

Budget Issues Committee Meeting
06/14/2021
Via Teams

Members Present: Amanda Funches (MGA), Donell Nixon (GGC), Antrameka Knight (KSU), Denise Floyd (GSU), Shana Yorkey (VSU), Josefina Endere (GCSU), Scott Mussak (GT), Marion Ryant (ASU) Melanie White (CSU), Jason Matt (USO), Benjamin Scott (ITS).

Members Absent: Traci Williams (FVSU)

Guests: Zach Rigole, Omar Esparza, Haley Henderson, Leslie Davis

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Amanda Funches called the meeting to order at 2:54pm.

A motion was made by Shana Yorkey to approve the minutes, seconded by Antrameka Knight. The minutes were unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Scott Mussak to approve the bylaws as presented, seconded by Donell Nixon. The bylaws were unanimously approved.

2. Budgeting for sponsored funds

There are different practices across the USG. Going through different scenarios will be beneficial.

- Project master is used at some institutions where funds are budgeted across all years. Some institutions budget at the project Master level, others do not.
- Ultimately the size and how many and what type of grants a school has drives the differences.

Ben (ITS) stated when budget prep creates the project grant journals as part of the financials export it creates them with the generate parent flag flipped to yes and creates a project master expense ledger update. PRMST EXP is like APPROP but only at the project level. It is literally the project id and dollar amount. From a budget prep perspective, an option can be added in the financials export to choose to generate the parent rows. This is not an issue for everyone. A check box will be added for project master for schools that use project master for managing overall grant allocations.

How is everyone using the grants information in budget prep?

GGC does not create these journals and post them. They leave them to the side and then go over each individual grant to verify dates and remaining funds.

MGA does not budget grants. They budget the revenue side and the grants director budgets the expense side.

Budget Prep does not have a way or means to budget funds to suspense. It budgets whatever it has regardless of funding end date. If the end date is not extended pay goes to suspense. Budget is where you have to make best guesses.

Jason (USO) stated when it comes to position counts - links to the statewide requirement - it is either a one or a zero, there is no proration and no FTE. What we are reporting to the state is - If budgeted for 9 months then 1 on the original budget it is 1 FTE in quarter one, two and three and then 0 in quarter four. There is a disconnect in that the salary is for 9 months but saying it is 1 position. This is because we are reporting position counts not FTE for the statewide process. Sponsored units have to deal with so many different regulations it is very structured and very strict.

Jason has had a few conversations where project master is truly used. For example, a 3-million-dollar project master is set up and never deviates from that over a 3-year period. Many institutions do not use it this way. They set up a budget for it and then true up the budget in year two and in year three as well.

3. Grants module

Ben (ITS) may need more discussion if grant module is implemented.

Email was sent out to controllers asking if there was a general interest in the grants module.

Denise Floyd (GSU) has module but are very minimally involved. It is used for any project numbers not just grants - capital projects, tech fees, etc. There are features and functionality in the grants module that are being used for non-sponsored things such as project costing. Used to define chart fields.

Who budgets for the expenses for grants? CSU, KSU and Albany.

4. System Office updates:

Jason discussed the need of possibly reporting federal sponsored funds differently; both from a budget and BCR perspective. We already maintain the budget at the sponsored funds federal level. The state reports all federal funds by CDFA level - over 250 different FDA federal programs. We are currently in conversation with OPB and SAO. More guidance will be coming out. It will be important to report mid-year. We need to start keeping our ledgers in balance. Maintain a revenue and expense balance. More to come on making sure we are using class codes appropriately on revenue and expense side. Working with them to report federal at higher level not CFDA level. CFDA # should be maintained on the project set up in PS - usually OSP office.

Change that could come:

Reporting at lower level of detail which is the CFDA number. This will be a challenge because our technology is not set up from a budget reporting/expense standpoint. Queries would have to link in the CFDA #. Talking with OPB and SAO. Need to make sure to get it right.

5. Questions concerning CFDA #'s

Ben (ITS) For each project id is there one CFDA #? Jason's understanding is it should have one - would have to survey to make sure that's the case. CFDA reporting you have to report CFDA # also have to break out R & D and student federal financial aid clusters. You can have a project id that does not clearly define your R & D number.

Marion (ASU) asked if a query could be designed to assist and pull the data - that would be helpful.

If it is somewhere in the system, it can be populated, and a query can be built. This needs to be a very clean set of data.

Jason (USO) asked is there anything else you wish we could do differently and are spending a lot of time on, things that you wish you did not have to do.

- Shana (VSU) We still have an issue with position reporting on the original budget - sponsored fund accountant always zeros them before pulling them in and we have to remember to go in and pick them back up. Never populates budget. It is all in unallocated but not on position. Position is reported but is all unallocated. Now VSU has the opportunity to make changes in the way they budget project grants. It would be helpful to know what other people are doing.
- Marion (ASU): The challenge for grant accountant is getting the detail. May have to update position count in 1st quarter and true up the budget then. There are times where there are expected funds and adjustments have to be made to the position count. This is a struggle for them because we may have to make an adjustment to the position count. We try to give as much detail as we can when we are doing our budget amendment. Try to true up budget in 1st quarter. Split year funded grants are challenges.

Tension between putting in funds available verses the spending plan. People interpret differently. Sometimes it comes down to where does it end up going? If people do not know where it's going, they do not see the value or importance to it. Jason can help with engaging in these conversations for the value or importance of it.

6. MCOP discussion/problems

Leslie Davis (FVSU) how do others verify MCOPs were paid correctly? How much time is spent on verifying this? Some have multi MCOPs this is very time consuming? Goes through and manually matches each one of them.

Amanda (MGA) has a spreadsheet. This is part of the monthly analysis and it takes a day or two. It's a lot. Constant check and double check.

Shana (VSU) tracks using budget position management as a tool. Usually sees if it hits the wrong place.

Melanie (CSU) problem with split funded positions in DBT - have to manually correct through an EDR.

Fina (GCSU) has a smart sheet for the MCOP's. This sheet is shared by budget, HR and payroll. Fina shared via email.

- One challenge for smart sheets is that you must have licenses.

Any interest in MSS MCOP transactions ? yes VSU and KSU.

Ben (ITS) In theory we could have a MCOP transaction through MSS. This could help get rid of the circular chase on the MCOPs. In theory, HR could initiate these transactions. Centralized would not be a problem, decentralized could have an issue.

7. Questions:

Are we allowing others not on BIC to attend meetings? What are we envisioning for the future in terms of engagement of non-members? Do we get questions from others in our sectors?

- Minutes will be sent out on listserv and remind everyone we are here for them for any questions/concerns they may have.
- Jason could follow up on the listserv and it was brought up on the sector calls

The next BIC meeting is scheduled for September 20th 10am-12pm. With no further business the meeting was adjourned.