BUGMI Annual Conference 2015

Implementing Banner Budget Journal Vouchers

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Implementing Banner Budget Journal Vouchers

Overview

In 2015, Oakland University transitioned campus wide from creating and submitting budget journal vouchers (JVs) on paper forms or spreadsheets to creating and submitting them completely in Banner.

I will provide an overview of:

- The old and new processes

- Technical aspects of the transition

- Training we provided users

- Benefits of the transition

- Challenges encountered during the transition

- Changes we've made since implementation

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Old Process

- Budget JVs were prepared on paper and sent to the budget office via interoffice mail, dropped off in person, or prepared on a spreadsheet and emailed to the budget office. Any backup documentation was included on paper or emailed to the budget office.

- Budget JVs were created by initiators, who then obtained approval (a signature if done on paper, or via email if done on a spreadsheet) from the appropriate departmental manager. If approvals from multiple managers were needed, additional signatures would be added to paper forms or additional email approval would be obtained for spreadsheets.

- Managers could initiate their own budget JVs for submission directly to the budget office. No additional approvals were necessary prior to submitting the budget JV to the budget office unless another department's funds were being decreased.
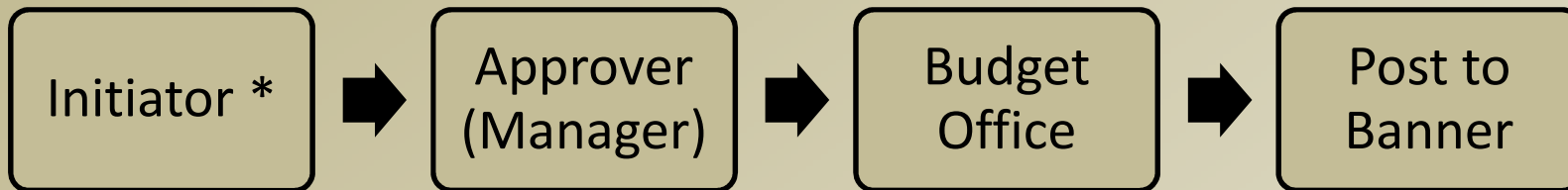
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Old Process

- The budget office then reviewed the budget JVs, and if approved, entered them into Banner via FGAJVCD, at which time they would post with no further approvals required.

- There were a few managers with access to initiate budget JVs in Banner from a small pilot group established in 2013. The project didn't really pick up steam until late 2014, and in the meantime those few users were able to enter budget JVs in Banner. As managers, their budget JVs didn't need any approvals before moving to the budget queue (implicit approvals used).

- The budget office would review these budget JVs in Banner (FOQJVCD), and upon approval in Banner (FOAUAPP) they would post.

- Budget office personnel initiating budget JVs would have a budget office colleague review and approve the budget JVs before they were entered in Banner.

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Old Process

Initiator *	→	Approver (Manager)	→	Budget Office	→	Post to Banner

*   Step not applicable if a budget manager initiated the budget JV

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New Process

- Budget JVs are created and processed completely within Banner using FGAJVCD.

- Banner Document Management (BDM) is used to store budget JV backup. Access to create documents in BDM for budget JVs is mostly limited to central office personnel, so users must email backup to the budget office who then archives documents in BDM.

- Initiators still create budget JVs, and once they complete a budget JV it moves to the approval queue where the appropriate budget manager can review it. If approvals from multiple managers are needed, email approval from the additional managers must be emailed to the budget office.

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New Process

- Budget managers still initiate their own budget JVs for submission directly to the budget office; we refer to budget managers who create their own budget JVs as initiator/approvers. When initiator/approvers complete a budget JV, it moves directly to the budget office approval queue.

- The budget office reviews the budget JVs. If approved, they post directly with no further approvals required. If disapproved, they return to incomplete status and can be modified for resubmission or deleted.

- The budget office can be pre-authorized to serve as a proxy for the departmental approver if the departmental approver will be unavailable.

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New Process

- Because of the way Oakland University's approval queues are configured, budget office approvers don't enter their own budget JVs because they would post directly. Budget office approvers (analyst or management level) who create budget JVs still use paper forms and give them to the budget office's financial assistant for entry into Banner.

- The financial assistant is set up similar to an initiator/approver, so budget JVs entered by that individual go to the budget office approval queue, where an analyst or manager other than the one who created the budget JV and gave it to the financial assistant will review and approve it.

