

I would like to nominate the individuals noted below for their participation in the development, initiation, and continued maintenance of two online systems for requesting, approving, and processing requests for two separate processes we now call our electronic Personnel Transaction Form (e-PTF) and our electronic Request for Leave/Travel Funding Form (e-RLTF). The University Library is a large unit housed in multiple buildings and physical locations across campus. Given our size and multiple locations, these activities have been difficult to carry out in a timely, efficient fashion especially considering we have multi-level approval processes in place to assure expenditures are properly reviewed and approved prior to committing or spending Library funding.

Electronic Personnel Transaction Form (e-PTF)

In February 2013, the University Library unveiled a new electronic personnel transaction form (e-PTF) designed to make the process of requesting personnel changes infinitely more seamless and timely.

Previously, University Library recruitment and appointment change requests went through a notoriously slow and frustrating approval process. A typical transaction involved Library staff and faculty completing a paper transaction request form which captured the nature of their personnel change and then routed it to their senior manager for review and approval. The form was then routed manually to Library HR, Library Finance, and Library Administration. The paper copy was often signed and emailed as a PDF document or via campus mail to and from each required approver.

The result was a very time consuming process for routine changes to be approved and implemented. There was also considerable frustration for the individuals involved in the approval chain not being able to tell where a particular request was in the process. It was not unusual for individuals involved in the process to spend a significant amount of time trying to determine where the paper form was in the process by emailing and/or calling the various units/individuals involved.

With the online electronic personnel transaction form now in place and successfully ingrained in the Library administrative process, anyone in the request or approval chain can access the change in the system and see what the status of the request is as well as what approvals/comments/edits have been made to the form as it's been approved. To date, over 200 transactions have been handled using the new system and, on average, the time for a transaction to be routed from start to finish has been more than cut in half. In addition, the system has drawn very positive reviews from faculty and staff users who are extremely pleased with the transparency and efficiency the system offers.

The new tool was developed by staff from the Library Web Systems department. The developers worked in close collaboration with staff from the Library HR and Library Finance office as well as other Library staff who helped test the new tool.

Library e-PTF development team members:

Ken Varnum, Manager, Library Web Systems

Tyler Frankenstein, Drupal Developer, Library Web Systems

Robert Campe, Chief Business & Financial Officer, University Library

Eric Sortor, Budget Analyst Senior, Library Finance

Jane Havens, Manager, Library Human Resources

Rich Schrader, HR Generalist Senior, Library Human Resources

Michelle Mosley, Administrative Assistant Senior

Electronic Request for Leave/Travel Funding Form (e-RLTF)

Given the success and efficiency gained as a result of our effort to electronically process the e-PTF, Library staff embarked on the development and implementation of our second electronic form. In early October, 2013, we processed our first electronic Request for Leave or Travel Funding form (e-RLTF). The process allows any staff or faculty within the Library to request a Leave of Absence or a request to travel for Library business or staff development and receive approval for funding. The web form is initiated by the traveler or individual taking leave and is electronically routed for review and approval to their immediate supervisor, their Associate University Librarian (AUL), Human Resources, and Library Finance. An archive of all requests is generated upon approval.

In the past, this process could take weeks from creation through review/approval and eventual reimbursement. As was the case with the e-PTF, the paper form had to be routed manually by email or campus mail to the appropriate areas. The same inefficiency was encountered when the forms were being reviewed and individuals throughout the process often spent unnecessary time trying to track down the form to determine where it was in the process.

With the electronic routing and approval process, the appropriate approvers are alerted by email that they have a request awaiting their review. When the request is complete, the individual receives an email to let them know their leave or trip and funding is approved or denied. To date, with the new e-RLTF, once an individual submits a request for review/approval, we are finding the request can be reviewed and approved by all areas within hours. We've had cases where individuals have submitted the e-RLTF, obtained approval to travel, secured their airline tickets, submitted their Concur report, and gotten notification their payment is on the way to their checking account on the **same day**. Finally, by having this system in place and processing Concur reports timely, we're able to prove to staff that they don't need travel or cash advances and that they can rely on the systems in place to receive approval and reimbursement timely.

If a form does get hung up somewhere in the process, individuals are able to go into the system to determine exactly where it is by reviewing the workflow history. What used to take hours and several calls and/or emails to track down can now be determined in minutes. A phone call can be made to the exact area necessary to get the form moving.

Additionally, now that the data is in the system, it is archived and can be retrieved at a later date, eliminating the need to upload the approval forms to keep electronic copies as well as the need to keep a travel log (Excel spreadsheet) so that Library Finance and Human Resources can track the trips and funding that are requested and approved. This was necessary so that Library Finance was able to review/approve the approved amounts of travel funding when they receive the traveler's Concur report. We're also now able to automatically route to the AULs system reports to provide them with information about the trips they've approved. Lastly, the data allows us to make future decisions about staff development and funding issues.

Library e-RLTF development team members:

Cyndi Beaudry, Financial Senior Manager
Melissa Hepburn, HR Assistant
Albert Bertram, Lead Web Sys Developer
Robert Campe, Chief Business & Financial Officer