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CU I&E: Supporting Students and Employees, and Enhancing Security [1]

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Employees have submitted some exciting projects to this year's CU Innovation & Efficiency (CU I&E) Awards Program [2]! We've been featuring their good work in a series of OUC News articles: see our previous posts on new submissions [3], on saving staff time/resources [4], and on generally making CU work better [5]. Following is our concluding set of summaries, covering process improvements that range from providing support for new hires to improving cybersecurity at the University.

Leveraging OnBase for Campus-wide Student Employee Termination Process

At UCCS, the Financial Aid and Student Employment office strives to improve customer service for students and parents. As one example of this effort, a team (Jennifer Biga, Brooke Koenig, and Norm Halford) recently transformed a frustrating manual process for terminating student employees into a modern efficient one. Termination activity involved PDF documents that didn't work well with Adobe Sign and didn't lend themselves to digital personnel file management. The team created a revamped form using the OnBase content services platform. The new form routes for electronic approvals and the fully signed document is emailed to appropriate staff for their personnel files. Feedback from campus partners has been positive and the team plans to expand the solution to additional manual form processes.

Multicampus Security Log Monitoring

For some time, information security teams have relied on an automated Security Information and Event Monitoring (SIEM) system to monitor CU IT systems for signs of attacks and potentially malicious behavior. Such a system enables the teams to monitor tens of thousands of log events every second, a task that would be impossible without advanced, automated tools. However, the system/processes had become slow and inefficient over time and were in need of replacement. David Capps, System Administration's Chief Information Security Officer, worked with the multicampus CU Security+ group (Sarah Braun, Information Security Officer, CU Boulder, Sean Clark, Information Security Officer, CU Anschutz Medical Campus and CU Denver, Chris Edmundson, Security Operations Manager, CU Denver, Brad Judy, CU Deputy Chief Information Security Officer, Cindy Kraft, UIS PMO Team Manager, CU System, Keith Lehigh, Information Security Officer, CU System, Scott Maize. Associate Director of Information Security, CU Boulder, Charlotte Russell, Assistant Vice Chancellor for IT Security and Compliance, CU Anschutz Medical Campus and CU Denver, John Scudder, Security Operations Program Manager, CU Boulder, Steve Thormod, Principal Project Manager, CU System) to select and deploy a new SIEM system. CU Security+ provides a forum for separate security teams to work together for mutual benefit. The teams chose to collaborate across campuses to take advantage of efficiencies from sharing knowledge and experiences. Since implementing the new system, teams have rolled out new detections that have alerted

CU to attacks against employee payroll, VPN services, and more. In addition, the speed of searches has significantly increased, with results returned in seconds instead of hours.

ODIN Subscriptions

ODIN Subscriptions is new technology developed by Kevin Sarsen and his team (Karthik Chigururu, Allmond McDermott, and Faraz Ali) in the System Administration office of University Information Services (UIS). It allows campus IT partners to receive and react to changes in CU PeopleSoft databases within seconds of the change as opposed to waiting for nightly updates. Specifically, the impetus for ODIN development was to address the problem of up-to-the-minute student data being unavailable to campuses during the monthly UIS maintenance windows. Campus Solutions student data is now available to campuses via ODIN when Campus Solutions is down for maintenance. With ODIN Subscriptions – that is, notifying campus OIT departments when data they care about changes – the paradigm for data transfer has been completely transformed.

Onboarding Program for Office of Contracts and Grants

In the Office of Contracts and Grants (OCG), workload has increased with the volume of research funding coming into CU Boulder, and most employees work remote or hybrid schedules. Given both circumstances, the office realized it was critical to have an onboarding program that accomplished two goals: It needed to empower new employees to work efficiently through a comprehensive training curriculum. And it needed to be inclusive to those who cannot connect with their teams in the office. Niki Spaeth and Jessica Trowbridge stepped up to the challenge by developing an onboarding program in the Canvas learning management system. The program includes individual assignments, required general CU tasks and trainings, and resources to ensure competence with department business and communication tools. It also sets up a virtual meeting cadence to connect new hires to current employees and to ensure intentional one-on-one time with supervisors. Now, all OCG employees (regardless of work location) receive a consistent, thorough onboarding experience that frees supervisors to be more intentional and focus on the technical skills required for the position. Furthermore, says Niki, “By trusting our new hires with their onboarding experience, we set the stage for a culture of trust within our department.”

Retirement Vendor Reconciliation Template

At CU System Administration, the Office of University Controller (OUC) is responsible for assuring that all employees’ retirement deductions are accurate and are submitted on time. This task has traditionally required significant manual processing to complete retirement vendor reconciliations after each payroll cycle. Recognizing the direct impact of retirement deductions on every employee’s financial goals, Audra Strang set to work to automate the manual processes and provide an auditable data record for each retirement vendor process. Her solution: Using an Excel template with integrated macros, queries, and text submission files. Users input raw data from HCM or FIN by copying and pasting directly into established tables, triggering macros to verify data and organize submission files into a readable format according to vendor specifications. By ensuring data accuracy before submission to third-party vendors, the spreadsheet mitigates future correction needs, optimizing efficiency and reliability in financial accuracy.

Want to learn more about these, and other submissions to the CU I&E Awards Program?

Check out our CU I&E Current Submissions [6] website ...

And find out which submissions move forward into the CU I&E Finalist stage, in our next OUC Newsletter!

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