FOCUS
November 2011
AP Roundtable

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Overview – Hot Discussion Topics

- General
- Late/Early Payments
- Expedites
- Stipends
- Honorariums
- Independent Contractors
- Personal Reimbursements
- Moving and Relocation
- COMM CARD Payments
- Electronic Invoicing
- Travel
- Certifications/Networking
- Presenting

General

- General – how do you do what you do?
  - How many individuals do you have processing invoices and reimbursements in AP/Travel?
  - Do you have a dedicated area/people handling travel reimbursements? Why/why not?
  - How many travel and personal reimbursements do you receive in a year?
  - How many invoices do you process in a year?
  - Do your individuals only process or do they handle emails and calls as well?
  - How are your invoices divided – by alpha? By vendor?

Understanding how we do things alike and differently may help us each to further efficiencies in our own departments and determine who we should benchmark with about particular aspects of our departmental processes.
Late/Early Payments

- What is your school’s designated time in which you “touch” an incoming invoice to AP?
- What is your policy on old invoices that come to AP after first being sent to the department?
  - Obviously “past due” to the vendor
  - Late fees charged by vendor
- Is your school taking advantage of early pay discounts? (e.g. 2/10 Net 30 Discounts)
  - If so what are you doing?
  - How did you begin to research with your vendors?
  - Would you be willing to begin a “network” of agreeable vendors with other FOCUS schools?

Stipends

- How does your school define a “stipend”?
  - What are your processing requirements?
  - How are your ensuring this remains uniquely distinct from “Awards & Prizes”, “Honorariums” and “Independent Contractors” or “Personal Service Agreements”?
- For schools not processing “stipends”, how are you handling:
  - cost of living assistance payments to students that come in for programs over the summer???

Honorariums

- VCU has begun to encourage the combination of travel with honorarium payments
  - Is anyone else doing this?
  - Has anyone set up policies surrounding this?
  - If so, what policies have you set?
  - How are you enforcing them? Are you enforcing them?
  - If you were to set some policies, what policies would you consider putting in place for cost and administrative efficiencies?
Independent Contractors

- How are you defining your Independent Contractors/Personal Service Agreements situations?
- When do you determine that this has crossed from an ICA/PSA to an employment situation?
- Has your University formally defined this?
  - If so, would you be willing to share this criteria with schools that have not yet done so to assist them with the process?

Personal Reimbursements

- Numerous schools have restricted Personal Reimbursements
  - Could you share how your school has restricted this category of payments?
  - Are certain categories prohibited en total?
  - Are categories required to be paid by other methods?
  - Have certain categories been shifted to other submission methods?
  - What effect has this had on the volume of personal reimbursements that are submitted to Accounts Payable?
  - Do you have a sense of any efficiencies this is creating for your department?

Moving and Relocation

- Tax Withholding & Reporting
  - Each University must take steps necessary to account for moving and relocation expense reimbursements and payments to meet both employer withholding and employee reporting of gross income and applicable payroll taxes as defined by the Internal Revenue Service.
  - 3rd party payments are restricted to common carriers and/or up to thirty 30 days storage.
  - are tax deductible and do not need to be reported for gross income per IRS Publication 521.
  - Does anyone see why "payments" is included in the above verbiage for M&R in the CAPP and Tier III Policy?

- Mileage related to M&R
  - It appears different schools are using different rates. What rate is your school using and why? (We can look at the CAPP or Tier III Policy live to help us.)
### COMMERCARD Payments

- What schools are using the COMMERCARD as a payment process?
  - When did you begin?
  - What has your experience been?
  - What lessons have you learned?
  - How many vendors do you have using the process?
  - Would you be agreeable to a FOCUS network of COMMERCARD vendors being shared among the group?
  - This will facilitate efficiencies for all involved
  - This should give a jump start to any new schools that begin electronic invoicing down the line
- Who is not using COMMERCARD as a payment process that would like to know more and discuss?

### Electronic Invoicing

- What schools have begun the process of electronic invoicing?
  - When did you begin?
  - What has your experience been?
  - What lessons have you learned?
  - How many vendors do you have using the process?
  - Would you be agreeable to a FOCUS network of Electronic Invoicing vendors being shared among the group?
  - This will facilitate efficiencies for all involved
  - This should give a jump start to any new schools that begin electronic invoicing down the line
- What schools are not using electronic invoicing yet, but are considering, and have questions for the schools that are up and running?

