

Grants closeout process recognized as I&E Award top finalist ^[1]

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A new automation is changing how sponsored research projects are closed, reducing manual work while improving consistency and compliance across the research administration process. The Project Closeout Automation initiative was recognized as a finalist in the [2026 CU Innovation & Efficiency \(I&E\) Awards](#) ^[3] for its use of technology to streamline complex administrative functions in research management.

Less repetition, more impact

Sponsored research projects cannot be closed until financial, contractual and administrative requirements have been satisfied. Historically, research administrators completed many of these reviews manually, evaluating projects one at a time before initiating closeout. The new system automates much of that work.

Once all requirements have been met, the automation completes actions and approvals that previously required hands-on monitoring. The workflow also notifies project owners that the project has been closed, reducing the need for manual follow-up. Exceptions are also flagged for review within the system.

“Prior to Closeout Automation, we spent on average 18 minutes per closeout on clicks to close alone. We have an average of 240 closeouts across 11 teams per month. This automated process can save our teams an average of 6.5 hours per month for each team,” said Brittany Vitts, post-award manager at the CU Denver | Anschutz Office of Grants and Contracts. “This does not consider the amount of time saved investigating each project which catapults our time savings even further. We are excited to expand this even further this upcoming year.”

At its heart: Campus collaboration

In addition to highlighting automation, the award also celebrates the collaboration between UIS and partners at CU Denver and CU Anschutz. The UIS Grants and Finance Development teams worked together with the Office of Grants and Contracts to develop a streamlined solution.

“It was really rewarding to work alongside our campus partners at Denver and Anschutz on something we all cared about. Everyone brought different perspectives and expertise, but we shared the same goal of creating a better experience for those involved in the closeout process,” said Samantha Fildish, Principal Solutions Manager at UIS.

The Project Closeout Automation initiative reflects UIS’s broader commitment to using

technology to improve services, strengthen campus relationships and support the research taking place across the university.

"I'm grateful for the collaboration and teamwork that made this project possible, and it's exciting to see that work recognized," said Fildish.

The Innovation & Efficiency Awards ^[4] are open to all four campuses and System Administration and are presented annually by the University Controller's Office. The Financial Aid Batch Processing project was also named a finalist for this year's award.

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