Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

CUSP Submission Enhances Delivery of Campus Financial Information [1]

May 8, 2015 by normandy.roden [2]

With its mission to provide “timely, accurate, and relevant financial information to the University community,” the Office of University Controller (OUC) consistently seeks to enhance both the format and the delivery mechanisms of financial information. The OUC’s most recent advancement in this area is the publication of the Supplementals in HTML.

The "Supplementals" are an unaudited supplement to the Annual Financial Report. This supplement is considerably more detailed than the Report itself because it is prepared according to the needs of internal management as opposed to the requirements of GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles).

The Supplementals have traditionally been posted online as a PDF file. The file is typically 80 pages long and filled to the brim with financial information stored in tables. Tables would often span multiple pages, making it difficult to find specific information. Furthermore, the font size was practically unreadable on the computer screen. And the printed versions weren’t much better.

For FY 2014, OUC Strategic Communication Technology Manager Travis Chillemi radically redesigned the document. He created the Supplementals in HTML and built in new features and functionality to enhance accessibility and use. Among the top benefits are:

- Easier navigation within a traditional web browser …. and easier use on tablets.
- Easier breakout of the financial information for each campus
- Inclusion of Search features to zero in on items of specific interest (words, phrases, numbers) to campus leadership and readers in general
- Creation of Show/Hide functionality to provide zoom-in capability and more focused review options on larger tables

Navigating through an 80-page PDF file to find a single line of information can be tedious and frustrating. Navigating through the 2014 HTML Supplementals demonstrates that taking extra steps with our financial data outputs can save significant time and effort (and therefore money) by users down the road. This customer-focused approach serves as a model for departments that produce financial (or non-financial) information.

To learn more about the new approach to communicating financial information, read the recent submission from Travis [3]on the CUSP website.

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