### Travel

- Mileage over 500 miles in a personal vehicle
  - What kind of justification/documentation does your school require?
- Rental cars at the destination location
  - Do you have a policy on rental vehicles versus taxi/shuttle? Sharing when traveling together?
  - Do you have policy on size/category of vehicle that may be used when a vehicle is warranted?
  - Do you see rentals being used prudently?
  - Is anyone allowing for GPS? How about internationally?
Travel

› Lodging
  - Conference Hotels
    - For Tier III schools: How much of a cost difference is still seen as automatically “beneficial” by simply being the conference hotel?
    - For non-Tier III schools: At what point are you asking your travelers to stay outside the conference hotel due to the cost benefit, or are schools looking at the side benefits of the conference hotels and putting the physical cost differences aside?
    - What is being considered the “Break Even Point”? Or is there one?
  - Non-Conference Hotels
    - We are state schools, traveling according to per diems for lodging. How tightly are we monitoring the availability of per-diem versus preference of hotels within the 150% (200%) with additional justifications?
    - Are schools seeking documentation or just certification from the traveler as to their justifications?

Travel

› Lodging Discounts
  - Chain-wide Lodging Discounts
  - Location Specific Discounts/Pricing
  - Production Based Compensation Programs
  - Amenities
  - Meeting Package Specials/Discounts
  - Set Catering Package Pricing
  - UVA’s new lodging booking tool
  - EI Cooperative expanding their travel component
  - Others???

Travel

› Bundled Packages
  - This seems to be the trend for conference and online purchases
    - How is your school handling the documentation requirements to meet what you need for policy and reimbursements?
    - How are you handling the request for reimbursement of a bundled package when the traveler simply can not put their hands on the information you would normally require by what has been written into your policy?
    - VCU is looking at implementing an “affidavit form” the rare situations such as above. Does anyone already have something similar in place? If so, please share.
Travel

- Parking
  - Hotel Parking
    - Any restrictions on valet parking at hotels?
    - Do you reimburse on state?
    - Do you reimburse on local?
    - Do you simply prohibit?
    - Is this not an issue?

- Airport Parking
  - Any restrictions on type of parking at the airport?
  - Number of days that may be used with the non-economy parking?
  - Economy parking versus negotiated off-site discounted parking?
  - Discounted parking for incoming visitors to your school from airports nationwide?

Travel

- Airfare
  - Travel Agency usage
    - Is any school “mandating” usage of their travel agency?
    - If so, what is compliance? Up from what %? Since when?
    - If not, has it been discussed?
    - Do you know what your travel agency usage is currently versus self purchase of airfare?
    - How if travel agency airfare paid for today?
    - Could it benefit your school to move towards a “mandate”/requirement for usage of the travel agencies?
    - Reporting of where travelers in emergency situations
    - Reporting of rogue travelers/departments spending outside true travel policy/guidelines
    - Spotlight opportunities for savings
    - Track unused tickets
    - Provide potential for front end negotiations with airlines
    - Are you utilizing the reporting your agency provides? How?

Travel (cont’d)

- Airfare (cont’d)
  - Online Booking Tool
    - Is anyone using an OBT?
      - If so, which one?
      - Are you satisfied?
      - What are your fees/transaction?
      - Did you re-negotiate your agent assisted transactions when you added your OBT?

- Non – OBT Travel Agency Bookings
  - Who is your primary Travel Agency?
  - What your air spend is?
  - What is your booking and billing process?
  - What is your transaction fee today?
    - Sharing this information within the FOCUS network will help us all to negotiate better deals with our agencies and have a better feel for what we should be able to receive.
Travel

Travel and Expense Reporting Tools
- Who is using one?
- What is your school using?
- What has your experience been?
- Can you share the general details?
- Who has been researching T&E Reporting Tools?
- Can you share what you have found?
  - Capabilities?
  - Limitations?
  - Pricing structures?
  - Anything else that may be of particular interest to the group...

Certifications & Networking

Certifications
- Who has received a professional certification for:
  - Travel? Accounts Payable? Meeting Planning?
  - Accounting? Administration? Other?
- Who has staff members that have received certification for similar items?
- Is anyone pursuing certification?

Certification lends credibility to you and your department.
Certification remains with you and is not specific to your position or your institution.

Certifications & Networking

Travel Certification
- Global Business Travel Association

Accounts Payable
- International Association Payables Professionals

Meeting Planning
- Society Government Meeting Professionals

Accounting
- Certified Public Accountant

Administration
Certifications & Networking

- Networking
  - Is anyone active in professional organizations outside of their school?
  - Global Business Travel Association (GBTA)
  - VBTA
  - NoVA BTA
  - Association of Meeting Professionals (AMP)
  - NoVA Area
  - Society Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP)
  - Old Dominion Chapter
  - American Accounts Payable Association (AAPA)
  - International Accounts Payable Professionals (IAPP)
  - Central Virginia Chapter

Presenting

- Do you share your knowledge with your vendors?
  - Do you tell your vendors how to make doing business with you easier?
  - Do you explain per diem limitations to your lodging and catering vendors?
  - When a vendor calls concerned about a late invoice, do you investigate and share tips as to avoid it in the future?
  - Have you ever considered working through your CVBs??

What else is on your mind?