

TRAVEL OPTIMIZATION TASK FORCE

June, 2022

NAU NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Travel Optimization Task Force

Two Task Force Working Groups: Policy / Process & Tools

- **Collaboratively** reviewed current process and policy, concepts put forward by the Finance Service Travel Team (FSTT) as well as input from the entire group.
- **Notes** regarding suggestions were taken.
- Suggestions were the **basis** for the Coordinating Group's draft of the Recommendations document.

Coordinating Group developed the recommendation report

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1 – Bree Bullard | CHER/SHERC |
| 2 – Cornel Ciocancel | CEIAS |
| 3 – Bryan Cornn | Athletics |
| 4 – Kate Florman | FSTT |
| 5 – Karletta Jones | WAFCB |
| 6 – Becky Lyons | Comptroller's |
| 7 – Brad Miner | Comptroller's |
| 8 – Singne Slayton | FSTT |
| 9 – Matthew Wint | CEFNS |
| 10 – Wendy Swartz | Comptroller's |

Meeting Time Invested

18 meetings
 @ 90 minutes per meeting
 for 28 unique participants
 ~ 375 Hours Invested

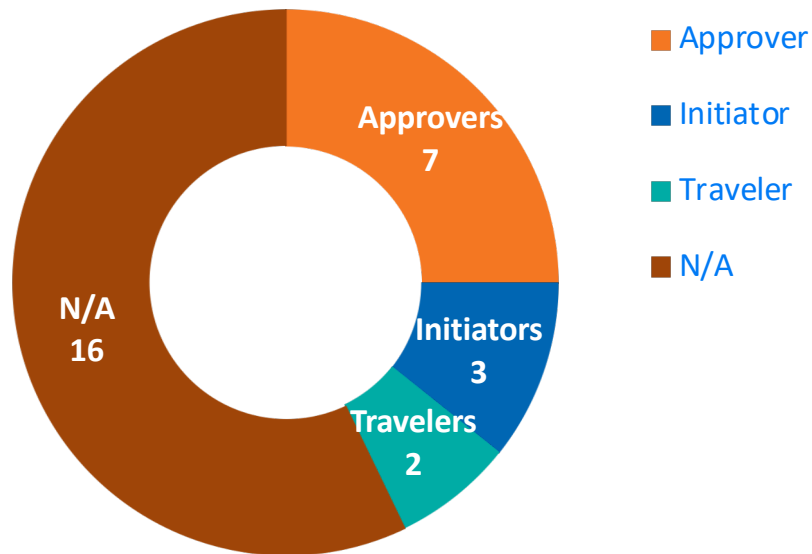


| APRIL | | | | |
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| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
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| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
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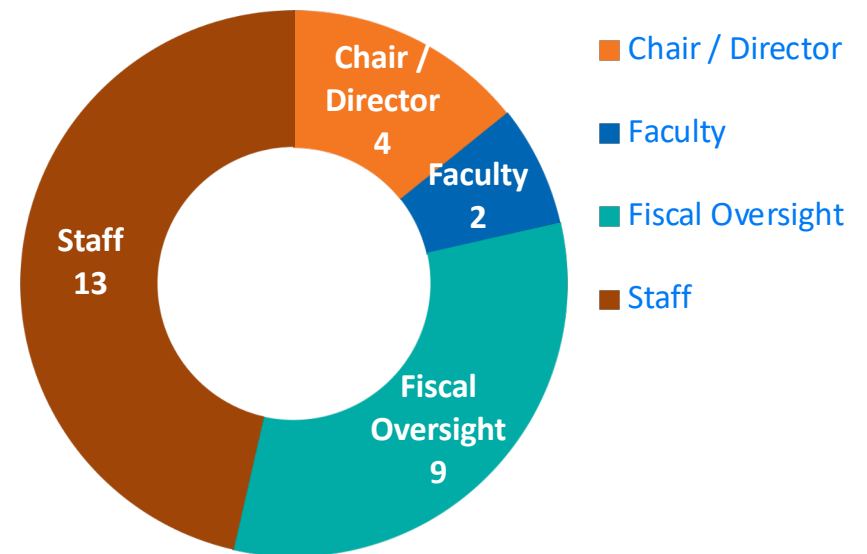
| MAY | | | | |
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| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Broad Participation

HIGH VOLUME USERS



ROLES



Pain Points

Pain points were identified by the Task Force and FSTT before initial work began. The groups worked to collaboratively solve these issues instead of rehash them.

