University of Washington: Continuous Improvement Highlights

January – June 2015

Curricular & Student Experience (enhanced academic programs or student experience)

**UW Video.** During the 2015 commencement season, UW Video produced nine live TV broadcasts and webcasts of UW commencement events, more than twice as many as last year. More students were able to share their achievements with friends and family who were not in attendance to celebrate the successes of their programs.

**Housing & Food Services.** Students now experience a less stressful moving-out process thanks to the launch of the Residence Hall and Apartment Turn and Inspections Review Project. The project improved workflow so that initial charges to students are more appropriate, resulting in lower refunds after inspection. Refunds in 2015 dropped to $268 (1.6% of initial charges) from $1,365 (7.9% of initial charges) in 2013.

Research (enhanced funding or research)

**School of Nursing.** The Office for Nursing Research (ONR) centralized pre-award research application support for Family and Child Nursing faculty, graduate students and provided overflow assistance in high submission periods. These changes resulted in a more standardized, easy-to-follow grant submission process in a time of increased grant activity. The school is now able to anticipate higher periods of grant activity and project staff capacity for planned adjustments. Faculty easily adjusted to the change and are happy with the new system.

**UW Information Technology.** A 100G High Speed Research Network is now fully in place, enabling UW researchers to connect directly to other research institutions throughout the world. The campus network upgrade from 10G to 40G also allows UW researchers to move large amounts of data at significantly higher speeds, and meets the rising demand from the UW community.

Business Process Improvement (enhanced or improved effectiveness)

**Arts & Sciences.** Shared Services managed a 54% volume increase over two years using Lean management principles. Key practices include daily team huddles and weekly step-backs, monthly goal-setting towards the College’s broad vision, respect for the creative thinking of each team member and client department, and follow-through on ideas to improve work quality and efficiency.

**Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S).** EH&S implemented a comprehensive ergonomics program to prevent workplace injuries in 2014. EH&S partnered with Facilities Services (FS) on a one-year ergonomics risk-mitigation project to identify and address high-risk custodial tasks, collaborated with the Access Technology Center to enhance office ergonomics resources and initiated an online office-ergonomics training and self-assessment program which includes self-help resources. The ergonomics program also gathered information about mature ergonomics programs at other universities for benchmarking and conducted more than 150 office evaluations and 12 industrial and laboratory projects.

**Environmental Health & Safety.** EH&S created a web interface to streamline the Lab Safety Survey process. An EH&S technician completes the survey, which is then posted via a password-secured web interface so the principal investigator can view the results and provide follow-up corrections and comments. This creates a quicker process for communication between EH&S and the lab community for safety issues, and provides an avenue for developing metrics and performance measures while increasing EH&S’s capacity to complete lab safety reviews.
Facilities Services. Energy use on campus has continued on a downward trend, despite more people coming to campus, more buildings on campus, more equipment in existing buildings, and hotter summer temperatures. This includes operations at the campus Power Plant as well as water usage. UW's Power Plant produces steam at a lower cost per 1,000 lbs. than the national average by creating efficiencies in the production process.

Facilities Services. From December 2014 to June 2015, UW Recycling’s average diversion rate increased 2.9%, from 61.5% to 64.4%, and diversion rates are on-target to reach 70% by 2020.

Housing & Food Services (HFS). The HFS IT unit worked closely with HFS Conference Services to design and implement a secure, web-based eSignature system to reduce the time it takes to collect physical signatures. The new eSignature program enables Conference Services to securely send documents via the internet to clients and HFS management for electronic signatures. In addition, the new system saves on postage and printing costs, is more environmentally friendly and features greater security.

Housing & Food Services. In 2014, HFS launched an automated capital-expense approval system with new tracking capabilities. The shift from manual to a SharePoint form (SharePoint being HFS’s primary business platform) offered several benefits including data and user appropriate workflow logic, automated email notifications and version history for audit purposes. As a key financial process, the new solution is less time-consuming (saves 82.5 hours annually for the Budgeting and Planning, 22.5 hours for requesters/approvers), guarantees an audit trail for approval purposes, and restricts access as appropriate for security.

School of Medicine. Using continuous process improvement, Academic Appointments and Compensation (AAC) enhanced the Annual Salary Increase Database (ASID) platform to align with the strategic goals of offering compatibility with modern technology and allowing easier accessibility and real-time data for users and application administrators. The ASID platform decreases the number of shadow systems to support the salary increase/merit process and ultimately improves processing time.

School of Medicine. The School of Medicine developed a balanced scorecard with 23 key performance indicators to monitor and ultimately enhance the customer experience, improve business processes, promote fiscal responsibility and maintain an experienced workforce. In addition, the School's Administrative Business Center is partnering with a faculty oversight committee representing the voice of customers to continue monitoring progress against our goals, report findings and find ways to further automate data collection.

UW Real Estate (UWRE). UWRE decreased the number of projects that were not entered into the property management system from 150 to 7. UWRE established processes for data entry turnaround times and large complex projects, which include written and visual narratives, document indexes and abstracts. This served to significantly reduce risks and improve record management.

UW Real Estate (UWRE). UWRE revised the Space Request Form for departments interested in leasing space off-campus to distinguish between inquiries for space vs. leasing space. The new process provides departments with a space cost estimate earlier in the process (total time elapsed for cancellations dropped from an average of 38 days to 26 days) and reduces the time and involvement required by UWRE and the department staff (total interactions fell from 25 to 13).