PeopleSoft HR Module Goes Live January 1

Following the launch of PeopleSoft Financials over the summer (see page 3), Optimize Puget Sound moved to its next phase: implementation of the PeopleSoft Human Resources module scheduled to go live January 1, 2013.

The team involved in launching the HR module includes representatives from Accounting and Budget Services, Business Services, Career and Employment Services, Human Resources, and Technology Services. This group has been working since June to design and configure the system, which promises to streamline timekeeping and other processes for the university.

“We look forward to offering one-stop, easy access to HR and payroll resources for faculty, staff, and student staff,” states Katie Holmes, assistant director of financial systems and disbursements. “PeopleSoft Time and Labor will replace both Kronos for staff members and the timekeeping portion of SETE [Student Employment Time Entry], providing a single system for all time reporters and supervisors.”

In addition to utilizing a unified timekeeping system, everyone who works on campus will now be on the same payroll calendar.

“Students will transition to a semi-monthly payroll like faculty and staff,” explains Cindy Matern, associate vice president for human resources and career and employment services. “This creates one set of approval deadlines for supervisors and, more importantly, means our student staff members will no longer have to wait a full month to be paid for the campus jobs that help toward the cost of their education.”

The new system offers other smaller, but no less welcome, improvements.

“Time and Labor will be easily accessible off-campus and is compatible with both Windows and Mac operating systems,” Holmes notes. “And exempt staff can record leave in both current and prior payroll periods, which will eliminate the need for correction leave.”

Some changes will be cosmetic only.

“The format of direct deposit advices and payroll checks will change,” Holmes says. “But faculty, staff, and student staff will see generally the same information currently provided on these documents.”

The process of implementation will not end January 1. Additional components of the module, including benefits administration and recruiting, are scheduled for implementation in 2013 and promise to bring further enhancements.

“We’re excited we’ll be able to offer online benefits enrollment next fall,” Matern comments. “Moving from a mostly manual entry process to an automated environment will produce significant efficiencies for enrollment participants and administration.”

It is a long, busy road to go-live, but team members believe the outcome will be well worth the effort.

“There is a lot of work involved,” Holmes acknowledges, “but we are excited at the opportunities we’ll have to enhance services for the campus over the coming weeks, months, and years.”

To learn more, see pugetsound.edu/optimize.

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Old Phone System Retired

With the successful summer installation of the new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system, the time arrived for the official retirement of the university’s old telephone and voice mail systems. On November 16, members of the Network and Server Systems team, including Network Manager Dave Hamwey, Director Mark Young, and Telephony Manager Larry Wussow, shut down power to these systems, parts of which were almost 20 years old.

“Congratulations to Mark, Larry, Dave, and the many others in Technology Services who participated in this momentous achievement,” stated CTO William Morse. “The old system served us very well, and I fully expect our new VoIP system will serve us equally well in the future.”
Faculty Use Moodle to Create Blended Courses
by Lauren Nicandri, Educational Technologist for the Social Sciences

It seems as though every day there is a new article about online learning in publications such as The Chronicle of Higher Education. Here at Puget Sound, we are employing such tools to supplement teaching and learning.

A number of courses on campus feature what are known as hybrid or blended offerings: face-to-face learning combined with supplementary online components. This hybrid learning environment often employs our campus installation of Moodle 2.3, an open source learning management system (LMS).

Some instructors use our video and audio streaming server to add materials to Moodle pages in what is known as “flipping the classroom.” Students can view the posted items (recorded lectures, audio clips, videos) on their own time. This saves valuable class time, which can then be used to engage more deeply with students in collaborative work, peer learning, and mentoring.

Faculty fans of Moodle include Ann Wilson, professor and director of clinical education in Physical Therapy, and Keith Ward, professor and director of the School of Music. Both see many advantages in using Moodle, especially the latest version made available through an August 2012 upgrade.

Wilson likes Moodle’s ability to make important clinical documents available to students for various patient evaluations.

“Moodle is a much superior method of communication to anything I’ve used in the past.”
– Ann Wilson

“I now have the ability to design the site so it makes sense to the way I organize courses....”
– Keith Ward

Get LinkEd!

In January, Technology Services is launching an exciting new series for faculty on teaching with technology.

LinkEd will be a monthly, hour-long conversation, training, or demonstration about various teaching tools, trends, and methods. It will be a great chance to engage and learn new ways to enhance course content through the use of digital teaching tools and pedagogies.

LinkEd will take place the last Tuesday of each month. We’ll be sending faculty more information soon about dates, times, and session topics, so mark your calendars and check your inbox!
Financials First!

After six months of hard work and intense preparation, the team charged with implementing PeopleSoft Financials reached a major milestone July 2 with the launch of that module, the first to go live as part of Optimize Puget Sound. Training sessions have been ongoing, and enhancements to the new system continue in order to realize the full benefits of this powerful budgeting tool.

The Financials team includes representatives from Accounting and Budget Services, Procurement, Human Resources, Technology Services, and the university’s implementation partner, MIS, Inc. Shown celebrating in the Optimize computer lab in Howarth are Jenifer Lambert, Tim Graham (MIS), Jody Putman, Kristen Spiese, Ed Barber, and Steve Renker. Team members not shown include Janet Hallman, Dana Kapla, Stefanie Lund, and Angela Markos.

