Introduction: UAF Process Improvement & Training (PIT) Crew

The PIT Crew: UAF institutionalized campus-wide process improvement (PI) efforts by creating the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 2012, which is the home of UAF PI. Fifteen staff members have gone through extensive training to become qualified process improvement facilitators (the PIT Crew). Since 2012, the PIT Crew has facilitated **six major campus-wide initiatives and 15 shorter efficiency projects.** In addition to core process improvement functions, PIT Crew facilitators also lead **strategic initiatives, strategic planning, workshops, and mapping sessions** to support UAF's mission. Current facilitators include:

Mike Cox, Facilities Services	Ashley Munro, Financial Aid
Faye Gallant, Information Technology	Julie Queen, Financial Services
Margo Griffith, Diversity & Equal Opportunity	Dave Read, Geophysical Institute
	Gabrielle Russell, Rural Student Services
Jennifer Harris, Fisheries & Ocean Sciences	Briana Walters, Management & Budget

Project Teams: Although a PIT Crew facilitator coordinates each project, improvement is driven by the process owners and those that are experts in the work or understand the business needs. Team members represent user groups, central offices, and key stakeholders. Projects are chosen based on institutional impact, focusing first on processes that are known to cause broad-based frustration to customers.

Methods: 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, and have adapted the University of Washington's Strategy Map approach for strategic planning sessions.

Results: While some results can be difficult to quantify, the PIT Crew has identified **over $750,000/year in savings, cost avoidance, and new revenue** from these projects.

What our partners are saying:

"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."

"Change is being promoted from daily users not just from the top down, creating a feeling of partnership with administration."

"The process improvement efforts have provided clarity, transparency and most importantly improvements on both sides."

"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."

"Customers love that they don't have to come down here or walk a paper around for signatures."

"I have been through several strategic planning sessions and yours was the most productive by far! I feel we have actual priorities identified and a way forward. You kept us on track and got all of the members of the team to participate and buy in."

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
- Office of Admissions missions and values: clarified role and guiding principles for a key student service
- Bookstore consolidation: facilitated consolidation of the Fairbanks Campus and CRCD bookstores, saving $75-100k/year while creating new payment options for students and expanding access to automatic textbook ordering
- Title IX compliance: mapped the processes of responding to Title IX reports, clarifying roles and responsibilities and developing an action plan to improve communication flows between relevant offices
- Military and Veteran Student Enrollment Initiative: identifying and implementing strategies to better reach and support current and potential students with military affiliations (in progress)
- Gender Inclusion workgroup: reviewing and modifying UAF's policies, procedures, and facilities to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students and employees (in progress)
- Student Billing Summit: coordinated summit with participants from UAF, UAA, UAS, and SW to understand the challenges in our current approach to student billing and identify goals for improvement (in progress)
- Scholarships: streamlining the scholarship processes for students and for administration, better leveraging scholarship funds to drive enrollment

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

- Mining Industry Research Consortium: facilitated workshop with Engineering faculty and industry leaders to identify areas of shared research interest and design a new consortium model for research funding; initial commitment of $200,000/year from Red Dog Mine
- Strategic Planning sessions for the Alaska Center for Unmanned Aerial Systems Integration (ACUASI) and Geographic Information Network of Alaska (GINA): identified mission, vision, and values for evolving units, producing a strategy maps tying actions to goals to guide growth
- Research Land Permits: reduced internal administrative steps to get permit applications out the door faster and facilitate field research

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: train 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
- 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 (in process)
- Electronic workflows in OnBase
- LEAN Six Sigma training: coordinated training leading to Lean Six Sigma white and green belt certifications, increasing capacity for process improvement across UAF
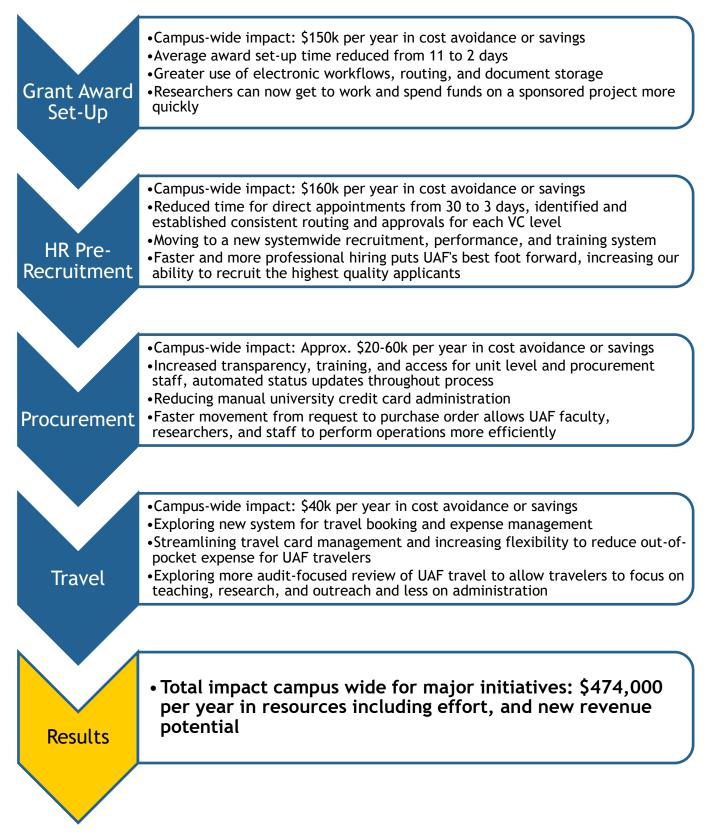
External Support: PIT Crew as a Resource

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

Highlights from Major Initiatives

Grant Award Set-Up
- Campus-wide impact: $150k per year in cost avoidance or savings
- Average award set-up time reduced from 11 to 2 days
- Greater use of electronic workflows, routing, and document storage
- Researchers can now get to work and spend funds on a sponsored project more quickly

HR Pre-Recruitment
- Campus-wide impact: $160k per year in cost avoidance or savings
- Reduced time for direct appointments from 30 to 3 days, identified and established consistent routing and approvals for each VC level
- Moving to a new systemwide recruitment, performance, and training system
- Faster and more professional hiring puts UAF's best foot forward, increasing our ability to recruit the highest quality applicants

Procurement
- Campus-wide impact: Approx. $20-60k per year in cost avoidance or savings
- Increased transparency, training, and access for unit level and procurement staff, automated status updates throughout process
- Reducing manual university credit card administration
- Faster movement from request to purchase order allows UAF faculty, researchers, and staff to perform operations more efficiently

Travel
- Campus-wide impact: $40k per year in cost avoidance or savings
- Exploring new system for travel booking and expense management
- Streamlining travel card management and increasing flexibility to reduce out-of-pocket expense for UAF travelers
- Exploring more audit-focused review of UAF travel to allow travelers to focus on teaching, research, and outreach and less on administration

Results
- **Total impact campus wide for major initiatives: $474,000 per year in resources including effort, and new revenue potential**

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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 respository 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-cyle approach and improved customer service and compliance.
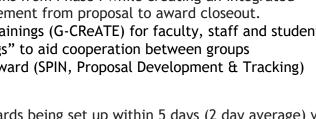
Time: reduction in average set-up from 11 to 2 days	*Monetary: yearly savings/cost avoidance total of $150,000*

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

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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