

University of Alaska Fairbanks



Process Improvement & Training (PIT) Crew Results Report

November 2015

In partnership with:



MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

University of Alaska Fairbanks

UAF photos by Todd Paris.

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Introduction: UAF Process Improvement & Training (PIT) Crew

UAF made efforts in FY12 to institutionalize campus-wide process improvement (PI) efforts by creating the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which is the home of UAF PI. Fifteen staff members have gone through extensive training to become qualified process improvement facilitators (the PIT Crew) who guide each project team. Since 2012, the PIT Crew has facilitated six major campus-wide initiatives and over 15 shorter efficiency projects.

Although a PIT Crew facilitator coordinates the activities for each project, improvement is best driven by the process owners and those that are experts in the work or understand the business needs. The process improvement teams are made up of UAF employees working in the process for each project who bring detailed knowledge to the table. Projects are chosen based on institutional impact, focusing first on processes that are known to cause broad-based frustration to customers. Once projects are complete, final implementation activities are often turned over to steering committees (for leadership decisions/support) and the process owners/responsible offices that put solutions into place with assistance from PIT Crew on an as-needed basis.

The tools used by the PIT Crew for each PI project include: 1) process workflow mapping or flowcharting, along with 2) implementation planning and project management to achieve results. The facilitators utilized a Process Advantage® framework developed by Professional Growth Systems (PGS) for many of the projects.

The UAF PIT Crew facilitators are:

Lillian Anderson-Misel, Geophysical Institute
 Mike Cox, Facilities Services
 Mike Earnest, Office of Admissions & Registrar
 Faye Gallant, Office of Management & Budget
 Margo Griffith, Office of Human Resources
 Jennifer Harris, School of Fisheries & Ocean Sciences

Pamm Zierfuss-Hubbard, Auxiliary & Contract Services
 Ashley Munro, Financial Aid
 Julie Queen, Office of Management & Budget
 Kris Racina, Student Services
 Dave Read, Geophysical Institute
 Gabrielle Russell, Rural Student Services
 Briana Walters, Office of Management & Budget

UAF community members and project participants have highlighted the success of the PIT Crew efforts and framework:

Breaking down barriers between units: “The process improvement efforts have provided clarity, transparency and most importantly improvements on both sides.”

