



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

# UO Business Practices Project

## Overview

# Project Background

- Pattern of findings related to audits of central business functions
- Consistent theme: risk of decentralized business functions

Jan 2018: Office of Internal Audit memo to Board of Trustees identified risks connected to UO's decentralized structure re: business transactions

- The significant delegation of authority to local levels
- The lack of data necessary for decision-making and monitoring by oversight functions, including questions regarding the quality of existing data
- The absence of accountability necessary in a highly decentralized environment
- The assignment of responsibilities not always being aligned with necessary skills
- Individuals being assigned “a myriad of additional responsibilities,” especially in smaller departments, which contributes to additional risk and/or operational efficiency



# Defining the UO Business Practices Project

## The project IS

- Creation of college/division-focused organizations
- Redesign of current business processes
- Focused on effectiveness of services and support to departments
- Custom development of regional hub structure

## The project is NOT

- "University-wide centralization"
- Individuals co-located together doing a similar job
- A cost-cutting exercise
- "One size fits all" solution
- Replacement of other related initiatives



# Three-Phase Project

- Phase One: Portfolio diagnostic. Analysis of current structure of business services, strengths, and areas of opportunity.
- Phase Two: Assessment of strategic options for development of Regional Business Hubs.
- Phase Three: Development of implementation plans to facilitate transition.



# Institution-Wide Project: Accelerate development of regional business hubs

**Address risks in the audit related to university's decentralized structure related to business transactions** (accounting, budgeting, purchasing and contracting, and human resources transactions); risks created by staff who do "a little bit of everything" include:

- Lack of training and experience on specific functions
- Lack of knowledge about policies and procedures
- Use of inefficient business processes
- Lack of internal controls and increased fraud risk (e.g., cash in the drawer)
- Business continuity risk if one person is out (e.g., due to FMLA, change in jobs, etc.)

## ***EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS: Improve our business processes and practices***

- Identify best practices in business processes, reports, and technology to be used across portfolios
- Leverage experts within the university so that we don't keep "inventing the wheel"
- Build increased collaboration between central staff and portfolio staff to improve problem solving, identifying issues and obstacles and help prioritizing resources toward improvement
- Standardize and staff transactional work so that portfolios are empowered to execute and support the majority of transactions and are able to effectively engage central offices when complex strategic problems arise.

## ***Improve support for local clients***

- Keep communication, feedback lines and accountability within client portfolios
- Identify and protect key functions that must be provided to departments
- Maintain high level of services to units





# Business Practices Project:

Research Administration Focus

# Tools

- Reconciliation and Forecasting Reports
- Department level checklists for proposals, subawards, closeouts, etc.
- Streamline workflow for subaward invoices.
- Tracking labor distributions on PI's projects.



# Data Access

- Enhanced Cognos Reporting
- DGA Access to IACUC system to help/remind PIs of process.
- Repository of documents for proposal submission.
- Repository of DGA trainings and modules.
- Greater access in EPCS for DGAs.
- Effort and cost share reports – ensuring everyone knows how to access them in EPCS.





# Communication

- Reaching out to sponsor for amendments/next year of funding?
- Getting pre-award index for multi-index awards, SPS send a reminder?



# Other items?

We will be sending a survey out in early 2022, the preceding slides are our current items but will be influenced by our feedback today.

