

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

AUGUST 8, 2023
PRESENTATION

AGENDA

- Background
- Our Work as a Team
- Improvement Action Set
- Next Steps
- Testimonials



MEET THE TEAM!



Sponsor:

Venis Manigo

Associate VP and Chief
Procurement Officer

Team Members:

Front row, left to right:

Clarissa Clark

Director of Purchasing

Candis Golston

Back row, left to right:

Amy Sabol

Kristen Moss

Edna Sims

Lana Widener

Kim Rose

Facilitator: Tom Terez

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1. Held 6 listening sessions to get detailed input from 16 people who depend on Purchasing

Principal Investigators, Administrative Leaders, Business Managers, IT, and others

- What works well with the current process?
- What are the most common pain points?
- What are your suggestions for improvement?
- Follow-up discussion



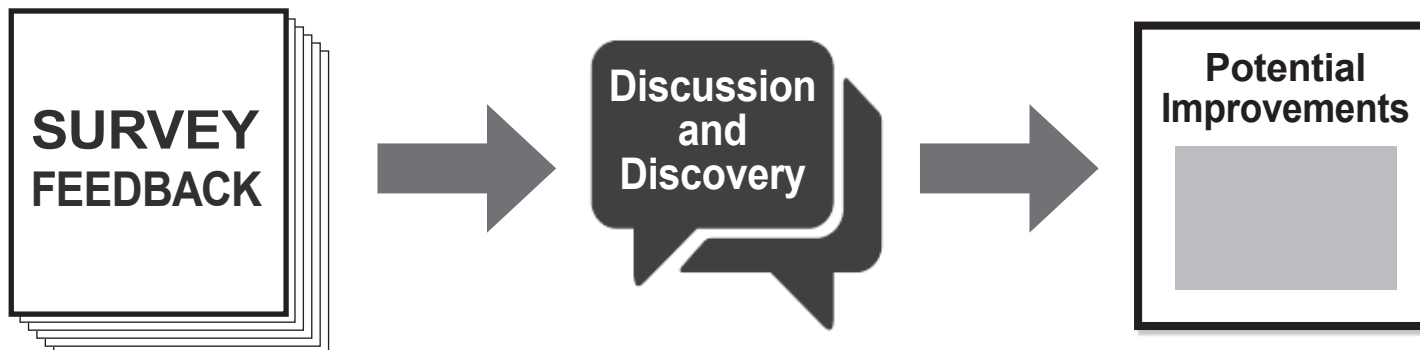
2. Heard from **161 requisitioners** via a **comprehensive survey** (42% response rate)

Sent to all who submitted requisitions in past 12 months

- Levels of confidence, sources of confusion
- Learning needs and resources
- Impressions of service quality
- Suggestions for improvement
- Candid comments

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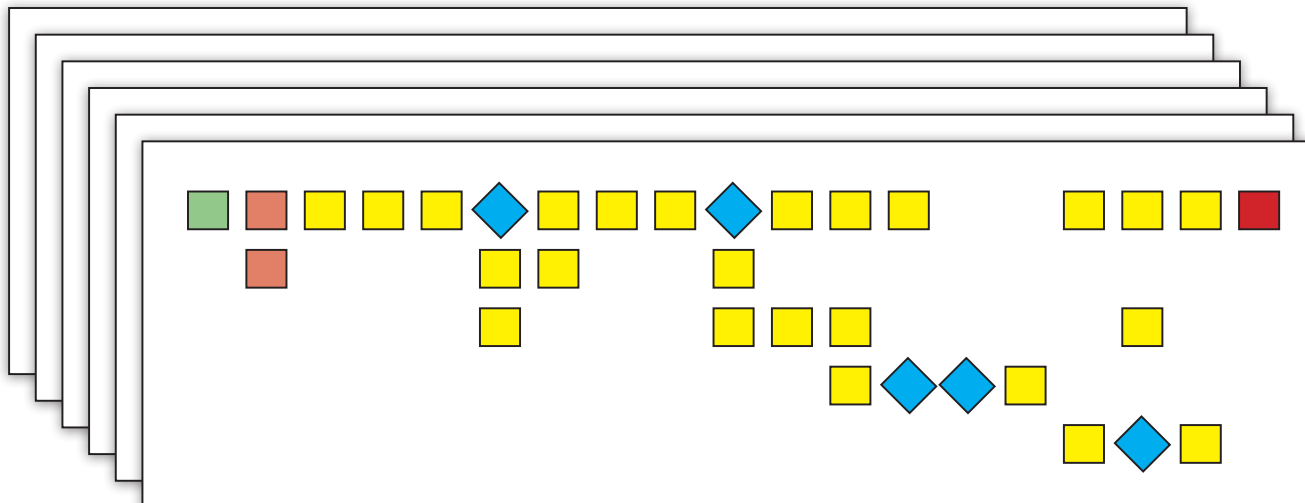


