
DIVISION OF FINANCE

MISSION AND VISION

Mission

To provide leadership, innovation and excellence in financial services and a safe work/study environment for the Texas A&M University community.

Vision

The Division of Finance is the primary provider of financial and safety support services to the academic community. These support services are the foundation for the internal business control and risk management structure by which management exercises its fiduciary responsibilities through assuring itself that its business is conducted within a well-defined and safe environment. Critical to the success of the academic endeavor, these support services must be designed to provide reasonable assurance that the University achieves its objectives with effective and efficient operations, reliable financial reporting, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY/ LONG-TERM SHARED OBJECTIVES FIVE-YEAR REPORT OF NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

During FY95, the Division of Finance and Administration was reorganized into two Divisions. Subsequently, a new office of the Vice President for Finance and Controller was established as the Chief Financial Officer and as the chief administrative office of the Division of Finance. The new office focused efforts upon: financial integrity of operations; streamlining operating procedures while assuring greater accuracy of reporting; and establishing a new corporate culture within the Division of Finance with emphases upon openness, collegiality, challenging status quo, and trust. The Division of Finance has experienced many notable achievements in pursuit of its long-term shared objectives during the past five years.

SERVICE: to provide and communicate timely, accurate and definitive information that is consistent, easily accessed and simple to understand; to ensure that the organization is adding value to any process in which it is involved; to be an organization that knows its customers, understands their unique needs and embraces open and honest working relationships (earn and safeguard the customers trust and confidence, assist in stewardship, and offer effective solutions); and to protect the interests of the University by informing policy makers of impacts and alternatives to existing and proposed legislation or regulations (benchmark units for other university Finance Divisions).

Student Financial Services (SFS) developed a streamlined and expedited emergency on-line loan process; established student debt management services office; SFS expanded Aggie Card services and automated the process for assistantship waivers; computed interest distribution analysis; analyzed entire endowment historical activity and researched each endowment for reporting requirements; Payroll Services facilitated process for automating payroll checks owed to other TAMU System parts with BPP and FAMIS; Financial Management Services (FMS) implemented depositing sales tax and tuition to the Comptroller via a phone deposit system and improved the USAS/ABEST reconciliation process; implemented new process for internal processing of IDT's; Purchasing Services procured master supply agreements for direct departmental use and in the process designed contracts that have allowed other institutions of higher education within the state to take advantage of the pricing, terms and conditions negotiated by the University; Contract Administration (CA) established a database to monitor progress in tracking and administrative handling of the high volume of contracts reviewed; CA enlisted assistance of Office of General Counsel to develop "standard agreements"; Payroll Services has a fully-functional "automated payroll transaction request" that is being implemented in two colleges and a half-dozen administrative departments; and at TAMUG, increased paycheck direct deposit participation by approximately 50%, revised TAMUG Form 500 Request, decreased turnaround time for the processing invoices from approximately two-four weeks to two days and turnaround time for the processing of individual reimbursements

and travel reimbursements from approximately two-four weeks to two days.

The Division of Finance consistently published financial data on-line for the university community including access to administrative presentations to the Legislative Budget Board, Faculty Senate, etc.; developed a more rapid response system for legislative bill analysis and have a comprehensive on-line reference tool for all responses; established a Budget Working Group to review processes to enhance continuing improvement in the budget process; established the first Fee Review Committee for TAMU regarding student fees; and aggressively pursued infringement on TAMU trademarks and registered several new trademarks. Purchasing Services helped convince the State Comptroller and General Services Commission (GSC) to provide information electronically; actively participated in their surveys, provided them with feedback [GSC recommended our web page to other state agencies until they could develop theirs], convinced GSC to change one of the rules so that we would not have to provide reporting on our local funds concerning the State Travel Management Program and developed a significant cooperative relationship with GSC by serving as a leader in the development of GSC's total State procurement process of an e-commerce solution; and Environmental Health and Safety Department (EHSD) developed a prioritized safety improvement list that played a key role in installing and/or upgrading fire safety systems in campus buildings, completed closure of the former TAMU landfill for radioactive materials and chemicals disposed therein, completed application for Clean Air Act Permit for Texas A&M University, established new respiratory fit testing program, established new hearing conservation program upgraded indoor air quality program, upgraded ergonomics program, and established injury and illness tracking database.

