

Indiana State University

2005 - 2006 Administrative Annual Report

Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar

Year in Review

Achievements

As you have heard, increasing public awareness of Indiana State University's accomplishments is crucial to building student enrollment, influencing policy makers, and developing a place of pre-eminence in the Midwest. What do you consider to be your department's accomplishments for the 2006-07 year that will contribute to this effort? (Please list in priority order and limit to no more than 8.)

1. PCI compliance is a major requirement for vendors choosing to accept credit cards as a form of payment. It is a relatively new requirement, and is essentially in a state of development at the time of this writing. While a significant amount of progress has been made to date in moving ISU toward compliance, additional on-going work is to be expected. Once the agreement for the system scans is signed by appropriate parties, quarterly system scans will be scheduled and authorized. Vulnerabilities found will need to be addressed as soon as possible, to be followed by additional scans which will hopefully reflect the absence of the vulnerabilities due to the corrective actions that will have been taken. In addition, the annual self assessment must be completed in a timely and efficient manner. While this project greatly involves staff members from Institutional Computing, the decision was made last fall that the leadership for the project should lie within the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance.

2. ACH direct deposit was offered to students in the latter part of the Spring 2006 semester. Response has actually been much more timely than expected, with several students submitting all required documentation for participation in a relatively short period of time. Several students have received their refunds in this manner, and to date, there have been no problems with the process.

3. The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff, in conjunction with Information Technology staff, have completed the evaluation of the need for a replacement of the Loan Management System (LMS) product. Evaluation criteria were broad, and included the monitoring of congressional action in regard to the future of the Perkins Loan program. The decision to move forward with a new product (SunGuard's Campus Loan Manager – CLM) has been made, and a contract is currently being developed for the purchase. With the funding secured, negotiations are underway for a planned go live date in the March/April 2007 time frame. Anticipated project length according to both the vendor and a school that converted last fall is six months.

4. A multitude of new initiatives will require special attention and fiscal oversight from the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance. Some are continuing programs and others are new. Programming in Cyprus, hosting students from Croatia, and working in conjunction with the Disney Corporation to provide leadership certificate opportunities for students from Morocco are examples of such programming. In addition to academic programming, other initiatives exist that require involvement from the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance. The establishment of a Student Recreation Center Fee required coding by the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff, as well as participation in procedural development and public relations documentation preparation. Another example is the implementation of the laptop scholarship. As with the Student Recreation Center Fee, the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff has fulfilled a significant role in moving this initiative to reality.

5. The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff was involved in the

review and development of many contracts for a variety of things including educational services and the commercialization of intellectual property. Examples are those agreements negotiated with the Correctional Training Institute, FUJI, the Purdue Research Foundation, the company providing the Office of Public Safety with new parking control software, the Department of Corrections, the University of Zagreb, etc. The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff also played a significant role in the transition of copy services in the library from the previous vendor to IKON. 6. The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff released the Grant and Contract web page to the university community during the 2005/2006 fiscal year. This release provided another mechanism to publish policies and procedures for the university community. The existence of the web page has helped to reduce the number of routine questions once fielded by Grant and Contract staff, allowing for more time to be spent on issues of accountability, and proper and timely reporting. The continued refinement and further development of the Grant and Contract web page will be pursued this next fiscal year. 7. In response to Hurricane Katrina, the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff had to not only work with fee waivers, etc., in conjunction with those students that transferred to ISU, but monitoring of Department of Education web sites for guidance on how to deal with Perkins Loans, etc. in the devastated areas had to be done. Monitoring ranged from watching for guidance involving whether or not forbearances were required, etc., to monitoring what zip codes had/did not have mail service. 8. The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff worked with staff from the Office of Registration and Records to develop summer refund tables and associated public information text that would reflect the new refund policy that had been defined to, and approved by, the Board of Trustees to be effective this past fall. While summer withdrawal and change of course activity is now reflective of these new policies, publication of the same had to occur many months earlier. 9. The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff worked with staff from the Office of Student Financial Aid on the implementation of ELM, new software to be utilized in the receipt of loan proceeds from financial institutions. This software also supports processing alternative loans through EFT, which will be a great enhancement for both the Office of Student Financial Aid and the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance. Aid processing was also modified so that all terms are disbursed each night with only the designated term being refunded. The amount of time that it takes to get aid to student accounts has been greatly reduced. 10. Many new reports have been developed in association with the administration of the Grant and Contract Unit of the division of Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar. Data generated by the reports are reviewed in order to bring attention to a variety of aspects associated with grant and contract administration. The reports allow for greater oversight possibilities bringing more accountability and greater assurance of fiscal integrity to grant and contract management.

Enrollment

What steps did you take this year to aid ISU in overcoming enrollment challenges?