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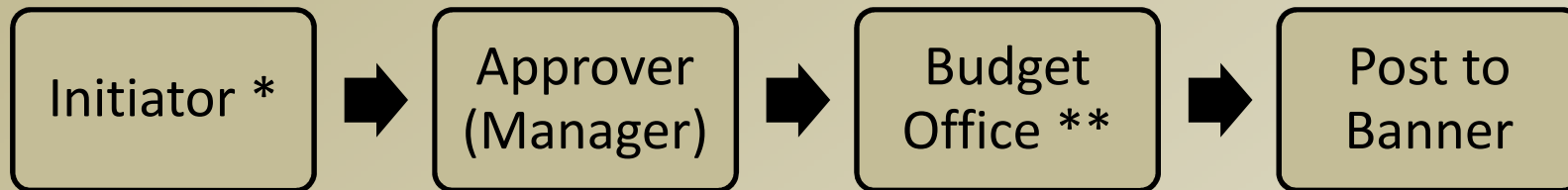
New Process

Initiator *	→	Approver (Manager)	→	Budget Office **	→	Post to Banner

* Step skipped if a budget manager initiated the budget JV

** Budget office-initiated budget JVs are initiated by a financial assistant whose budget JVs do not post directly to Banner; these budget JVs are then reviewed and approved in Banner by a financial analyst or manager

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Transition – Technical Aspects

- FOMAQRC – Approval Queue Routing Codes
  - Document Type
  - Rule Group (maintained via FOMRGRC; includes one or more rule classes)
    - Each level in our process (initiators, approvers, budget office) has a specific rule group
  - Chart of Accounts
  - Can also specify
    - Fund, Fund Type, Organization, Account, Account Type, Program
  - Create only one queue per unique combination of routing criteria (avoid using identical routing criteria)
  - Document Type and Rule Group combination is an important factor in routing
    - Custom rule codes (FTMRUCL) and rule groups (FOMRGRC) can be created as necessary to accommodate different routing needs and create unique routing criteria

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Transition – Technical Aspects

- FTMAPPQ – Approval Queue Maintenance
  - Queue ID
  - Queue Limit
    - Document will move to next queue only if document total exceeds this limit
    - Set to $0 to force all documents to next queue upon approval
  - Next Queue
    - Where documents exceeding queue limit will be routed upon approval
  - Queue Level Information
    - Individual users
    - Effective and termination dates
    - Queue level
    - Approval limit (individual user limits can exceed the queue limit)

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13

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Transition – Technical Aspects

- FOMPROF – User Profile Maintenance
    - Authorities for each user
        - Master Fund
        - Master Organization
        - Various authorizations (NSF Override, Post in Accrual Period, Self Service Access, etc.)
        - Maintained by accounting (finance data stewards); they determine the proper authority levels

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Transition – Technical Aspects

- FOMUSRG – Rule Group Security Maintenance
    - Assign users to rule groups
        - User ID
        - Rule Group

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Transition – Technical Aspects

- Setting up users in the appropriate queue(s)
  - Approval queues for budget JVs were established for the pilot group in 2013; we explored alternate queue structures prior to rolling it out campus wide in 2015, but decided to keep the existing structure
  - We don't have org security enabled, and it would be tedious and time consuming for the data stewards to create and maintain individual queues for each org
    - Because approval queues need unique routing criteria for proper routing, we would have had to create a queue for every org if we wanted department-specific queues, leading to unwieldy queue maintenance
  - We use one approval queue for each level of budget JV entry/approval
    - Q008: Budget JV initiators
    - Q007: Budget JV approvers and budget JV initiator/approvers; levels are used depending on role (level 10 for approvers; level 20 for initiator/approvers)
    - Q005: Budget office approvers (once approved in Q005, budget JVs post to Banner)

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Transition – Technical Aspects

- We created one queue and corresponding rule group for each approval level
  - Q008: Budget JV
    - Queue limit is $0
    - Next queue is Q007
  - Q007: Budget JV approvers; budget JV initiator/approvers
    - Queue limit is $0
    - Next queue is Q005
    - Approvers who have Q008 initiators are level 10, as the lowest level will see documents for approval first; initiator/approvers who don't approve budget JVs created by others are level 20 so they won't see other people's budget JVs waiting for approval
  - Q005: Budget office approvers
    - Queue limit is $999,999,999.99
    - No next queue
    - Documents post after receiving Q005 approval; this queue is the final stop for approvals