STAFFING: to provide a positive and challenging work environment that promotes team involvement at all levels; to ensure that the organization maintains a perceptive, knowledgeable, ethical staff through selection, continuing education and training; and to provide a safe and enjoyable work environment which facilitates productivity, skill enhancement and growth (invest in a diverse, empowered, well compensated and well rewarded staff).

Implemented new employee classification program throughout the Division of Finance including new position titles, job descriptions and reclassification of positions; increased FMS staff to provide 1-2 day turn around time for correctly prepared travel reimbursements; first Texas institution of higher education to have an individual attain the Certified Texas Purchasing Manager (CTPM) certification; four individuals within the Purchasing Services awarded designation Certified Purchasing Manager (C.P.M.); and EHSD expanded staff credentials to include Certified Health Physicists (2); Certified Industrial Hygienist (1); Certified Building Inspector and Certified Plans Examiner (1); Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (1); and Biological Safety Professional (1). Assisted with the financial review, account clean up and reorganization of TAMUG Fiscal Department; reorganized TAMU Fiscal Department into four departments: FMS, SFS, Payroll Services, and Finance Division Computing Support Group; Division of Finance assisted in the transition of HSC as a new System part; created Department of Contract Administration to include collegiate licensing, contract administration and post-award management of sponsored projects; and restructured post-award contract administration and contracted the collegiate licensing administrative and marketing duties to Licensing Resource Group (LRG); created the Environmental Health and Safety Department by combining Radiation Safety with Safety and Health. FMS required all first time supervisors to attend supervisor training, provided opportunities for FMS management to obtain training for selective areas and to attend training offered "for profit companies" to foster creativity, hosted a comprehensive USAS training class, attended more UBIT specific conferences, and attended specialized banking seminars; Accounting Support Services staff training allowed staff to eliminate significant duplication of effort and tedious paper processing; and at TAMUG payroll staff trained on individual reimbursements and tax related vouchers to ensure IRS and INS compliance. Purchasing Services developed a series of standard purchasing training modules to offer consistent and effective training for both internal and external customers; and Contract Administration coordinated and planned campus-wide training on research administration topics and sponsored campus-wide training workshops on "Managing Grants & Contracts" for the Council of Senior Business Administrators; and at TAMUG offered improved inventory, accounts payable, purchasing and travel disbursement training for departments quarterly. Renovated Coke building and former A&M Foundation building to house Vice President for Finance, Payroll Services, Contract Administration, Financial Management Services, and Finance Division's Computer Support Group creating more efficient space

utilization and consolidation thus reallocating space in five buildings (space reallocated to Provost and VPSA); and renovated offices in Research Park to house EHSD.

TECHNOLOGY: to be an innovative organization that anticipates the future and rapidly evolves by encouraging creative thinking and innovative use of technology throughout the organization.

Annual computer upgrade/replacement plan implemented throughout the Division of Finance; SFS initiated effort to use email for individualized official documents on campus with the purchase and implementation of M-Bill software; first university debit card provider in the country to provide student debit card statements using official email, first on campus to use the University's new email system for official notices to students, driving force behind movement of the University towards an online registration process, and driving force behind the movement to recognize the limitations of existing administrative software and begin the process to acquire new software; FMS initiated conversion from modem based banking to Internet based banking and moved from storing original checks and microfilm to storing copies of original check on CD ROM; Purchasing Services developed Disbursement Manual on the web and changed the disbursement training session from paper based to web based, automated the Bid Process which includes: automated bid posting and utilizing 'push' technology, via email, to notify vendors about bid opportunities and utilized Web page development to create one-stop procurement resource, which includes: customer information, supplier information, buyer information, and supplier mall; CA implemented homepage to provide departments the preliminary information on the contract process, appropriate administrative handling, key contacts, links to contract information from the OGC site, helpful hints, the President's Delegation of Authority; notable new or upgraded safety equipment purchased by EHSD included automobiles/vans - number reduced, quality upgraded, Hazardous Material Identification Kit - to identify unknown chemicals, laptop computers and LCD projection equipment for training, quantitative respirator fit testing equipment, custom-designed/equipped trucks for hazardous material transport, custom-equipped van for chemical spill response, audiometric testing equipment, software and test booth, multi-gas detector for indoor air testing and for emergency response, 800 MHz radio equipment; radioactive contamination monitors for hands and feet; electric trucks (2) for use in fire extinguisher maintenance program, and propane-fired demonstrator for fire extinguisher training; and at TAMUG installed Global PC giving capability to take credit card payments for the Police Department, Continuing Education for Elderhostel and TAG, Fiscal, Food Service, and Campus Development, etc.