The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff helped enrollment by ensuring that students understand their fiscal responsibilities and by providing information to help them make sound financial decisions. This allows students to spend their time on academic subjects because the fiscal aspect of the university experience has been met. The division begins this process by presenting sessions at Sycamore Advantage that explains billing, university financing plans, and a myriad of other financial items. It continues through hardcopy and the web as deadlines are announced and students are made aware of the consequences of non-payment. In addition, job shadowing opportunities were afforded interested local high school students thinking of a career in accounting. This division also has had representation on the President's Task Force on Enrollment; inclusive of the Scholarship Subcommittee that developed and introduced the Laptop

Scholarship concept. Service continues in regard to this initiative through membership on the Laptop Scholarship Implementation team.

Action Steps

Do you have any further progress you would like to report?

The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance also participated in the October 2005 upgrade to Banner 7.0, which was followed in March 2006 with another upgrade to the Banner Accounts Receivable module bringing it to version 7.2. Staying current with all Banner releases ensures that our division is taking advantage of the most current advances in technology available. As part of our move to new versions of the software, we are careful to review to see if any modifications previously deemed necessary can now be eliminated due to baseline enhancements. We were able to eliminate yet another of these modifications as a result of these upgrades. All upgrades to TouchNet web payment and SalePoint on-line cashiering software were also scheduled and timely installed. Additional utilization was made of the portal messaging system this year in sending bills and financially related notices to students. During this past year, the decision was made to select Argos as our new reporting tool. Significant progress has been made in learning this new tool, and in restructuring how reporting is organized within our division. ACH direct deposit for student refunds became a reality this year. Significant work was completed within our division to develop the reporting needed to ensure that the ACH process functions correctly. Developing reconciliatory and work flow procedures was a major priority for our division. Extensive testing was involved to ensure the fiscal integrity of the system as well.

Assessment

What are two ways in which you evaluated the quality or effectiveness in your area last year? What changes did you make based on those assessments?

The University received an unqualified audit opinion in conjunction with the financial records for the year ending June 30, 2005. An unqualified opinion was also received in conjunction with the A-133 federal audit, which covered the same period of time. Both of these are good indicators of the integrity of the work performed within the division. In addition, we conducted a survey that measured customer satisfaction in association with both Bursar Operations and Grants and Contracts. Benchmarking activities were also undertaken. The audit results did not require any changes, given the favorable reports issued. In like manner, the customer satisfaction survey results were very favorable. We are still evaluating the results of the data obtained through benchmarking, however, preliminary reviews appear to be positive.

Budget

As you know, ISU is facing significant budget challenges. Finding ways to overcome these while increasing efficiency requires innovation. How are you overcoming your budget challenges this year?

There are several ways in which this division has addressed budget challenges. In order to minimize the impact of the elimination of two support staff positions, which was necessary to meet budget reduction requirements, technology was utilized to both save on human time and related S & E expenditures. For example, the introduction of portal messaging regarding billings and other financially related information dissemination will save significant dollars in postage and printing costs, as well as staff time associated with the preparation of the items that were once mailed. The web was also utilized when possible, resulting in the same type of savings, with the best example being the elimination of the production and mailing of thousands of 1098T supplemental information forms, the information of which can now be obtained via the web. A review of existing

telephone lines was also undertaken, with non-critical lines being removed, resulting in the elimination of the associated monthly charge. Additionally, hard copy promotional material was reviewed and redesigned in order to generate a reduction in printing costs. Professional development opportunities were also prioritized given a reduction in travel funds, with some opportunities not being realized due to limited funding. The major reduction in division resources required to meet budget challenges had to come from the elimination of positions. There simply does not exist enough S & E to offer any savings of any magnitude given the reality that we must have supplies in order to continue to function.

Future Goals

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Have you considered any action steps your department could make to enhance Indiana State University's reputation as a University of choice? If so, please indicate what you are planning to do and tell us which area of planning your steps fall under.

IE – The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff, in conjunction with Information Technology staff, will continue to review and evaluate the University's Visa/MasterCard compliance. It is planned that the Visa/MasterCard compliance quarterly system scans will begin during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Much effort has been, and will continue to be, given in preparation of such an audit, with appropriate corrective action being taken as may subsequently be deemed necessary. TCH - Staff within the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance will continue to work with Information Technology staff on the conversion to a new loan management system. Campus Loan Manager (CLM) has been purchased and is scheduled to be installed in the next fiscal year. This will provide staff with the latest technology, and enable them to provide better service to students. This project will require a significant amount of resources, as the accurate conversion of loan data is essential to a successful conversion and resultant unqualified audit opinions. TCH - Web payment will be extended to other campus areas once Visa/MasterCard compliancy is assured. Banner has increased the number of baseline web payment applications, many of which will benefit the campus community. OTHER - New initiatives in the Academic Affairs area will involve the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance. As an example, the Laptop Initiative will introduce challenges with collecting the amounts and student data to be added to the 1098T forms as scholarships. A variety of other new initiatives are underway as well that require the involvement of the Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division staff. TCH – The Assistant Treasurer and University Bursar division of Business Affairs and Finance staff will be deeply involved in the rewriting of current FOCUS programming in the Argos language. This will be a significant task given the number of FOCUS programs that are currently in the portfolio of repeat use programs. This, of course, will be in addition to the training sessions and learning curve that the report writers will experience. All reporting will need to be analyzed, and the most efficient method of rewriting must be employed.