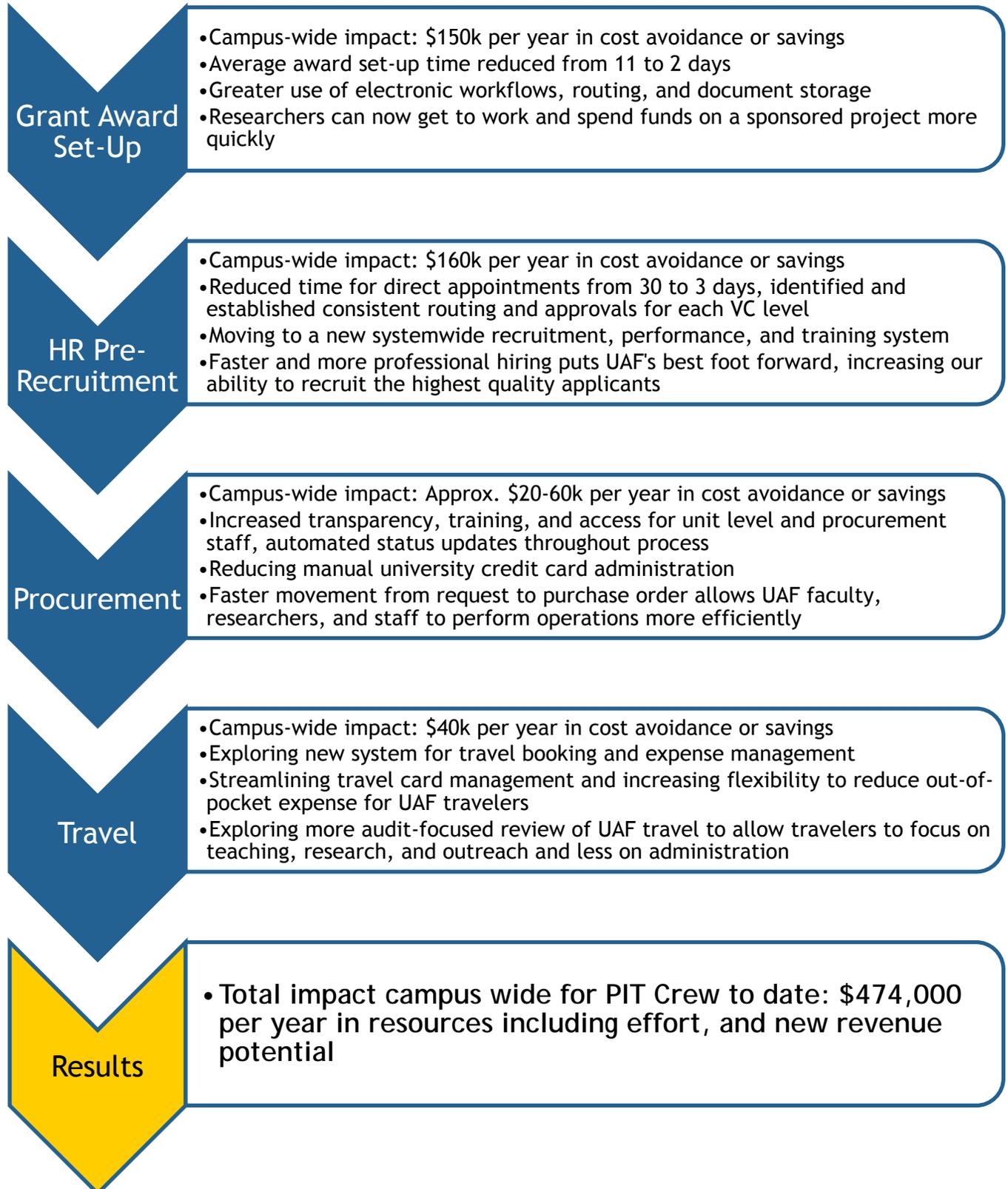
Empowering staff: “It’s ongoing now - the process bleeds over to daily aspects of my job and within my department, allowing me to think outside the box when it comes to finding solutions.”

Supporting change: “Change is being promoted from daily users not just from the top down, creating a feeling of partnership with administration.”

Improving customer service: “Customers love that they don’t have to come down here or walk a paper around for signatures.”

Encouraging open communication: “Our communications, project management, and customer satisfaction has improved tremendously. This would not have happened without the help of our facilitators walking us through this process.”

Highlights from Major Initiatives

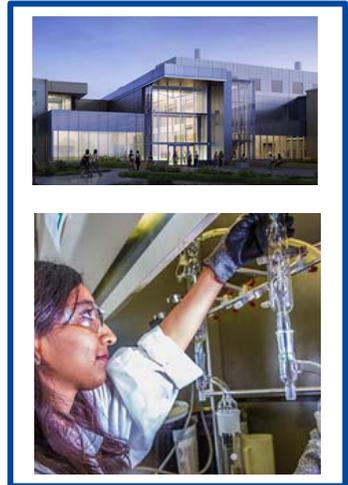


Sponsored Award Set-up: GPS (Grant Process Solutions) Team

Situation

The GPS team set out to streamline the grant award setup process, reducing the time between notification of an award and when the researcher can start spending funds from upwards of 30-60 days to five working days. Specific problems included:

- Inadequate documentation, forms not intuitive
- Lack of standardized training and infrequency of training
- Pre-Award and Post-Award disconnect
- Insufficient time to complete review
- Lack of timely response, follow-up and transparency
- High potential for error/unclear resources
- Redundancy/duplication of work
- Difficulty in technology tools, inability to fix errors



Solution

The team's recommendations to its steering committee included:

- The integration of the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration (OGCA)
- An electronic repository for all proposal and award documents
- Eliminating the budget request form (BRF), reducing the paper submission process and several steps to review and key grant budgets into the Banner system
- Increasing training for units and researchers and reducing silos between stakeholders

In Phase 2, OGCA implemented the recommendations from Phase I while creating an integrated OGCA with a lifecycle approach for project management from proposal to award closeout.

