2020 FSU Winners of the Florida TaxWatch Awards

The Florida TaxWatch Productivity Awards recognize and reward state employees and workgroups who find ways to improve services, increase efficiencies and save Florida taxpayers millions of dollars each year. Within the past year, FSU has identified cost savings and cost avoidance that affects the entire campus. FSU employees claimed a total of 14 Florida TaxWatch Productivity Awards this year. Collectively, the 14 FSU programs recognized save students, families, and taxpayers more than an estimated $86 million.

A virtual awards ceremony is tentatively scheduled for December 15th to honor FSU winners for their award-winning solutions and productivity improvements for the state government.

The winning individuals and teams from Florida State University are:

**CASH WINNERS**

**Facilities Maintenance & Engineering Team**  
Mauro Mancilla, Maintenance Systems Engineer  
James Stephens, Executive Director, Utilities/Maintenance  
Chad Cooper, Assistant Director of Maintenance  
Jerry Alexander, Assistant Director of Maintenance  
**Estimated Cost Savings: $90,000**  
By analyzing data and the movement of Facilities Maintenance staff on campus, the team was able to develop and implement a process that combined 6 maintenance service zones into 4, eliminated two full time supervisor positions, and reduced the amount of transit time to and from work assignments. This has led to technicians and workers providing higher levels of customer service. By consolidating shop workspace, some are now co-located within the maintenance service zone. This has eliminated the need for larger, on-road vehicles to commute between jobs and the parts required to complete them. It has allowed us to replace many of the larger vehicles with smaller service vehicles and are now able to service most of the main campus with dedicated electric vehicles, which contributes to further sustainability. Electric vehicles now represent 5% of our maintenance fleet vehicles but is expected to grow to 50% within 5 years.

**Utilities**  
Nariman Nusserwanji, Energy Engineer  
**Estimated Cost Savings: $95,000**  
It was determined that each building's HVAC system has a variable speed drive to alter the fan speeds when building needs changed. Each unit, which had been previously installed, has a built-in feature that measures energy usage. By modifying existing hardware, the data from each building's HVAC drive was linked to the central system so all the energy consumption data was made available in one place. The University was able to use existing hardware to make all the programming changes internally, avoiding the necessity of installing individual meters on each HVAC system at a cost of more than $810,000 up front.
Learning Systems Institute/FCR-STEM
Rabieh Razzouk, Director FCR-STEM
Estimated Cost Savings: $40,000,000
Research indicates scientific experimentation tools and manipulatives for high-quality, hands-on learning in K-12 schools are very limited and expensive, making them inaccessible to most STEM teachers. In partnership with Sciberus Inc., a software and curriculum solution was designed called MyStemKits, for K-12 teachers to cheaply create high-quality manipulatives for hands-on math and science teaching using 3D printing. While not related, the 3D printers from the Learning Factory and many of those placed in schools are creating face shields for health care workers around Florida to help in the fight against the Covid19 virus.

AGENCY INITIATIVE WINNER

Institute for Family Violence Studies
Karen Oehme, Director
Estimated Cost Savings: $300,000
To promote Florida’s goal of being “trauma-informed, FSU’s Institute for Family Violence Studies created an online, self-paced, multi-disciplinary curriculum enabling professionals worldwide to develop the knowledge and skills needed to understand the developmental impact of trauma on client and patients, while providing the keys to resilience. The agency developed a 20-hour, ten-chapter curriculum of evidence-based readings, case scenarios, video lectures, and other multimedia materials, assignments, and quizzes providing 1200 participants so far a new perspective on trauma-informed approaches to improve service delivery to clients, students, human services recipients, patients, and other members of the public. Continuing education credit has been approved for licensed counselors, therapists, social workers, nurses, teachers, chaplains, lawyers, judges, and others.