Ultimately, the Division of Finance has striven to promote ownership, involvement, pride and responsibility within the Division.

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Contract Administration

Increase contract information available to customers; expand website information; implement an annual training agenda for grant and contract topics for colleges and departments; protect trademarks while simultaneously supporting the Aggie Spirit; be consistent in pursuing TAMU's trademark infringers; be proactive in working with State of Texas agencies to establish more web-based financial reporting, grant & contract progress reporting, and draw down of funds; increase number of OGC approved standard contracts; and implement a grant compliance review program.

Environmental Health and Safety

Expand the remote-monitoring program for "smart" chemical fume hoods on campus; and expand programs in response to campus demand: indoor air quality, ergonomics, hearing conservation, and student fire and life safety training.

Financial Management Services

Place On-line: travel system, cash receipting system, time and leave system (this could be part of the new payroll system), job descriptions and procedures manuals, Division-wide monthly report; accept credit card payments for all goods and services; acquire front-end imaging system; implement electronic invoicing; improve design and speed of access to web page; submit property transfers, IDT's, fiscal requests, journal entries and other forms electronically; provide training for all new employees campus wide in accounting related issues; provide greater interaction for new employees with other departments/divisions; provide new employee orientation monthly for division of finance employee; and represent Higher Education issues through participation in TASSCUBO, USAS User Groups, GSC, travel committees, State Property Accounting system User's group meetings, GASB 34/35 statewide financial reporting issues and TAMU System workgroups.

Payroll Services

Provide employees with widespread, yet secure access to their payroll data including earnings records and W-4 status; deliver employees' annual W-2 promptly and efficiently in the format of their choice; distribute all net payroll amounts electronically to the financial institutions (multiple, if the employee chooses) selected by employees, including an option or options for those employees without traditional bank accounts and those employees who bank outside the United States; make all payments to other state agencies and to insurance and retirement plan carriers electronically; account for and report on all payroll transactions in real time; develop and offer a training program to ensure that University business administrators have an opportunity to learn appropriate payroll processing procedures in a centralized, classroom setting; develop and offer a program to assist departmental business administrators in hiring and paying international individuals; and relocate the data entry for all "people" transactions to close as possible to the source of the data, eliminating many out-of-date, centralized functions.

Purchasing Services

Promote mandatory use of Procurement Card for limited orders; graduate HUB suppliers and continue to train and establish on-going business relations with new HUBs; establish and promote cooperative and consortium supply agreements; promote mandatory use of supply agreements to maximize the benefits of product/services standardization; continue to simplify the process and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of providing material support services to the university; and further automate business processes to handle increasing workload with same or less human resource.

Student Financial Services

Implement more effective collection process for student billing accounts; expand use of loans funds to include study abroad and field trip opportunities, consolidation of credit card debt (in conjunction with debt management efforts), child care assistance, and educational technology purchases; ensure the security of University systems that use the ID card for access and also the security of the University students, faculty, and staff by making the Aggie Card office the sole producer of ID cards on campus; work cooperatively with Student Financial Aid to facilitate the transfer of the approval

process from FAID to SFS so that the institutional short-term loan process (excluding AFS loan fund) is administered by one department; provide leadership and work cooperatively with Admissions and Records, Student Financial Aid, and CIS to provide on-line registration and detail bill presentation; begin providing formal debt counseling to students; supplement student notification of tuition, fee, loans billing and charges by e-mailing tuition and fee billing statements to students at their official TAMU e-mail account; implement expanded payment options (more credit cards, e-check, debit card) for student billing accounts and student loan accounts; utilize expert design to increase readability and functionality of web pages; coordinate the organization of both Texas and Big 12 Regional groups of SFS administrators; and promote active participation in state and national organization by SFS management.

STAFFING: to provide a positive and challenging work environment that promotes team involvement at all levels; to ensure that the organization maintains a perceptive, knowledgeable, ethical staff through selection, continuing education and training; and to provide a safe and enjoyable work environment which facilitates productivity, skill enhancement and growth (invest in a diverse, empowered, well compensated and well rewarded staff).

Contract Administration

Develop a grant and contract accounting procedures web-based training module; encourage involvement in professional development activities through work related professional organizations; and increase employee and customer education through regularly scheduled, informative training programs.

