

Collaborative Effort Yields PRO SYS 2006

The LSU Office of Procurement Services introduced its newest system called PRO to the LSU community on Feb. 13. PRO is Information Technology Services' largest system development in several years, incorporating advanced features such as a Web interface, online document routing and approval, accounts payable enhancement, PDF-creation using templates, content management and security access.

PRO development was a collaborative effort between ITS and Finance and Administrative Services, which began when Vice Chancellor Jerry Baudin appointed a committee to spearhead the project.

"PRO is poised for success because many individuals from many university offices worked together to achieve a common goal," said Cindy Hadden, deputy CIO and executive director of ITS's University Information Systems Division. ITS Manager Byron Honoré led a team of eight analysts who were assigned full-time to this effort and 17 other IT professionals who worked in supporting roles. Rick Frye, manager of procurement services, coordinated the efforts of purchasing professionals across all campuses. Lisa Gillen, applications consultant at Financial Systems Services, or FSS, served as the liaison between the purchasing and ITS professionals and coordinated the training for the new system. In addition to representatives from ITS, purchasing and FSS, the committee included representatives from the LSU AgCenter, Accounting Services and the Center for the Coast and Environment, all of whom played key roles in the successful implementation of PRO.

Training sessions were held at various locations during the month of January and the first week of February. Approximately 1,200 users have been trained or given authority to use this new process. In the first two weeks of implementation, more than 800 purchases were requisitioned. A primary goal of the system was to eliminate paper and expedite the purchasing process. One feature of the new system that meets both of these goals is the new Contract Release Order function, which allows departments to issue orders directly to vendors. Another popular feature of the new system is the Electronic Receiving Report, which eliminates the old paper copies used for the past 25 years and allows quicker payment to vendors. Web-based invoice processing now allows users to look online at an original copy of the invoice and see a complete tracking history from requisition through invoice payment.

According to FSS Director Carol Wesson, she, Associate Vice Chancellor for Accounting Services Donna Torres and Executive Director of Procurement Services Rose Mary Wilhelm agree that the collaboration and cooperation exhibited during the development of this system should serve as a model for other future system developments.

By Margo Jolet
March 24, 2006