3. Mapped 6 key processes

- Goods and Services
- Construction
- Professional Services
- Sole Source Procurement
- Alternative Delivery Method
- Emergency Procurement

AGENDA

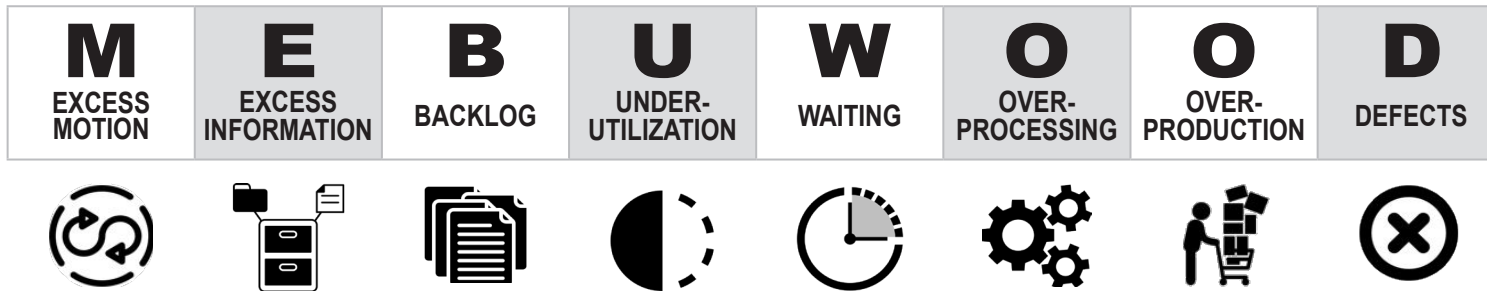
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OUR WORK AS A TEAM

