

# CONCUR TRAVEL AND EXPENSE PROJECT

## FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

*Six California State University campuses and the Chancellor’s Office worked together to establish a shared web-based platform that eliminated cumbersome paper flow for their travel and expense processes, shortened approval and review times, and improved audit and payment cycles.*

The Concur Travel and Expense project was borne out of a shared interest in exploring ways to eliminate the paperwork for travel that California State University employees embark on for official business, which includes travel requests, approvals and reimbursements.

The challenges the paper-laden process presented included inefficient movement of documents throughout campus; lack of transparency of where a transaction lies within the workflow; the need for consistency and education around procedural compliance; the need to obtain approval before costs were incurred; and the desire to minimize resource constraints in managing and working through the entire travel lifecycle.

Although the CSU has a baseline travel procedure for all campuses, each campus may have varied business processes tied to how travel transactions occur. As the CSU continues to look at ways to share resources and mitigate costs, this project was an opportunity for the Accounts Payable group to join in that effort.

The implementation cohort consisted of the Chancellor’s office and six campuses –CSU Bakersfield, Chico State, Humboldt State, Sacramento State, San Francisco State and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. The cohort was determined to develop a web-based platform ensuring compliance with CSU travel procedures; expediting flow of transactions throughout campus; shortening approval and review time frames; and providing more fluid audit and payment cycles. It was also imperative to create a resource that could be readily adopted by other CSU campuses.

Developing this shared environment provided an opportunity for the leads to interface with local technical support, the Chancellor’s Office, and to discuss project elements with campus administration and financial officer representatives. These spirited conversations involved compromise and explored current business practices, as well as strategies for potential improvements.

The team worked to identify necessary compliance measures, gaps in data needs, workflow criteria and overall user experience to build the Concur Travel and Expense platform. Concur is a web-based tool that supports higher education business requests, booking and expense reporting.

The cohort has worked with this platform for more than a year and continues to fine-tune its use. During this timeframe, the participants have been enthusiastic and thoughtful about their involvement with this project as they leverage personnel resources and share implementation costs that would otherwise be prohibitive for any one campus.

### MILESTONES

Mar 2017

- Meet with Concur representative regarding platform.

July 2017

- Kick off design and implementation team meetings with Concur team.

Sep 2018

- Rolling go live for campuses within cohort (three commence at the same time).

Oct 2018

- Finalize credit card feed configuration with U.S. Bank and Concur.

July 2019

- Engage Concur Consultative Intelligence to more efficiently build reports to monitor activity and provide data to campus users.

Oct 2019

- Go live for last campus in original cohort.

## QUANTIFICATION AND RESULTS

The platform has been available to the seven participating institutions for more than a one year, and 4,950 travel reimbursements have been processed through Concur.

During this time, users have identified pain points and potential solutions, and administrators continue to refine and improve the platform.

The migration from a paper-heavy process to this online environment has required extensive creation of educational resources, in-person training and engagement with the campus community in a new way.

## IMPACT AND BENEFITS

At a local level, each campus is able to migrate a cumbersome and labor-intensive process to a more meaningful online platform, which has freed time for employees to devote to other tasks.

At an organizational level, this project created the first opportunity for the Accounts Payable teams within the seven organizations to collaborate, problem solve, and build relationships that will set the stage for future group endeavors.

Through this project, members of the cohort have found ways to support one another and identify practices that eliminate unnecessary resources and procedures so that users may focus time and energy on other efforts.

## PROJECT TEAM

### **Daljit Khangura**

Overall Project Manager, Director of Accounts Payable and Travel, Sacramento State

### **John Guion**

Project Sponsor, Procurement Director, Sacramento State

### **Gina Curry**

Former Interim Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

### **Sarah David**

Project AVP Sponsor, Associate Vice President, Financial Services, Sacramento State

### **Ashok Penumalli**

IRT Lead, Software Developer/Analyst, Sacramento State

### **Melissa Taylor**

Project Campus Lead, AP Manager, Chico State

### **Amanda Gazz**

Project lead, AP Concur coordinator, San Francisco State

### **David Chelliah**

Project Lead, AP manager, San Francisco State

### **Scott Tucker**

Technical Lead, Administration and Finance Technology Architect, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

### **Bernadette Monterrosa**

Project Campus Lead, Procure-to-Pay Director, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

### **Tawny Fleming**

Project Lead, AP & Procurement Manager, Humboldt State

### **Becky Lappin**

Project Lead, AP Lead, CSU Bakersfield

## LESSONS LEARNED

1

Communication is key. Some decisions came easily, and others required spirited debates. Weekly calls by Daljit Khangura, overall project manager, kept participants on the same page and added a layer of accountability during the initial implementation stages.

2

Hindsight suggests that a more developed road map and assignment structure would have avoided resource bottlenecks, such as ensuring internal partnerships (IT personnel, for example) were available during the implementation with Concur.



Team members from left: Gina Curry, project AVP sponsor and Sacramento State associate vice president, financial services; Becky Lappin, project lead and Chancellor's Office AP manager; Sarah David, Concur Global administrator/project lead and Sacramento State travel program specialist; and Daljit Khangura, overall project manager and Sacramento State director of Accounts Payable and Travel.

## PROJECT TEAM

**Ann Avery**  
Project Lead, AP Manager, Chancellor's Office

**Michelle Norton**  
IRT Lead, Project/Application Support Manager, Chancellor's Office.