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Transition – Technical Aspects

- Budget JVs initiated by departmental initiators
  - Initiated in Q008
  - Always forced to Q007 based on queue limit of $0 and next queue of Q007
  - Departmental approvers are in Q007, level 10, and will see notification on FOIAINP when first accessing a Banner Finance screen after logging in
  - Approve using FOAUAPP
- Budget JVs initiated by departmental approvers (initiator/approvers)
  - Initiated in Q007
  - Always forced to Q005 based on queue limit of $0 and next queue of Q005
  - Budget office approvers are in Q005, level 10, and will see notification on FOIAINP
  - Approve using FOAUAPP

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Transition – Technical Aspects

- Budget JVs initiated by the budget office
    - Because budget office approvers are set up as approvers in Q005 and we use implicit approvals, any budget JVs created by these approvers will post directly with no explicit approvals required
    - Budget office approvers are set up in both Q007 and Q005, and budget JVs they create originate in Q007
        - Level 20 in Q007 so they don't see budget JVs waiting in Q007 for departmental approval
    - The budget office's financial assistant doesn't approve budget JVs, and is the department's designated budget JV initiator
        - Set up as an initiator/approver in Q007, level 20
        - Not set up in Q005
        - Doesn't see budget JVs waiting in Q007 for departmental approval
        - Budget JVs go to Q005, where a budget office approver will review

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Queue Routing
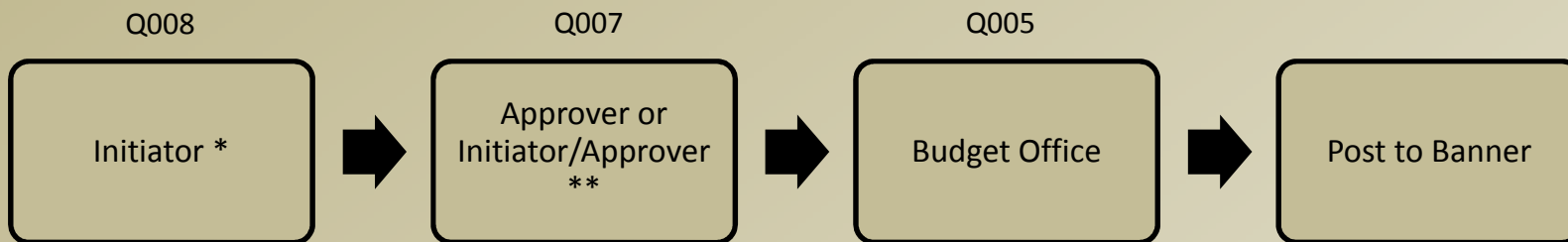
Q008		Q007		Q005		
Initiator *	➤	Approver or Initiator/Approver **	➤	Budget Office	➤	Post to Banner

* Step skipped if a budget manager initiated the budget JV

** Budget office-initiated budget JVs are initiated in Q007 by a financial assistant whose budget JVs do not post directly to Banner; this user is set up similar to an initiator/approver

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Training Users

- Campus wide training
  - Scheduled several training sessions and notified Banner Finance users
  - Provided a detailed presentation that was designed to also serve as a user manual complete with screen shots and step-by-step instructions
  - Users had to complete two steps after the training to be set up
    - Submit a request to be added to the appropriate approval queue; all requests reviewed by the budget office
    - Complete an access form to be added to the appropriate Banner class for their role; all requests reviewed by the Banner Finance data stewards
  - Learning curve has varied based on each individual's comfort level and how often each department enters budget JVs
    - For some, it was essentially an introduction to the entire budget JV process regardless of entry method
    - For others, it was just a matter of spending a few minutes reviewing the training guide, and the Banner entry was no problem

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Training Users

- Customer service
  - We knew there would be many questions and some frustration as users adapted to the new system
  - We made an effort to provide timely, patient, and thorough customer service, including working one-on-one as necessary to assist users during the transition
  - We implemented the new process in February 2015, allowing for plenty of time before the year-end crunch
    - This made things much easier in the long run for the users and the budget office
- New users
  - We have been training new users as necessary when they come on board, and haven't been offering recurring formal group training sessions since completing the round of training we did prior to implementation
  - Current users have been great about training new users in their areas

