize outcomes under the system as well as the actual monitoring and balancing of the staffing list? It is estimated that in combination all these activities sum to at least one to two weeks of effort in a medium sized unit. With over 110 units having some level of staffing, savings across academic affairs could range from 3 to 6 FTE. Across campus the savings could range from 10 FTE to 20 FTE and could be more when including the support the current system needs from staff in central offices such as Resource Managements and ACT.

Simplify, streamline and reduce SAS112 certification and reporting requirements – The campus requirements for broad monthly certification of financial reports and processes for SAS112 go far beyond the regulatory requirements of SAS112. This could be streamlined, automated and reduced for substantial savings and still meet regulatory requirements.

Recommendations:

1) A truly campus wide work group should be constituted to determine certification frequency and methodology.
2) Automated reporting tools (not just pdf's of the certification forms) should be implemented, and alternative methodologies for achieving the goals of SAS112 should be considered.

Impact:

The University could save over 43,000 hours per year by streamlining and automating this process. The current campus SAS112 certification requirements require the certification of over 43,000 reports campus wide on a monthly basis (based on active, distinct FOPs and FOPs for the DOPES). Assuming that it takes 5 minutes to adequately review a report, that is almost 3,600 hours per month and over 43,000 hours per year. Reducing this requirement to simply quarterly would save over 28,000 hours per year.

Graduate Student Support Reporting and Data Access - The ability to monitor the broad array of graduate student support such as fellowships, stipends TA support and similar graduate student support is poor. The process requires significant staff effort compared to regular payroll. Furthermore, reporting financial support to OGS and the Financial Aid Office is very cumbersome. Graduate Affairs staff need to submit multiple forms -some of which are done on hard copy forms and are asking for the same information- to these offices about individual student support.

Recommendations:

1) Create a report for use by departments based on the model developed by the Division of Biological Sciences or JSOE that allows a user to enter a student ID and get a report of all students support across multiple systems. This will require some standardization of entering the PID number in consistent fields across SAM, IFIS, and PPS.
2) Make the SAM data available in the data warehouse and develop querylink queries to access the data. OGS anticipates extracting graduate data table from SAM and producing queries during

Summer 2009. *(Upon release of this report, OGS has already integrated some SAM data tables into the data warehouse, integrating both payroll and merit-based financial support. Some MSO's and Student Affairs personnel have been invited to participate in testing the queries.)*

3) Streamline departmental reporting to OGS and Financial Aid. Both offices require very similar graduate support information at different time frames ; therefore, a system needs to be developed coordinating both offices' requirements and serve as a single data entry point for both OGS and Financial Aid, eliminating multiple data entries. We also recommend that the data entry be performed through an e-form interface. OGS is on board with this plan and they are working on implementation requirements. The Student Affairs team offered to assist in this endeavor in any capacity, such as serving on a workgroup evaluating requirements.

Impact:
In aggregate, departments could save approximately 6,000 to 11,000 hours per year if the above recommendations are implemented. UCSD has over 4000 graduate students who receive support. On average a department has to deal with a student 3 to 4 times per year in reviewing their support. Currently because of the multiple systems that have to be accessed it takes on average -30 to 40 minutes per student to get an accurate picture of their support.

Comprehensive Online Graduate Data System. Currently, there is not a centralized platform that tracks graduate students from admissions to commencement and when they become UCSD alumni. Departments have created their own internal tracking systems, mostly done through spreadsheets. After awhile, these spreadsheets become unwieldy.

Recommendations:

1.) Consolidate the programming that has already been started by departments to develop a a system to track students from (before) the time they enter UCSD, while at UCSD and when they leave UCSD. We can envision a system that extends the functionalities of existing *GradApp* (please see recommendation 2 for further GradApp development.)* The functionalities should include:
   a.) admissions/review data;
   b.) financial support;
   c.) individual student program history (courses, grades, CPhil dates, defense/graduation dates, dissertation committees, progress reports);
   d.) GSR/TA appointments and history;
   e.) TA/Associate- In evaluations;
   f.) job market placement;
   g.) alumni records

2.) Add review capabilities to *GradApp* (OGS Admissions data system). Some departments/divisions (JSOE, Chem/BioChem , Social Sciences, etc.) have already created a review layer to complement *GradApp* downloads. OGS is currently evaluating some departmental systems to determine if they could be leveraged to create a campus wide system. This evaluation should be completed and review capabilities implemented. *(Upon release of this report, OGS in collaboration with some MSO's and Student Affairs personnel, have started the development of a campus-wide*

admissions data system adopting the specifications and standards found in the Social Sciences' system).

Impact:
Departments who currently maintain their own systems for doing graduate application review could save 350 hours per year by not having to maintain these systems themselves (daily maintenance, enhancements, hardware and server maintenance, data storage.) Please note that the assumption here is that the system is fully developed. The savings for departments that have not yet automated are potentially 2 staff hours and .50 faculty hour per file; hence for a department that processes 400 applications annually could potentially save 800 staff hours and 800 faculty hours (4 admission-committee membership) per year by using an automated process. Potential savings are magnified if systems plans and functionalities are expanded to creating current graduate/alumni tracking systems.

Instructional Management System – Currently instructional management (Course Scheduling, Textbook Adoption, Computing requests, TA assignments, TA evaluations) is done across a multitude of centralized, departmental, automated and manual systems. This causes many instances of duplicated data entry and departmental staff needing to interact with multiple systems to accomplish a single task such as the preparation of *Schedule of Classes*. Currently the departments of CSE and Economics have internal systems under development. The fact that departments are already devoting their own scarce resources to this development shows that this is a high priority.

Recommendation:

1) Consolidate departmental development efforts into a single effort. This would require compromises, but it would conserve development resources and lead to a product that could be used by departments across campus. One possibility is for the VCAA's office to manage this effort with programming provided by the departments or ACS.

Impact:
There would be significant savings in departmental programming time as departments would consolidate their efforts. Ultimately, as the whole process is integrated and streamlined, the savings for both faculty and staff would be enormous.

Undergraduate Staff/Student Portal - Undergraduate colleges use the staff/student portal to disseminate information, capture/store/track student records and interact with students via secure log in. The academic departments/programs need this system - some have needlessly created their own internal tracking systems while the majority of student contact is facilitated via e-mail or by phone. Departments/programs have no access to the information stored in the portal which is crucial to continuity and consistency in advising. In every instance that a departmental advisor needs/provide information from/to the college advisors, they would have to either call or e-mail each other. The portal would serve as the repository for information exchange to facilitate student advising.

Recommendation:

1) Add resources, programming and hardware, to the College's IT group so that this program could be rolled to the departments in a much more timely way.

Impact:
There would be significant time saving to departments' student advising staff due to centralization of information and streamlined and consistent communications. Dissemination of conflicting information is minimized.

Electronic Grade Submission. Currently paper-based grade sheets require an excessive amount of staff resource to distribute, to audit, and can cause errors in grading due to legibility.

Recommendation:

Electronic submission would increase timeliness and accuracy of grade reporting and could prove efficient for all parties involved, faculty, students and staff. A workgroup has already been charged in evaluating requirements for implementing such systems. We strongly recommend that the workgroup forge ahead with development and implementation of e-grade submission system.

Impact:
Processing time would be greatly reduced while time for posting and delivery of grades to students would be greatly enhanced.