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CUSP (CU I&E) Submission: CPE for CPAs [1]

The system controller wanted to capitalize on the accounting and teaching strengths of the staff of the OUC and other offices … to help CU CPAs meet their continuing professional education requirements by providing relevant timely courses, on topics that benefit both the individual and the organizational unit, at no cost to either. Development and implementation of the CU CPE for CPAs Program involved a team made up of Bob Kuehler (AVP/University Controller), Normandy Roden (Director of Finance & Procurement Business Services), Lisa Vallad (Finance Trainer & CPE Program Manager), and Travis Chillemi (Communication Technology Specialist).

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE UNIVERSITY?

The direct result to the University is a considerable savings of financial resources (since there is no charge for the CPE) and staff time/travel (since CPE courses are taught locally at the CU Building in downtown Denver), combined with the benefit of enhanced staff training (since CPE courses are directly relevant to University CPAs/employees).

CU CPAs can now count on obtaining up to 64 credits/year. Utilizing a conservative estimate of $45 average CPE cost per credit hour, this translates to a savings of up to $2,880 for the individual CPA or for the individual University office in which that CPA works. Looking at the larger picture, with classes filled to, or almost to, capacity each session, with a minimum of 30 employees per course, each day (track) of each quarter, results in over $86,000 in savings annually. The cost to the University to produce these courses is, by comparison, very small, since the program draws on the knowledge and skills of existing staff. By way of efficiency, the program also re-leverages, as appropriate, some CPE presentation topics for other venues.

The most compelling benefit of the program is its relevance to the CU working environment. These are not generalized topics of marginal value. Class attendees hear insights and explanations from fellow employees, and participate in group discussions that draw upon experience directly from CU. This is not armchair theory; it is real world instruction that participants take back to their job and put to use. The payoff is immediate and long-lasting, and exceeds the dollar savings because it produces better employees for the long run. That is priceless.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Fully implemented. The OUC was approved as a NASBA sponsor in spring 2011 and has since offered two-track sessions on a quarterly basis: September 2011, December 2011, March 2012, and May 2012 (under development). Future offerings will continue on a quarterly schedule with 2 tracks (up to 16 credits) in each quarter of the calendar year: February, April/May, September, and November. All courses offered seemed to be filled to capacity. I

have rated these training programs very high and others I have spoken with that have attended the sessions have done the same.

Submitted by Laura Ragin, Controller, University of Colorado at Boulder

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