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CUSP (CUI&E) Submission: Process Mapping [1]

The Department of Neurology at the Anschutz Medical Campus, like many other School of Medicine departments, has seen incredible growth in clinical and grant revenue over the last several years, requiring the hire of 9 additional faculty and the creation of 12 new administrative positions in the past 3 years alone. Additionally, the very nature of working in an academic medical community means that employee turnover can be quite high, as employees gain experience in the department's clinics and/or labs, and then move on to medical school or graduate school. Like many departments, there is little training documentation in the department – institutional knowledge is slowly gained, highly valued as it is used in daily work, but then is lost when employees retire, transfer to other departments, or leave the university's employment, and new employees struggle to figure out the best way to perform their job functions, reinventing the wheel each time.

Last fall, Kathy Illian, MA who is the department's Director of Finance and Administration, and Leah Lleras, BA, the department's Manager of Human Resources and Faculty Affairs, decided that creating a Succession Plan was a high priority for the department, so that even in a time of rapid expansion and fast-paced activity, the Department's administrative needs would be met at all times. Out of this discussion came the Process Mapping project.

Process Maps are essentially swim lane diagrams that describe in a visual fashion the tasks, decisions, and timeline of specific departmental functions, by each participant in the function. They are created in Microsoft Visio (flow-charting software), converted to PDF, and loaded on the Neurology Intranet with links to additional forms, supplemental documentation, screenshots, videos, and even audio files as appropriate. The maps are reviewed, edited, and approved for publishing by the entire administrative staff in twice-monthly meetings. This mass review is critical as it ensures that there is no assumption of prior knowledge – the map should be clear enough that an employee on the very first day of work could perform the function using the process map as a guide. The Process Map team uses a standard template, and they color code each 'role' and all of that role's functions. They use the same color coding on all maps for consistency, and use a naming convention for the files that clearly identifies the administrative unit and the function being described. The goals of Process Mapping are to shorten the learning curve for (and instill confidence in) employees who have taken on new positions, to capture the institutional knowledge of the longer-term employees, and most importantly, to provide checklists for critical functions to ensure deadlines are met.

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE UNIVERSITY?

Most training materials are a 'wall of words' – often inside a Word document or a Power Point slideshow. Bullets and indents might attempt to parse information into meaningful sections, but at the end of the day the training material is just words. There is overwhelming evidence, supported by the last 15 years of global research into technology and adult learning, that people learn better from pictures and words than from just words alone. By using only words,

the opportunity to transfer knowledge more quickly and with better retention is lost. In addition to improving the speed with which one becomes proficient in a job, the process map serves easily as a printable checklist, which can be annotated with notes and reminders for each instance of its use. Process maps also provide, at a glance, an overall indication of the complexity of a process, the optimal timeline and deadlines, and the extent of the involvement of the participants – valuable information when allocating resources.

Unanticipated, but welcome outcomes of the Process Mapping project are:

- It teaches and encourages ‘systems’ thinking
- It fosters a team spirit
- It offers an opportunity for all employees regardless of position/professional level to practice critical thinking and problem-solving
- It teaches information design and a rather unique software program that most of the Process Map team have enjoyed learning
- It creates cross-training opportunities
- Perhaps the most important unseen benefit of the Process Mapping project is that it quite often reveals flaws in existing processes, which can then be revised.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

By June 30, 2013 we will have 50 process maps on our website, with an additional 75 links to supporting documentation. Each administrative unit is tasked with completing 2 process maps per month, so by year’s end we hope to have an additional 80 process maps live. We have hired a full-time student worker to assist with this project, and it is a project we expect will never end.

NOTE: All of our process maps are on our Intranet, and so these documents and many of their links are not accessible outside of the campus network. For the purpose of this submission, we have loaded one on our public site:

http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschool/departments/neu... [2]

Also included below are some of the various Process Maps already live, as well as our standard template, color-coding guide, and a tips sheet.

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Groups audience:
Controller

Source URL:https://www.cu.edu/controller/cusp-submission-process-mapping

Links
[1] https://www.cu.edu/controller/cusp-submission-process-mapping
[2] http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschool/departments/neurology/Documents/hr-newProviderCredentialing-Internet.pdf