Campus Solutions Set for March Implementation

In February of this year, work kicked off on the PeopleSoft module called Campus Solutions, dealing with student-focused functions such as bill paying, financial aid, registration, and advising. Offices involved include Academic Advising, Admission, Associate Deans, Business Services, Career and Employment Services, Institutional Research, Registrar, Student Affairs, Student Financial Services, Technology Services, and University Relations.

Campus Solutions will go live March 25, 2013. Maggie Mittuch, associate vice president for student financial services, anticipates the new system will provide many benefits.

“Students will have the ability to customize their information preferences using a dashboard approach and portal environment,” Mittuch explains. “They will be able to develop academic schedules using sophisticated registration planning tools and see fees for a coming term when they pre-register for classes.”

The tools in Campus Solutions are designed to assist in managing virtually every aspect of student life.

“Students will select housing assignments and meal plan preferences using a web-based tool,” Mittuch notes. “Financial aid information will be easier to understand in relation to specific terms of enrollment, and we’ll be able to deliver important, student-specific messages and alerts in a more individualized fashion. We’ll even have the ability to maintain co-curricular transcripts, which is very exciting since the student experience at Puget Sound extends well beyond the classroom.”

Beyond what it will do for students, the new system also holds great promise as a powerful planning resource for administrators like Mittuch.

“We’ll have access to more sophisticated predictive modeling and analytics than we’ve had in the past,” she says. “Using these tools, we’ll be able to make the best, most informed decisions to support our community.”

By the time of go-live, the Campus Solutions team will have worked more than a year in developing the new system. As Mittuch well knows, implementation will not be the end of their efforts.

“We know there is much work ahead as we build this new future,” she states. “But PeopleSoft provides inherent tools to do it well. This system will fundamentally change how we deliver on our educational mission, both inside and outside the classroom.”

Optimize Training Opportunities

There are a variety of ways to learn the new systems and services implemented as part of Optimize Puget Sound!

Current training topics include budget administration, payroll and timekeeping, and purchasing. To learn about scheduled sessions, training documents, and online instruction, go to soundnet.pugetsound.edu/optimize/learning.
Project Management Office Established

On July 1, Technology Services (TS) established a new Project Management Office (PMO), naming Travis Nation, Project Manager for Optimize Puget Sound, as its first director.

The PMO is responsible for the methodology and management of TS projects, business process analysis, and business solutions architecture. The primary goal of the PMO is to achieve benefits from standardizing and following project management policies, processes, and methods.

“Nationwide, universities are beginning to realize the essential role of project management in the success of their efforts,” explains William Morse, chief technology officer and associate vice president for technology services. “As we’ve seen with Optimize Puget Sound, the key to success is having staff with extensive project management skills who can guide such projects in a timely, organized manner.”

For now, the extensive nature of Optimize Puget Sound means it will be the one and only project managed by the PMO. In the long term, however, the PMO will be engaged in supporting a wide range of TS and other university projects.

For more information, see pugetsound.edu/PMO.

TS Student Employment Offers Career Benefits

by Kat Leitzmann ’15, TS Student Staff Member

Technology Services currently employs 55 students, who work in Print and Copy Services, Optimize Puget Sound, Media Services, and the Technology Service Desk. Duties and responsibilities vary greatly across the department, but in any position there is ample opportunity to gain valuable work experience.

Several current TS staff members got their start working as students in the department. They include Joel Arakaki ’06, Alexis Greenwood ’10, Garret Dieckmann ’12, and Julie Coleman ’12.

Arakaki is client support manager, supervising the Technology Service Desk, where he worked in his student days as both a helpdesk consultant and student manager. He finds his experience gives him a better understanding of the important role student staff play in the organization.

“Student staff are vital to the TS operation,” Arakaki states. “They are valuable members of the team and greatly impact our ability to serve the campus community.”

Greenwood sees work-study students as both clients and employees. She encourages them to provide feedback so they can impact the work of TS in a meaningful way.

“They understand the student experience and often give a much-needed perspective that helps us address issues and provide solutions,” Greenwood explains.

Greenwood says her own work-study jobs in TS forced her to break out of her shell while in college.

“I had wonderful student managers who mentored me and helped me overcome any fears I had about working in the traditionally male-dominated tech world,” Greenwood recalls.

Greenwood’s student experience in TS strengthened her resume and provided real world experience that has served her well.

“As important as your degree is, employers also care about work experience” Greenwood emphasizes. “It means a lot when you have a history of showing up on time and completing tasks to your supervisor’s satisfaction.”

Dieckmann’s student job in TS certainly set the stage for future employment. He joined the department in Fall 2011 and, according to Steve Renker, director of Enterprise Information Systems, “impressed everyone with his can-do attitude and talent for quickly picking up new technology” as a project assistant for Optimize Puget Sound.

After graduating in May, Dieckmann was hired as an implementation developer for Optimize before being named the university’s new PeopleSoft administrator in September.

“During my transition to full-time staff member, one of the strangest things was I still felt like a student worker,” Dieckmann comments. “I think that speaks to the opportunity I had as a student to work with full-time staff members and feel like I was contributing, even if it was just for a few hours a week.”

Coleman, also hired after graduation this past May as a classroom and events media specialist, feels her four years in TS as a student staff member opened an unexpected career path for her.

“Although my coursework was in sociology and did not focus on technology, the training I received working for TS in Media Services was like a second major,” she says. “Honesty, I have never been this happy at any other job, either as a student or regular employee.”

Even if student staff don’t pursue technology-related employment after graduation, Greenwood points to a lasting benefit from their time in Technology Services.

“It’s incredibly empowering to understand the technology that makes our lives run on a daily basis,” she concludes.