- Created monthly research administration trainings (G-CReATE) for faculty, staff and students
- Established regular "harmonization meetings" to aid cooperation between groups
- Implementing the InfoEd modules for pre-award (SPIN, Proposal Development & Tracking)

Results

The teams' solutions resulted in 92 percent of awards being set up within 5 days (2 day average) vs. prior 11 day average. This savings of 9 business days in processing time increases researchers' ability to hire, spend, and recover indirect costs as revenue. Two positions were eliminated through attrition and reorganization. In addition, the integrated office approach has allowed for cross-training, a team life-cycle approach and improved customer service and compliance.

*Time: reduction in average set-up
from 11 to 2 days*

*Monetary: yearly savings/cost
avoidance total of \$150,000*

Team members

GPS Team (Phase 1): Wanda Bowen, OGCA; Deby Chapman, Center for Research Services; Nickole Conley, CEM/INE; Kim Cox, IARC; Janet Daley, GI; Angela Gies, SFOS

Implementation Team (Phase 2): Rosemary Madnick, OGCA; Andrew Gray OGCA; Teri Langton OGCA; Samantha Aleshire OGCA

PIT Crew Facilitators: Dave Read and Mike Cox

HR Pre-Recruitment: HIRED (HR Internal Recruitment & Design) Team

Situation

The existing recruitment process was known to be overly complex and slow, hindering department action in a timely manner and leaving a poor impression on candidates for employment. The process has high impact and high visibility across campus.

The problems in the existing recruitment process included:

- Cumbersome, inflexible processing unable to accommodate quick seasonal hires
- Redundancy in workflows
- Outdated software (UAKJobs) with inadequate document storage space slowing response time, and lack of reporting tools for vital statistics or equal opportunity demographics, contributing to increased institutional risk
- Delayed or failed searches due to lengthy process, resulting in loss of qualified candidates to other opportunities
- Frustrated stakeholders and process inconsistency



Solution

- The HIRED team standardized the approval, routing and corresponding signature authority memos at each Vice Chancellor level. They also improved trainings and extended the UAKJobs time-out period to avoid the loss of unsaved work in the system. These changes resulted in more efficient and timely transactions in UAF HR, allowing two vacated positions to be eliminated.
- The team streamlined the direct appointment process reducing processing time and eliminating unnecessary review. This improvement resulted in reducing turnaround time on direct appointments from 30 to 3 days on average; increased use of recruiting pools also contributes to this metric.
- The team is currently implementing a new recruitment, learning and performance management system (PageUp), which will replace the aging UAKJobs system and is expected to reduce processing time for recruiting and employee onboarding, improve transparency, reduce duplicate entry of employee data, require fewer workarounds and improve reporting in critical areas.

Results

*Time: reduced direct hire time
from 30 to 3 days*

*Monetary: yearly savings/cost
avoidance of \$160,000 to date*

Team members

HIRED Team: Derek Bastille, OMB; Inna Conner, UAF HR; Margo Griffith, IAB/UAF HR; Shelly Hall, UAF HR; Donna Laiti, GI/UAF HR

Implementation Team: Margo Griffith, UAF HR; Brad Lobland, UAF HR; Derek Bastille, OMB

PIT Crew Facilitators: Julie Queen, Libby Eddy and Faye Gallant

Procurement: SUPER (Streamlined, User-friendly Procurement and Efficient Requisitioning) Team

Situation

Faculty, research, and staff were frustrated by the long and complex process involved in making a purchase. The team worked to reduce or eliminate the following problems:

- Insufficient information and lack of communication
- Overall process not user-friendly, lack of training
- Experts brought to the table late in the process
- Too many reviews/approvals, many redundant steps
- Lack of accountability/consistency/transparency



Solution

The team streamlined the process beginning with a request to buy something within a department, ending with issuance of a Purchase Order (PO) at the UAF Office of Procurement & Contract Services (P&CS).