Environmental Health and Safety

Establish long-range plan to encourage and reward technical staff to pursue recognized safety certifications; expand the TAMU Hazardous Waste Building, Bldg. No. 1165; reduce the volume of hazardous waste generated at and disposed by TAMU through implementation of effective training of persons who generate hazardous waste; and implement intradepartmental cross training for technical staff.

Financial Management Services

Develop and implement programs to reward/recognize staff; develop written procedures for each position and make them available on the web; provide intra-divisional training for areas such as diversity, emerging supervisors, new university software, personal development, on an on-going basis for all levels of staff; provide extensive training for all new employees university-wide in accounting issues including participating in CSBA workshops; and promote University diversity initiatives ... evaluate current dress codes, provide diversity training for all staff, develop intern program with historically minority institutions, and develop a program for international business students.

Payroll Services

Encourage the members of the Payroll Services staff to pursue professional development; and recognize members who achieve CPA and CPP status.

Purchasing Services

Develop and launch on-line training/test modules for FAMIS, Procurement Card and purchasing procedures and guidelines; continue to improve skills and increase knowledge base in the areas of technology, leadership, management, contract administration and profession purchasing practices; and promote certification training within department with goal to have all purchasers obtain State of Texas certification and at least 50% of all purchasers be certified by one of two national purchasing associations.

Student Financial Services

Each position's processes will be documented ... twenty-five percent of documented processes will be tested through cross-training efforts to ensure accuracy of SAP documents; clearly identify expectations of student employees and implement advancement opportunities; pursue expansion and remodeling of office space in Pavilion; encourage departmental managers and supervisors to interact (network visits, conferences, e-mail, phone calls, etc;) at least once per year with colleagues at other institutions; review employee performance evaluations and implement appropriate career ladder advancement; utilize Human Resources professional development opportunities; and work through TAMU Human Resources and minority group leaders to ensure that applicant pools for the position reflect University's commitment to diversity.

TECHNOLOGY: to be an innovative organization that anticipates the future and rapidly evolves by encouraging creative thinking and innovative use of technology throughout the organization.

Contract Administration

Create and maintain digital files of contracts for access to pertinent contracts, clauses, language, etc.; automate electronic project termination notice letters to Principal Investigators at 90, 60, and 30 days from project end date; provide employees with the necessary computer equipment and associated tools so there is less downtime created by staff members leaving their workstations; adapt contract database to reflect changing needs of tracking contracts as well as increased volume; and implement a web based time and effort reporting system for TAMU faculty.

Environmental Health and Safety

Develop and implement on-line training courses to augment existing training options; and purchase and install internet-accessible software to enable Principle Investigators and permitted laboratory personnel to electronically access radiation safety data, get approval to order radioactive materials and arrange for radioactive waste to be collected.

Financial Management Services

Provide routine information to customers in a web based format; purchase or develop a new electronic inventory system; and develop more web based training applications such as disbursement training, Service Center compliance training, Procard training, etc.

Payroll Services

Provide the University with a comprehensive human resource management system/business application that allows for data entry and retrieval when and where “people” transactions occur, ensures long-term data retention in a format that is easily used, accommodates accounting changes and reflects those changes immediately.

Purchasing Services

Develop and launch on-line Stores catalog; develop and launch on-line auction site; complete and launch web-based, PJR-compatible bid tabulation screens/programs; complete and launch program to automatically post bid opportunities to a dedicated website; complete and launch companion program to e-mailing capability to existing fax-distribution system (PJR); develop and launch programs to provide on-line bidding; build vendor database to track and report detailed vendor activity and performance; automate HUB and other management reporting requirements; expand current e-billing program to include all major supply agreement suppliers; promote and utilize e-commerce initiatives at both the state level and at the university level; and establish a search engine on the web-page that interfaces with FAMIS to allow better tracking of procurement documents by the end user.

Student Financial Services

Install and effectively utilize an auto attendant program to better direct customers within the organization; replace technology resources annually in accordance with SFS Technology Replacement Plan; automate all competitive scholarship, assistantship, and faculty/staff waivers; implement electronic fund transfers of student refunds; utilize technology to implement an on-line solutions database; provide leadership and work cooperatively with FMS to implement and utilize the University’s intranet and utilize strategically located drop box sites on campus for pickup by courier; and evaluate impact of auto attendant on customer service staffing.