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CU I&E Submission: Residence Life Streamlined Expense Reporting and Tracking [1]

Description: Our Residence Life department consists of 54 staff members who use the Procurement card to make about 400 purchases a month for student development programs in the Residence Halls. For fiscal year 2013, Hall Directors used an individual paper chit to capture the business purpose, comments, speedtype, and account code. Upon completion, they would physically take the chit and receipt to the Administrative Assistant, which took about five minutes of time. Next the admin would type the information into another departmental form, scan the form and receipt together, and save the pdf to the interdepartmental network, taking another 10 minutes. In cases where receipts were missing or purchase information was delayed, additional time might be needed. Finally, one more admins would upload the form to Concur and copy and paste the information into the fields in Concur, taking another five minutes per expense. Each purchase took about 20 minutes to process, or about 133 hours per month and about 500 sheets of paper.

For fiscal year 2014, the Residence Hall procurement process was consolidated within my Accounting Technician position. My first goal was to create an easier process for our Hall Directors so that purchasing took less time and directors could focus on the students in their Residence Halls. My second goal was to save paper and improve workflow by creating a streamlined process and utilizing tools that the University had provided. The third goal was to design a straightforward process that would allow users to review purchasing activity for correct use of SpeedTypes, adherence to University Procurement policies, timely submission of documentation, and reporting to reconcile monthly expenses to budgets.

I created a network spreadsheet for each cardholder to capture the expense information necessary for entry in Concur. Drop downs were added for common expense types, business purposes, and SpeedTypes, as well as pop-up boxes for required information on more complex spending such as professional development, recruitment, and training. This saved time because staff had exactly what they needed at their fingertips and hall directors had one tracking list for all of their spending to reconcile against their monthly budget reports. Also, the admin no longer needed to re-type the information into an additional document, and scan and upload the information.

To facilitate receipts being uploaded to Concur promptly and to avoid lost receipts, I provided cardholders with training on the use of the Concur app that CU had provided. Staff members were able to download the free app on their smartphones or iPads, take a picture of the receipt, enter, and the receipt went directly to their file on Concur, aka their Receipt Store. By taking a picture right away, the receipt was not lost, didn’t have to be searched for, and didn’t have to physically move from the vendor, to vortex stray pocket, and then to an Admin. Also with the immediate review of the receipt, if tax was inadvertently charged, it could be taken care of with the vendor on the spot.

How does this impact the University? This fiscal year, the streamlining of the documentation process saved about 780 hours and reduced the number of lost receipts. This time could then be used by hall directors to focus on connecting with residents, building community, and promoting retention. We also saved about 10 reams of paper a year, promoting sustainability, and saving on electricity & toner for printers. By utilizing the new Concur phone app, cardholders were able to accurately capture their receipts immediately and not have to worry about losing them or getting them to the Admin to process. The third set of goals was met within my Accounting Technician position. Using the Procurement Card Aging report expedited tracking of expenses that had posted to Concur. I was then able to review those business purposes and receipts for completion, accuracy, and adherence to University policy, and hold cardholders accountable for timely submission of documentation. Additionally, cardholders were able to use the spreadsheet to verify their expenses against budget reports and monthly supporting ABS cash controls.

Implementation status: We have successfully used the new streamlined process this year, and are looking to implement increased efficiencies for fiscal year 2015 using the upgraded Quick Expense feature of the Concur app for capturing the receipt and the reason for purchase, the Concur CU Detailed Report for monthly budget reconciliation, and using the Procurement Aging Report weekly for the Accounting Technician to audit documentation, policy adherence, and timeliness of processing.

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