- Implemented automated banner notification emails, which eliminated repeated phone calls or status enquiries. Empowered unit personnel to respond to researchers
- Automatically assigned PO numbers which enabled full use of Banner's automated features and eliminated unnecessary manual work
- Expanded the Procurement Technician (PT) program, increasing authority and system access for highly trained staff in high volume departments
- Moved to electronic routing and storage of POs, eliminating manual paperwork and filing, and reducing processing time by 60 hours/year per department with PTs
- Increased ProCard functionality by allowing travel expenses and increasing purchasing limits, while reducing institutional liability by consolidating multiple cards
- Delegated authority for insufficient funds (NSF) overrides to unit business officers and allowed for setting the budget control at a higher level, which reduces the number of NSF errors in the system and allows for such errors to be addressed more quickly

Results

Time: reduce manual steps and increase ProCard functionality

Monetary: \$40,000 in savings in addition to increased rebates

Team members

SUPER Team: Kara Axx, Facilities Services; Roberta Hamilton, SFOS; Kari Haschke, GI; Denise Moe, P&CS; Terry Rahlfs, P&CS; Kristin Elieff, OIT; Scott Snedden, P&CS
 Steering Committee: John Hebard, P&CS; Deb Moore, P&CS; Raaj Kurapati, Financial Services
 PIT Crew Facilitators: Faye Gallant, Margo Griffith and Jennifer Harris

Travel: TRIP (Travel Representatives Improving Processes) Team

Situation

The UAF community has been frustrated by the processing time for travel authorizations and reimbursements. As the travel industry moved to online efficiencies, such as online check-in, electronic boarding passes, and emailed receipts, UAF took steps to understand its manual and paper processes to more easily keep up with a traveler's needs.



Solution

UAF is continuing efforts to improve the travel management process in FY16-17, in conjunction with systemwide efforts, by:

- Increasing use of ProCards for lodging and other travel expenses reduces the burden on travelers, increases rebates, speeds up processing, facilitates volume discounts and eliminates bed tax expenses; this reduces exemption processing efforts by an estimated 100 hours/year
- Moving to a one-card system for travel and procurement, streamlining administration of these cards while reducing institutional liability
- Enabled electronic document upload in current travel system, easing manual submissions
- Exploring a new travel booking and management tool, Fall 2015
- Evaluating audit thresholds
- Piloting shared service center for travel, led by interested UAF units

Results

Time: avoidance of 100 hours/year in exemption processing

Monetary: \$40,000 in tax savings in addition to increased rebates

Team members

TRIP Team: Jared Dillbeck, SFOS; Dawniel Dupee, SNRE/OFA; Karina Gonzales, SFOS; Denise Irish, Athletics; Geoff Jacobs, OFA; Sarah Lanstra, GI; Serena Likar, VCR
 Steering Committee: Raaj Kurapati, Financial Services; John Hebard, P&CS
 PIT Crew Facilitators : Ashley Munro, Jennifer Harris and Margo Griffith

Proposal Development: Premier Unit-led Shared Service Center

Situation

Turnover in distributed proposal development offices left some units with critical vacancies and a loss of institutional knowledge, which negatively impacted researchers' ability to submit high quality proposals in a timely manner. Additionally, workloads in the pre-award/proposal phase can be highly variable in any one research area depending on sponsor deadlines, creating a boom-bust environment that makes it difficult to efficiently manage staff time.

Solution

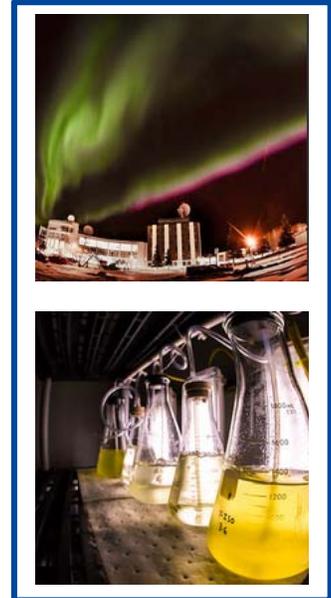
Several research units at UAF, with assistance from the PIT Crew, piloted a shared service model to address these concerns. This model has been successful and is now being applied to other functional areas. The shared service model for proposal development resulted in an increase in the volume and quality of proposal submissions as well as increased efficiency and expertise.

Results

The office projected a proposal output increase of 162 over FY14. The initial savings equated to ¼ position and \$15,000/year in single unit efficiencies, with one position and \$60,000 in savings system-wide. As these positions are often high turnover, the shared office creates a higher degree of institutional knowledge and consistent service. This increases UAF's consideration for awards in an increasingly competitive environment.

