

UIS Production Services team named finalist for CU Innovation & Efficiency Prize ^[1]

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When UIS's Financial Aid Batch Job Spreadsheet Automation project was named a top finalist in the [2026 CU Innovation & Efficiency \(I&E\) Awards](#) ^[3], the recognition reflected more than a successful technology project. It highlighted a practical solution to a common challenge: reducing thousands of repetitive administrative tasks without disrupting the business processes that staff rely on every day.

"It is probably the coolest piece of automation I've designed so far," said Christine Bauder, assistant director of UIS Production Services.

That was the thinking behind a workflow automation initiative that transformed how CU Denver's Financial Aid batch jobs are managed in PeopleSoft. By combining a familiar spreadsheet interface with automated system updates, the UIS Production Services team reduced a process that could take two to three days to just two to three minutes.

Solving a Familiar Challenge

Campus financial aid operations depend on scheduled batch jobs throughout the academic year. These jobs rely on run control parameters that change as award cycles, deadlines and processing requirements evolve.

Historically, financial aid batch job updates required users to manually edit hundreds of run controls individually. The work was repetitive, time-consuming and susceptible to human error. Even routine parameter changes could require several days of effort, delaying other priorities during peak processing periods.

Meeting Users Where They Already Work

Rather than asking CU Denver Financial Aid to learn another enterprise application, the project team chose to build around a tool they already understood: spreadsheets.

Campus users continue to maintain job parameters in a standardized spreadsheet. Once updates are complete, they simply email the spreadsheet to an automated batch scheduling service.

"The goal wasn't to change how people worked," said Bauder. "It was to remove the manual effort happening behind the scenes while preserving a process that our users were already comfortable with. I'm hoping the other campuses will see the benefit and ease this automation adds and allow the same automation to be created for their batch processes too."

The solution supports approximately 1,700 Financial Aid batch jobs while improving accuracy, transparency and operational efficiency. This work demonstrates how relatively small workflow improvements can produce institution-wide operational gains, a key reason it was recognized as a finalist for the CU Innovation & Efficiency Awards.

The Innovation & Efficiency Awards program is open to all four campuses and System Administration and is awarded annually by the University Controller's Office. The UIS CU Denver | CU Anschutz Project Closeout Automation project ^[4] was also named a finalist for this year's award.

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