AUGUST 8

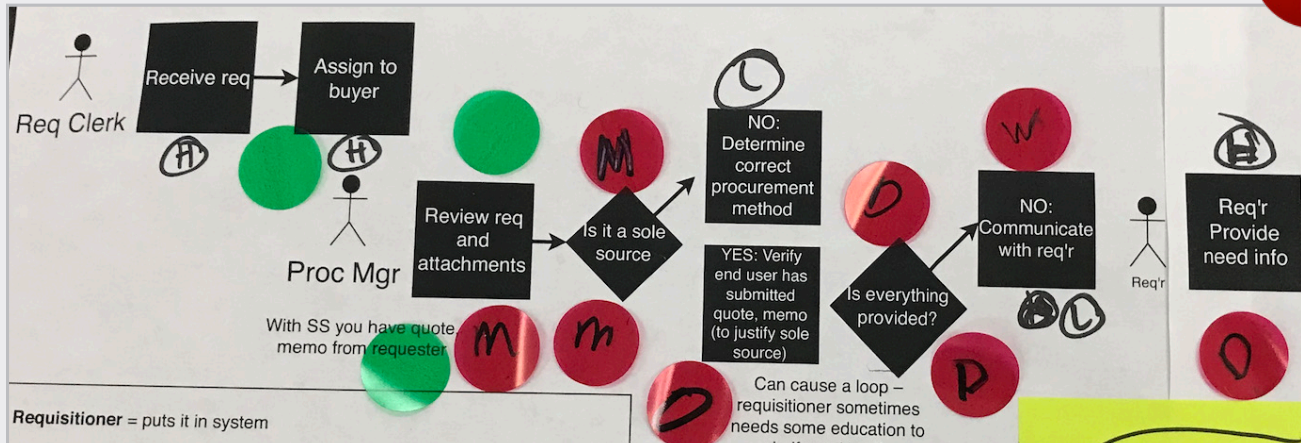
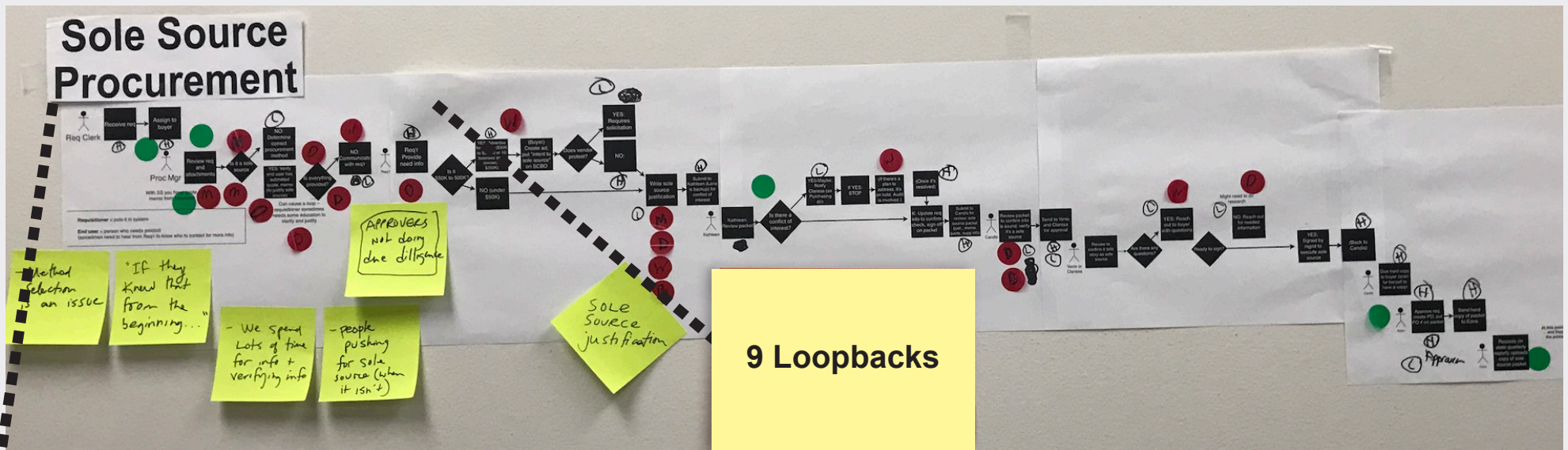
4. Studied the maps to uncover process problems and inefficiencies



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A deeper dive into one of the process maps:



Frequent LOOPBACKS* on the front end of the process – as often as 90% of the time in some cases

- **Results in DELAYS** and frustration right from the start
- **OVERPROCESSING** on the front end of the process – e.g., requisition arrives under one procurement method, but a different method is appropriate

* **Loopback:** When incoming requisitions arrive with incorrect information and missing information or attachments, Purchasing needs to “loop back” to the requisitioner