Using current award rates, the office estimates UAF researchers are able to submit additional proposals equivalent to \$2 million in potential new revenue. Direct benefits include:

- Increased ability for administration to plan workload while meeting agency deadlines
- A robust depth of staffing and expertise to meet high submission volume to single agency calls
- Structure that successfully navigates unplanned staffing outages and turnover while providing uninterrupted & seamless proposal submission and excellent customer service in a complex regulatory environment
- Internal professional development & promotional opportunities for staff within the office and retention of specialized skill-sets



Monetary: yearly savings of \$60,000 with \$2M in potential new revenue

Functional: a new unit-led model for doing business with greater efficiency

Participants

Led by Dave Read (GI, PIT Crew) and Jennifer Harris (SFOS, PIT Crew); Matt Seymour, CNSM; Michelle Pope, SNRE. Office of Proposal Development managed by Erin Albertson
 PIT Crew Facilitators: Julie Queen and Faye Gallant

Continuing Improvement: Projects in Process

The PIT Crew manages its project portfolio to ensure results can be achieved, and works to evaluate new projects and assist with campus improvements on a regular basis.

Administrative: Training and Employee Development (TED)

Summer 2014 - Winter 2015/16

The TED team is working to improve training delivery and tracking for UAF employees. Target outcomes include: trainings available online in one easy to find place, clearly defined pathways for employees to train (from initial onboarding through professional development), and improved tracking and reporting of training so that employees and supervisors can easily tell what they need, when they need it.

Team members: Jessica MacCallum, Office of the Bursar; Debra Kouda, OIT; Gary Bender, OIT; Kimberly Knudsen, EHS&RM; Melissa McDonough, OFA/IAB; Michelle Littell, P&CS; Melissa Parks, OGCA; Andrew Gray, OGCA; Teri Cothren, UAF HR

Steering Committee: Martha Mason, OIT; Frances Isgrigg, EHS&RM; Brad Lobland, UAF HR; Raaj Kurapati, Financial Services

PIT Crew Facilitators: Ashley Munro and Faye Gallant



Research: Land Permitting

Fall 2015 - Spring 2016

The research directors indicated the number one area in which they would like to see improvement is faster turn-arounds on land use permits. Specifically, this project will focus on clarifying and streamlining the permitting and university risk processes from a research perspective. Target completion is scheduled to utilize improvements in the 2016 field season.

Team members: Debbie Coxon, GI; Dian Siegfried, UA Land; Tina Schimschat, UA Land; Frances Isgrigg, EHS&RM; Jay Jones, IAB; Jeff Freymueller, GI; Emily Youcha, INE; Bob Busey, IARC; Jamie Hollingsworth, IAB; Mike Abels, IAB

Steering Committee: Larry Hinzman, Research; Michelle Rizk, UA Strategy, Planning, and Budget; Kari Burrell, Administrative Services

PIT Crew Facilitators: Margo Griffith, Jennifer Harris and Lillian Anderson-Misel

Student: Refund Improvement Process (RIP)

Spring 2015 - Winter 2015/16

The purpose of this team is to improve customer service, create a better student experience and staff work environment by streamlining and automating the refund process to decrease refund wait times and increase clarity for students related to billing and refund processes. Intended outcomes include an automatic, electronic process for the majority of refunds, improved training, improved communication with students, transparency, and a refund processing time of three business days.

Team members: Amanda Wall, Bursar; Mark Steel, OFA; Kaitlin Tom, student; Caitlin Kaber, OAR; Jolie Phillips, CTC; Julie Parhsall, Financial Aid; Holly Sherouse, OAR; Kim Runnion, eLearning

Steering Committee: Raaj Kurapati, Financial Services; Kris Racina, Student Services