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Transition – Benefits

- Reduces number of data entry points and potential for data entry errors
    - With paper or spreadsheet budget JVs, users entered data on a form that was sent to the budget office; the budget office's financial assistant would then re-enter the data from that form into Banner once the budget JV was reviewed and approved for posting
    - Moving budget JV entry to Banner results in only one data entry point and eliminates multiple people entering the same data at different points in the process, which should reduce the potential for data entry errors
    - The budget office is completely out of the data entry process for department-initiated budget JVs

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Transition – Benefits

- Shifts data entry responsibility to the departments
    - Data entry responsibility belongs to the departments, as they now enter their own budget JV data directly into Banner and take complete ownership of their budget JVs
    - Eliminates the possibility of the budget office making a data entry error on a department-initiated budget JV
- Allows the budget office's financial assistant to focus on core tasks
    - The financial assistant was previously responsible for entering almost all budget JVs for the University
    - Now the financial assistant only enters budget JVs initiated by the budget office and has no data entry role for other departments' budget JVs

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Transition – Benefits

- Reduces processing time
    - Initiators don't need to send paper copies or email spreadsheets
    - Time from creation to posting could have been a full day or two using the old process if the budget JV was sent via interoffice mail
    - Time from creation to posting can now be as little as a few minutes
- Reduces paper usage
    - Budget JVs are no longer submitted or archived on paper forms, and backup is now archived electronically in BDM instead of on paper
- Significantly reduces the chances of a budget JV getting lost or overlooked
    - Paper budget JVs could get lost and spreadsheets could get buried in email
    - Banner budget JVs remain in the approval queue and suspended budget JVs can be found quickly and easily using Banner or queries

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Transition – Challenges

- Approval queue routing
  - One queue for each approval level; all departments are lumped together; approvers must identify and select only their department's budget JVs for approval
    - Budget office has to be extra vigilant for approvals and disapprovals by the wrong department
  - It was determined that, in our case, separate approval queues for each department (equivalent to the Q007 level) would be too cumbersome to set up and maintain
  - Budget JVs move to the next approval queue after one approval; if multiple departments need to approve a budget JV, written approval from the second department must still be obtained

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Transition – Challenges

- Budget office review process
    - The budget office was used to reviewing budget JVs in a user-friendly format on paper
    - The new process displays information on the Banner form FOQJVCD
        - Layout not nearly as user-friendly as the paper format previously used
        - Requires multiple clicks to review additional information associated with the document such as approval history, document text, total debits, and total credits
    - Some budget office financial analysts prefer reviewing budget JVs on paper, especially budget JVs with many sequence lines

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Transition – Challenges

- Departmental approver review process
  - Several departmental approvers either did not use Banner or used it sparingly before the new process was implemented
  - Those users were used to quickly signing a piece of paper or adding to an email chain containing a spreadsheet, not logging into Banner just to do an approval
    - Departmental initiators have been a big help with walking their approvers through the approval process when necessary
- Lack of automatic notifications from Banner
  - The only built-in notification mechanism is FOIAINP, which only displays the number of documents waiting for approval when an approver tries to access a Banner Finance form
  - FOIAINP is very cryptic, and because of the way our queues are structured (all departments lumped together in each queue), it will appear for each approver if any department has a budget JV waiting for approval

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Post-Implementation Changes

- Suspended JV detail reports – for budget office use
  - Access report to display all budget JVs currently waiting for approval by the budget office (Q005)
    - Displays all pertinent information in one place – line item detail, total debits, total credits, rule class, period, document total, document reference, initiator ID, approval history, etc.
  - Access report to display all suspended budget JVs (everything currently in progress whether or not submitted for approval)
    - Displays all pertinent information in one place
    - Used to identify budget JVs that need to be deleted prior to accounting closing the period
    - Used to help users troubleshoot budget JV issues – can pull up this report to see what they've entered so far and help them correct any errors

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Post-Implementation Changes

- Workflow notification emails
  - The only built-in notification mechanism is FOIAINP, which displays the number of documents waiting for approval when an approver tries to access a Banner Finance form
  - FOIAINP is very cryptic, and because of the way our queues are structured it will appear for each approver if any department has a budget JV waiting for approval
  - Worked with our IT department to develop a series of workflows that will send emails to initiators and approvers when certain triggers are met
    - Email sent to approver (determined by org in first line of budget JV) when initiator submits budget JV
    - Email sent to initiator if budget JV is disapproved
    - Email sent to budget office when department approver approves a budget JV
    - There have been a couple of bugs, but we are working through them

Questions?

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