5. Used the discoveries to develop an action set of improvements

AGENDA

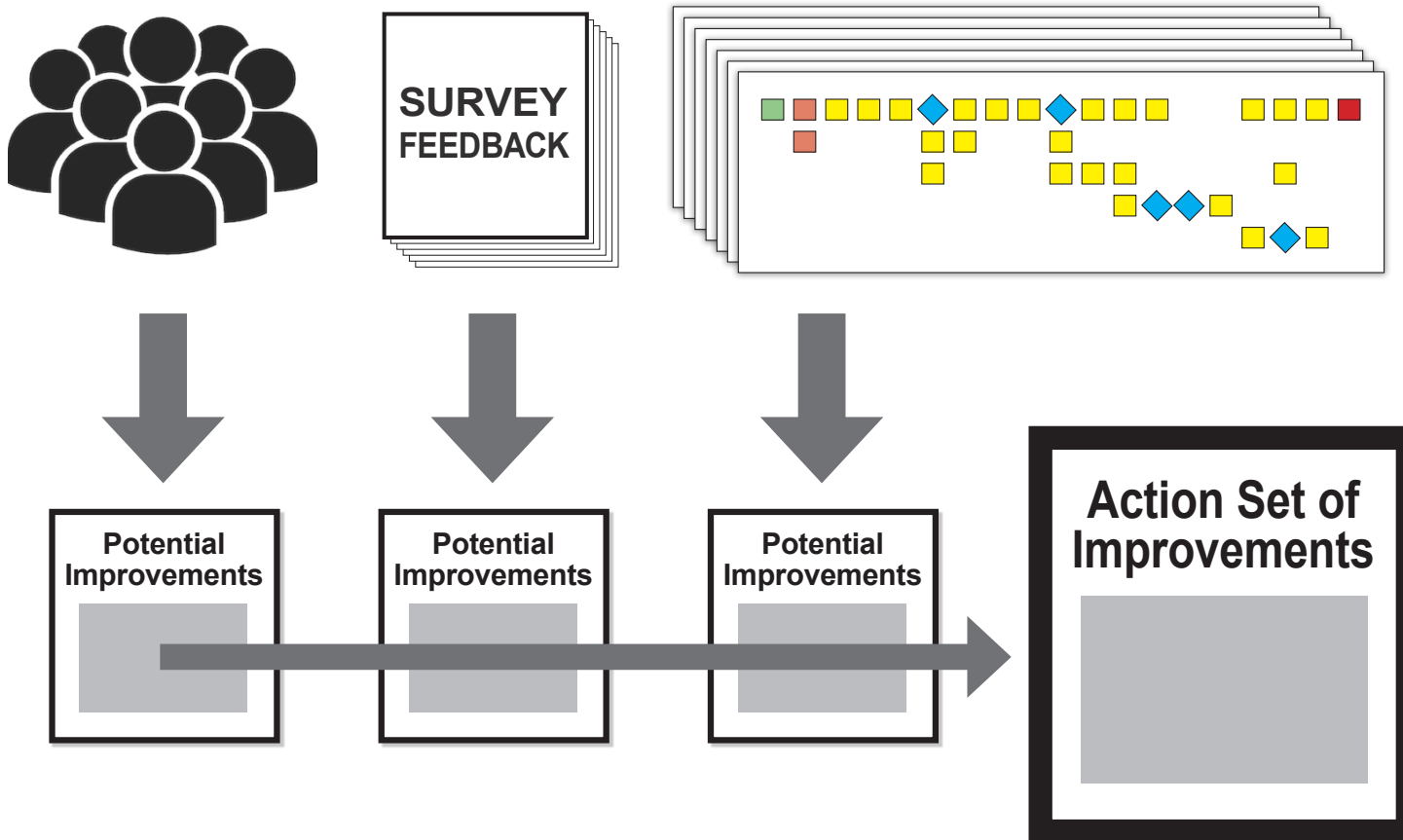
- Background

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What you'll see on the next slides:

19 Improvement Actions

- The improvements are in **6 categories**
- Included are:
 - **One-time actions:** Improvements and development efforts to be completed in a set amount of time
 - **Start doing:** Improvements that call for development work on the front end, then become ongoing
 - **Ongoing:** Actions that continue over time, reflecting Purchasing's way of doing business

User-Friendly
Guidance

Easier
Tracking

Process
Simplification

Feedback
Pipeline

Expanded
Know-How


Strengthened
Partnership

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These actions and *additional* improvements are in the full report, with time frames and leads for each.

Provide simple tip sheets and checklists

 Clearer guidance on the front end will make it easier to prep and submit requisitions – removing guesswork, saving time, increasing the number of ready submissions, and reducing loopbacks.

- Create user-friendly tip sheet that clearly spells out “which procurement method to use when”
- Create plain language checklist for each procurement method
- Update website to add clear explanations, contact info, an easier-to-navigate toolbox, and links to other areas and offices

ACTION SET

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Make it easier to check requisition status



Knowing the status of a purchase is critically important to Purchasing's customers.

- Partner with IT to add more notifications to show the status of requisitions (e.g., missing information).
- Communicate how to check the status of a requisition using managed requisitions.
- Ensure that PIs and/or other affected end users are identified in submitted requisitions.
- Add capability for approver and buyer to add comments to the requisition status.

