Q & A WITH GENE LUCAS
UCSB EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR

How long have you been using Kronos in the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor?
Since September of 2011, so a little over 2 years.

Describe your experience moving from paper time cards to electronic timekeeping.
I think the switch to electronic timekeeping is long overdue. I've been complaining about paper time cards since I took this job over 11 years ago. I've found Kronos quite easy to use, and it takes me little time to approve the time records of my direct reports.

Does someone else enter your time/vacation/sick leave into Kronos for you?
No, I do it myself.

What have been some of the challenges with moving to online timekeeping?
I have heard that the current version of Kronos works fine for employees being funded by a single fund source, but for academic departments with employees on multiple fund sources that change month-to-month, the current version is problematic. I have heard that the frequent security updates for Java have made it hard on staff to keep Kronos running every time there is an upgrade. I have heard that the new version 7 should fix most of the problems, and that it is undergoing extensive testing before being rolled out.

I have also heard that the rollout of biweekly pay, which occurred during the Kronos deployment, has been a hardship on staff doing payroll and personnel. The anger over the increased workload of biweekly pay has spilled over onto the rollout of electronic timekeeping.

Systems implementations are expensive and time-consuming. Why do them?
We are in the midst of upgrading many enterprise systems simultaneously. Some of this upgrading – the student information system and the financial system – is the result of legacy systems coming to the end of their lives. They were running on a mainframe at OP that was no longer going to support them, so we had to do this. Some of them are imposed by OP. OP is requiring all campuses to move to a new hosted payroll and personnel system because the old one was making it impossible to aggregate data systemwide, and it was also in danger of dying. Since the new payroll and personnel system requires electronic timekeeping, we had to move to this in advance. Some of them – e-procurement, cloud based e-mail and calendaring systems – are ways of saving money in the middle of a budget crisis.

I realize that doing everything (seemingly) simultaneously puts a huge burden on staff across campus, and we welcome suggestions on how to better roll these systems out, provide better training, and provide better support. I do believe that 5 years from now, when all of these systems have been implemented and used for a number of years, that we will look back on this time as hard but necessary and that life will be better because of this.

From the Project Manager
We have set up both development and test instances of the new Kronos version 7, and begun work on configuring version 7’s Navigator user interface. We have also completed the upgrade of interfaces that manage the data exchange between Kronos and PPS so that they will work with version 7. The next step will be to modify these interfaces in order to automate more processes in Kronos. Finally, a recruitment is underway for a Kronos Customer Support/Quality Assurance Analyst who will assist with the Kronos help desk as well as training and support for departments who will be transitioning or rolling on to Kronos version 7 in 2014.

– Ann Dundon, Kronos Project Manager

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