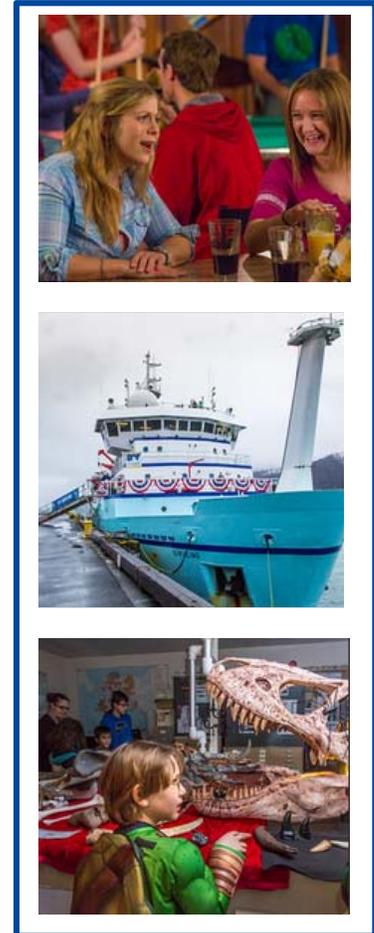
PIT Crew Facilitators: Jennifer Harris, Dave Read and Gabrielle Russell

Shorter Efficiency Projects & Results: Implementing Faster Solutions

Not all projects require year-long engagements. PIT Crew facilitators are often tapped to help groups with targeted solutions on a faster timeline, then responsible offices are able to implement change.

Student Services and Support

- Student Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software for applications, recruiting, enrollment, and advising: mapped current and ideal processes to aid vendor implementation
- Wood Center visioning: established core values in student-centric service area made up of diverse components. Will be a central part of future Wood Center planning activities, incorporating student traditions of the past with new ideas to meet future goals
- Electronic tuition waivers: implemented electronic forms with e-signatures and automatic routing to reduce manual processing and improve transparency and reporting
- NCAA compliance: mapped the process of certifying athlete eligibility to mitigate risk of violations



Research and Academics

- Sikuliaq: created clear and transparent recharge accounting processes to meet agency requirements for annual ship operations of \$16M
- Shared services: Office of Proposal Development (OPD) and new shared travel hub to provide consistent, unit-led, quality service

Administrative Functions

- Activity codes: integrated activity codes with the web timesheet, expanded access and improved reporting
- Campus events: integrated review process with campus events coordinator, established communication process and website, adopted single point of contact and event software system
- Title IX processes: mapped current process and facilitated development of new process to ensure compliance and manage/reduce risk of future violations
- Process Mapping 101 for Employee Development Day: trained UAF employees in the basics of process mapping and change management strategies
- AiM for Facilities Services: implemented asset management software to streamline facilities activities, reduce overtime expenditures, increase processing capacity, and improve audit compliance
- Marketing & Communications intake and workflow: implemented Basecamp software for project management, developed web-based project intake form, and established lead intake/triage role

Shorter Efficiency Projects & Results: Implementing Faster Solutions

Administrative Functions, continued

- Electronic representational allowances: implemented electronic forms to reduce manual processing and improve transparency and reporting around campus entertainment expenses
- Memoranda of Understanding/Memoranda of Agreement (MOU/MOA) database: created new policies to reduce risk and implemented an electronic database to store fully executed agreements in a central location, and easily search/find agreements across university units
- Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity: mapped the internal processes and procedures for incoming director to clarify roles and responsibilities of office
- Journal Voucher (JV) Workflows: automating JV submission, processing, and storage to reduce manual and duplicate data entry, reduce paper routing and time delays, and improve transparency

External Support: PIT Crew as a Resource

The PIT Crew has assisted external groups in an effort to help bridge the communication gaps between the State of Alaska, University, and Alaska public.

- PIT Crew members were recruited by PGS to facilitate active work sessions, sponsored by the Governor's office and State of Alaska Office of Management & Budget, to convey state budget information and gather constituent feedback
- PIT Crew members work as UAF representatives in local and regional activities, increasing university partnerships and community support, which aligns with Shaping Alaska's Future themes

Looking Ahead

In the coming months, the PIT Crew is serving as a partner in the following initiatives:

- Engaging with the UA System office to explore shared service options, and/or opportunities for outsourcing, in addition to transforming access and controls related to technology systems
- Participating in State of Alaska discussions exploring efficiencies and shared service models across government agencies
- Employee engagement surveys, initiatives, and outcomes
- Coordinating with PGS and university leadership for Chancellor's priority projects
- Other projects based on campus demand

For more information about the PIT Crew or projects in this report, please visit www.uaf.edu/omb.