ACTION SET

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Implement initial process improvements



The aim is to simplify, standardize, and reduce process time. This work will be ongoing.

- Sole Source: Develop a standard questionnaire with straightforward prompts for all required info.
- Sole Source: If posted to SCBO, use those 5-10 days to write justification and keep the process moving.
- Develop a standard written quotation form for use when seeking quote.
- Conduct deep dives into the processes of additional procurement methods to find more efficiencies.

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Track how well we're serving our customers



A combination of meaningful measures and qualitative feedback will show where we're meeting customer needs and expectations – and where further improvement is needed.

- Develop and use a simple scorecard to monitor process time, loopbacks, and other key measures.
- Strengthen Purchasing's customer survey by adding prompts to gauge customer satisfaction.
- Review survey input and process measures with staff each quarter, so all are aware and engaged.

KEY MEASURES

Loopbacks: Percentage of times a buyer needs to “loop back” to a requisitioner due to a requisition missing information and/or attachment, or requiring corrections.

Why loopbacks are occurring: Track the most common reasons a buyer had to loop back to the requisitioner, in order to further mistake-proof the process and reduce loopbacks.

Process time: Start-to-finish process time in days, from the arrival of an approved requisition to dispatch of the purchase order.

ACTION SET

User-Friendly Guidance

Easier Tracking

Process Simplification

Feedback Pipeline

Expanded Know-How

Strengthened Partnership

Expand our internal purchasing know-how



Trainings are routinely offered already, but **the following actions aim to fill current gaps.**

- Include people with different roles in trainings, so all get the same info and a shared understanding.
- Launch an updated Business Manager Certificate Program to strengthen know-how in this key role.

ACTION SET

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**Expanded
Know-How**

Strengthened
Partnership

Learn more about customers' business needs



By expanding our efforts to listen to our customers and learn more about their missions and needs, we will be better able to serve and support.

-
- Expand to have periodic business meetings with more departments to learn about their business needs.
 - Meet with principal investigators at least yearly to learn more about their priorities, plans, and needs.
 - Meet with system campuses at least yearly to strengthen communication, coordination, and service.

The input sessions underscored the importance and value of this.



ACTION SET

User-Friendly
Guidance

Easier
Tracking


Process
Simplification

Feedback
Pipeline

Expanded
Know-How







**Strengthened
Partnership**

1-page action highlights

 UNIVERSITY OF South Carolina


HIGHLIGHTS Purchasing Improvement Project

Below are select improvements from the action plan. The full report provides detail and additional actions.

-  Provide simple tip sheets and checklists, to make it easier for everyone to prep and submit requisitions. Clear guidance will reduce guesswork, save time, and increase the number of ready submissions.
 - Create a user-friendly tip sheet that clearly spells out "which procurement method to use when."
 - Create a clear checklist for each procurement method showing key steps and required info/documents.
 - Update the Purchasing website to add clear explanations, contact info, an easier-to-navigate toolbox, and links to other areas and offices sometimes assumed to be managed by Purchasing.
-  Make it easier to check the status of a requisition. For many customers of Purchasing, time is of the essence – and knowing the status of a purchase is extremely important.
 - Partner with IT to add more notifications to show the status of requisitions (e.g., missing information).
 - Communicate how to check the status of a requisition using managed requisitions.
 - Ensure that PIs and/or other affected end users are identified in submitted requisitions.
 - Add capability for approver and buyer to add comments to the requisition status.
-  Implement improvements to simplify, standardize, and reduce process time – and begin next-round work to uncover additional process-specific improvement opportunities.
 - Sole Source: Develop a standard questionnaire with straightforward prompts for all required info.
 - Sole Source: If posted to SCBO, use those 5-10 days to write justification and keep the process moving.
 - Develop a standard written quotation form for use when seeking quote.
 - Conduct deep dives into the processes of additional procurement methods to find more efficiencies.
-  Keep track of how well we're serving our customers. Doing this consistently over time will show where we're meeting needs and expectations – and where we need further improvement.
 - Develop and use a simple scorecard to monitor process time, loopbacks, and other key measures.
 - Strengthen Purchasing's customer survey by adding prompts to gauge customer satisfaction.
 - Review survey input and process measures with staff each quarter, so all are aware and engaged.
-  Gain a deeper understanding of our customers' business needs. By expanding our efforts to listen and learn, we will be better able to serve, support, and help our customers be successful.
 - Expand to have periodic business meetings with more departments to learn about their business needs.
 - Meet with principal investigators at least yearly to learn more about their priorities, plans, and needs.
 - Meet with system campuses at least yearly to strengthen communication, coordination, and service.
-  Provide additional opportunities for people to build their purchasing knowledge. Trainings are routinely offered already, but the following actions aim to fill current gaps.
 - Include people with different roles in trainings, so all get the same info and a shared understanding.
 - Launch an updated Business Manager Certificate Program to strengthen know-how in this key role.