- **Timeliness / Log Jam**
- **Communication**
- **Clunky process**
- **Confusion around policy and documentation requirements**
- **Lack of metrics to evaluate**
- **Desire for travel to be booked locally**
 - Noted by several Task Force members as a pain point
 - Repeatedly asked of the FSTT

Root Causes

- **Process gaps that create inefficiency**
- **ESC (Employee Service Center) can be confusing**
- **Confusion around policy and documentation requirement**
 - Cases frequently submitted without all required information or a policy issue
 - Training and resources are not maintained due to FSTT staffing
- **Foundational data for metrics and improvements is lacking**
 - Data that one can rely upon to make informed decisions such as:
 - Dates related to one transaction to measure transaction timeline
 - Reason for additional documentation requests and exception to policy requests

Coordinating Group Process

- A **first draft** document was quickly formed.
- Refined **themes** emerged by discussing specifics.
- The **effort and impact** of each potential change was discussed.
- As work continued, it became clear that a conversation about **how the Finance Service Travel Team was organized** was important to the Coordinating Group's final product.
- Final themes were grouped and became the **recommendations list**.

Broad Recommendations

1. Provide College, Divisions and central departments with the **staffing** levels necessary to complete work efficiently and effectively.
2. Eliminate the **term** “service team.”
3. Move **travel booking** from FSTT to travelers and Colleges / Divisions.
4. **Reorganize** the “Finance Service Team” to better support reimbursement processing and compliance.
5. Improve **student** and non-employee travel reimbursement support.
6. **Improve** travel training, resources, and technology.
7. Refine travel **policy**.
8. Institute integrated process for policy and process **compliance**.
9. Establish **metrics** and reporting.
10. Improve **communications**.
11. Provide **transparency** into the Travel Optimization Process.
12. Engage in ongoing **conversation**.

Why “These” Recommendations?

- All pain points and root causes have at least one recommendation that will mitigate impact or frequency
- A few recommendations were borne from conversation such as:
 - Provide College, Divisions and central departments with the **staffing** levels necessary to complete work efficiently and effectively.
 - Eliminate the **term** “service team.”
 - Provide **transparency** into the Travel Optimization Process.
 - Engage in ongoing **conversation**.
- What else was discussed?
 - Coordinating Group discussed if the FSTT should be **reorganized** or even dismantled.
 - Some **technical** desires that were not feasible such as a “Save” button.
 - Most everything made the list as they were **valid** and **achievable**.

Implementation Timeline

Summer, 2022

Fall, 2022

Winter, 2023

Spring, 2023

Summer, 2023+

Summer, 2022 Actions

- Establish efficiency **metrics** such as incomplete rate, policy violations, etc.
- Create “certified” **trainings**
- Short term **policy** refinement
- Guides and quick **references**

Tech enhancements include:

- **Student traveler** indicator in ESC
- % indicators for **M&IE / mileage reimbursement**

Dependencies:

- ITS resources availability
- Foundational data for metrics is available
- New resource added to assist with training/resource development

Implementation Timeline

Summer, 2022

Fall, 2022

Winter, 2023

Spring, 2023

Summer, 2023+

Fall and Winter Actions:

- Potentially **embed** existing travel team resources at college / division level
- **Compliance** measurement begins
- Establish operation **metrics** such as time in each stage of the process, cases submitted complete, etc.
- Policy/process guide developed for all types of **student travel**

Tech enhancements include:

- Compliance **workflow** with message to traveler regarding the review and possible delay
- Improve the **Approver view** of ESC information
- Add **hover “tips”** in ESC

Dependencies:

- IT resources available
- Thorough discussion regarding embedding travel team staff

Implementation Timeline

Summer, 2022

Fall, 2022

Winter, 2023

Spring, 2023

Summer, 2023+

Spring, summer, and beyond actions:

- Explore the use of a **travel card**
- **Overhaul travel policy** in conjunction with discussion on risk tolerance

Tech enhancements include:

- Examine how **students** could be reimbursed through the **PSF ER process**
- Scope **end-to-end integration** from travel case in ESC through Expense Reimbursement in PSF
- ESC change that **requires key data** including speedchart, budget, etc. before final submission

Dependencies:

- IT resource availability
- Willingness as an institution to discuss risk appetite and tolerance

Proposed Next Steps

- **Post** the Recommendations document online (after time for UAB review).
- More **conversation** about the idea of **embedding** existing Travel Team at the College/Division level.
- Request a **dedicated resource** to assist with policy management, training, and communications.
- **“Certified” trainings** must be developed to allow for travel booking to transition.
- **Continuing conversations** with the Policy and Coordinating Groups are scheduled for August.

Thank you

Questions?

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