

CONTROLLER/FINANCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW
First Follow-Up Report
Fall 2006

HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
TAMPA, FLORIDA

RESPONDENT

Bonnie Carr, Controller

PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR
CONTROLLER / FINANCIAL SERVICES

Ellen Cangi, Dean of Academic Affairs, HCC
Barbara DeVries, Financial Services Director, HCC
Mike Ermeling, Accountant, HCC
Bruce Judd, VP Information Technology, HCC
Linda Tarrago, Accounting & Business Professor, HCC
Alisa Zujovic, Research Analyst, HCC



A task force was assembled in the Spring Term of 2006 to conduct a Program Review of the services rendered by the Controller / Financial Services Unit. Below is a listing of the 8 Task Force recommendations followed by a brief report of progress toward implementation. This report will be followed by a 12-month Progress Report. Recommendations that are not achieved within 12 months will be incorporated within the unit planning objectives to ensure a continued focus on their attainment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

It is recommended that the Controller / Financial Services Unit:

1. Implement recommendations from the Payroll Process Review Project.

Status of Recommendation:

We are in the process of determining the best options for improving the payroll function. Finance, Human Resources and IT are meeting on a frequent basis and progress is being made. An audit of the processes was recently performed by Datatel and we are awaiting their report. The current Colleague process (Pay Period) will not be supported by Datatel after July 2007. According to our Datatel consultant, the new process will resolve many, if not most, of the issues that we are encountering. The transition to Time Entry could be completed within three to six months after the conversion. The next step would be to utilize the Web Entry process which would provide many of the same benefits that we could obtain if we were to outsource the process to a specialized vendor. On-line pay advice is about 95% complete. We are in the test mode and IT support is needed to complete this project. Reporting and overall efficiency of the function are major concerns that are being addressed. Mini payrolls have been virtually eliminated. However, we are still experiencing late time sheets and the receipt of time sheets for employees that are not on the employee roster.

It is recommended that the Controller / Financial Services Unit:

2. Work with campus Student Services to develop a survey of Bursar operations including, but not limited to, hours of operation.

Status of Recommendations:

A survey was conducted and the results are being summarized by the Institutional Effectiveness Department. The results will be analyzed and a plan of action developed to address concerns.

It is recommended that the Controller / Financial Services Unit:

3. Create an updatable on-line manual that can also be printed and placed in binders with updated sections clearly designated so that they can be removed and replaced. Budget training should be accomplished through on-campus training sessions and supplemented by an on-line refresher module. Develop/publish procedures for functions/processes that affect staff members throughout the College. Include a link to the Council of Business Affairs (COBA) website.

Status of Recommendation:

An Operations Manual has been developed and is in draft form. It will be reviewed by the Finance Liaison Group which consists of faculty, staff, students and administrators. They will provide feedback and suggestions which will be incorporated before the document is finalized. The Manual will be on the Business & Finance website and will be maintained by the Manager of Financial Information Systems.

It is recommended that the Controller / Financial Services Unit:

4. Set up a Task Force to examine and receive input on ways to improve the budget process. Form a Focus Group of financial report users or distribute a survey to obtain input as to areas of concern or confusion as well as possible solutions. Use process mapping to document the current process and to identify areas for improvement. Establish an Advisory Committee of professionals. The Finance Department should work with PDS to develop an on-going orientation and training program for staff and Budget Officers. The training should include but not be limited to forms, procedures and Datatel.

Status of Recommendation:

The Finance Liaison Group will serve in this capacity. Faculty, staff, administrators and students are represented on the Committee.

The charge of the group is as follows:

- Broaden mutual understanding between HCC's Finance Division functions and end users of roles and responsibilities as they pertain to College financial services.
- Provide input and counsel from end users to Finance Departments regarding process improvements, training and communication needs.
- Assist with broader communication to campuses regarding the rationale for and roll out of procedural improvements

Content areas may include:

- Budget development process
- Recommendations regarding streamlining financial transactions
- Providing input to prioritize software enhancements

The group held its first meeting on August 25, 2006 and meets monthly at a campus location.

It is recommended that the Controller / Financial Services Unit:

5. Establish a rotating schedule to review processes/practices to ensure adherence to State/Federal Regulations and ensure proper internal controls. Look to create an internal audit position that reports directly to the Board of Trustees. Use cross-functional teams to periodically evaluate other departments to ensure compliance with operational procedures.

Status of Recommendation:

Staff is being cross trained to perform this function. Temporary staffing is being used to review areas where problems have been identified. A member of the Accounting staff is assigned to monitor and report on compliance with P-Card use. The Auditor General's Office performs an annual audit of internal controls. The college's Operational Audit includes a review and evaluation of internal controls and results in a report on findings and recommendations. This report is presented by the Auditor General's staff to the chair of the Board of Trustees.

It is recommended that the Controller / Financial Services Unit:

6. Assign one or more staff to work with OIT in developing a data warehouse (in progress) that provides financial reports via a browser.

Status of Recommendation:

The Manager of Financial Information Systems will work with OIT on this project.

It is recommended that the Controller / Financial Services Unit:

7. Provide periodically scheduled and on-demand training using in-house resources geared to specific applications needs (Excel spreadsheets, etc.) on site to limit disruption of operations. In addition, on-line refresher modules should be required to be completed with certificates issued and supervisors notified. Contact IT3 (MS office skills) or Datatel (Colleague skills) for an analysis of technology training needs across the department and establish annual training and skills goals for all staff needing skill upgrades.

Status of Recommendations:

A technology proficiency survey was developed for the staff by PDS to assess their current skills. PDS will provide customized technology training along with other training to develop workforce skills. A training session on Team Building is scheduled for December 8, 2006. Communications and customer service skills training will be held in January or February, 2007.

It is recommended that the Controller / Financial Services Unit:

8. Create a website that has links to procedures and commonly used forms (i.e. budget transfer, expense transfer, invoice submission, check requests, etc.). Communicate to the College where these procedures are located. Include a link to the COBA website on the Finance Department website. Electronic tutorials should also be provided on the website.

Status of Recommendation:

Several members of the staff attended a NOVUS training session and will begin to develop the website. Information for the website is being reviewed and compiled by the Finance Staff and the Finance Liaison Group to ensure that it is convenient and informative. The website will be maintained by the Manager of Financial Information Systems.