July 14, 2023

1-page project summary

 UNIVERSITY OF South Carolina

Purchasing Improvement Project

This report presents an improvement roadmap developed as part of the Purchasing Improvement Project. Included is a full set of improvement actions aimed at making the purchasing experience more user-friendly and efficient for the Purchasing Department's many customers.

About the Project

The project was chartered by Venis Manigo, Associate Vice President and Chief Procurement Officer, and facilitated by the Office of Organizational Excellence.

The team began with a **discovery phase** to study the current situation. Team members:

- Held 6 listening sessions to gain in-depth input from 16 principal investigators, administrative directors, business managers, IT, and others.
- Conducted a survey, gathering feedback from 161 requisitioners across campus
- Mapped 7 processes of various procurement methods to uncover occurrences of process waste

This was followed by a **possibility phase** to generate potential improvements, then a **planning phase** to narrow from possibilities to recommended actions.


About the Improvements

The improvements are organized into the categories shown on the next page, followed by a compilation of improvement actions. Three types of actions are shown:

- ONE-TIME ACTIONS** Individual improvements and development efforts completed in a set amount of time
- START DOING** Improvements that call for development work on the front end, then become ongoing
- ONGOING** Actions that continue over time, reflecting Purchasing's way of doing business

Team Presentation on August 8

The team presents its project story and action set on Tuesday, August 8, at 11 a.m. to noon. Write to excellence@usc.edu for the Teams link for the live presentation and the link to the session recording.



Members of the Purchasing Improvement Team: Left to right, Front row: Clarissa Clark (Director of Purchasing), Candis Golston, Back row: Amy Sabol, Kristen Moss, Edna Simms, Lana Widener, Kim Rose.

July 14, 2023

Detail about ALL the improvements, with time frames and assignments

I. Build Closer Partnerships with Customers

The input sessions with customers and stakeholders made an impression. Team members noted the value of getting a reality check directly from the source who matters most. They cited the benefit of learning more about the "business" of the various departments – of hearing about the job and its research, for example, and learning more about another area's seasonality and why that shapes the critical timing of its purchases. Going forward, the plan is to build these kinds of rich interactions into Purchasing's ongoing way of doing business.

ONGOING – EXPAND Lead: Clarissa Clark Underway

Expand to have periodic business meetings with more departments.

- Learn more about their mission, work, and needs
- Answer questions and provide guidance
- Get earlier notice regarding anticipated purchases
- Work together to identify how we can best help
- Strengthen the relationship in a sustained way

- This is currently being done and working well with a number of areas. The plan is to expand.
- Important: With any one unit, the frequency and timing of these meetings would be based on customer preferences and needs, with 2x per year serving as a starting default.
- Sessions would bring together Purchasing leadership, management, and select buyers with key people from the unit – including a mix of "end users" (who are the ultimate customers of Purchasing), business managers, and leaders.
- Year-end sessions could be used to close out any pending procurements and to plan procurements for the upcoming fiscal year.

START DOING Lead: Clarissa Clark Start by November 30 2023

Meet with principal investigators at least yearly – to learn about their purchasing needs and challenges, answer their questions, provide guidance (including on any important changes in procurement), and get earlier notice of emerging priorities and purchases.

- While the partnership meetings (above) will involve various PIs in many cases, it's important to have periodic sessions that focus entirely on this high-priority group of customers – especially given the university's commitment to research.

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Everything is in one document that serves as a comprehensive roadmap

At the end of this presentation, see the chat window for links to these slides and to the full report





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PURCHASING DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



[Click here for the full report](#)