PLAQUE WINNERS

Finance & Administration, Department of Procurement Services
Casey Laurienzo, Contract Administrator
Megan O’Malley, Megan O’Malley, Contract and Policy Analyst
Estimated Cost Savings: $15,000,000
FSU’s Office of Procurement Services recently implemented a centralized Contract Administration Program (“Program”). The Program has updated University policies and procedures, launched an automated contract routing system (“Contract Module”), and initiated campus-wide training on contracting best practices. The Program mitigates risk, ensures compliance, and creates a consistent and efficient workflow for the routing, approval, signature, and management of contracts University-wide. This allows greater transparency and efficiency, in addition to the opportunity for cost savings and cooperative purchasing.

Graduate Health Subsidy Team
Ashley Jarvis, Deputy Director for Business Operations
Brian Barton; Associate Dean for Business Operations
Derek Blauer; Assistant Controller, Operations
Linda Lieblong; Associate Director, Benefits
Beverly Miller; Associate Controller
Estimated Cost Savings: $17,700
The Grad Health Subsidy team worked to streamline the exception payment process for students who missed the election window. Originally, this payment was processed as a bonus and paid directly to students via payroll, causing the student to lose roughly 28% of the total amount due to taxes. The new method allows the University to process the payment as the health benefit it truly is allowing it to be processed through the Benefits Office and applied directly to the student health insurance charge. This allows the student to take full advantage of the benefit other students receive throughout the semester.
College of Social Work
Karen Oehme, Director Institute for Family Violence Studies
Ann Perko, Director of Policy & Special Projects
Lyndi Bradley, Program Manager

Estimated Cost Savings: $40,000
The team created a new Trauma and Resilience Training module for the Successful Co-Parenting After Divorce Project. This module expands the free toolkit, available 24/7 online, provided by and required by the state of Florida for divorcing parents. The new module informs parents of the potential long term, negative physical and mental health consequences resulting from their own history of childhood trauma. It provides them tools to address and break the cycle of family dysfunctionality. The training supports successful co-parenting after divorce by helping parents gain insight into their own behavior and teaching stress management and resilience skills to stop the cycle of adversity for their children. It is the only free tool available for divorcing parents in Florida that satisfies divorce education mandates and to date has served 2171 Floridians.

Center for the Advancement of Teaching
Leslie Richardson, Director, Center for the Advancement of Teaching
Jennifer Bartman, Associate Director, Center for the Advancement of Teaching
Sophia Rahming, Associate Director, Center for the Advancement of Teaching
Joe O'Shea, Assistant Provost and Dean, Undergraduate Studies

Estimated Cost Savings: $29,294,000
Through FSU’s Course Redesign Initiative, the team facilitated redesign of the structure and delivery of key courses particularly within the STEM discipline, to maximize student learning and success, especially for those first in their families to attend college, benefiting a total of 7,542 students in the first year. By dramatically improving course passage rates, the equivalent of 775 students who previously would not have passed these required courses were able to successfully complete them—instead of retaking courses, lengthening their time in college, or dropping out altogether. To help faculty redesign courses to be more learner-centered, CAT planned and facilitated course design seminars, provided ongoing support through one-on-one consultations and also piloted a Learning Assistants (LA) Program, through which faculty who have redesigned their courses could work with advanced undergraduates trained to help facilitate active learning during class time. The changes in the Calculus I classes were particularly noteworthy. While previously women students had passed the course at lower rates than men, the rate of DFW (students receiving grades of D or F or withdrawing) for women dropped by 13%. This means that, thanks to the initiative, more women can pursue majors (e.g., engineering) that require calculus as a prerequisite. In all the redesigned courses, DFW rates for underrepresented students dropped. The initiative will provide the state with more, more diverse, and better-prepared STEM graduates for many years to come.

Office of Institutional Research
James Hunt, Director of Institutional Research
Matthew Earhart, Director of Information Management
Heather Epstein-Diaz, Compliance Reporting Analyst
Andrew Brady, Associate Director of Institutional Research
Galiya Tabulda, Director of Institutional Planning and Assessment

Estimated Cost Savings: $478,400
As a result of extensive comparison research, Institutional Research (IR) replaced the previously used platform, Tableau, with Microsoft’s Power BI, at a 90% cost savings. As FSU already owned a site license to Microsoft 365, including Power BI, everyone on campus has access to the tool. Authorized users can now access and manipulate their own data as opposed to requiring all visualizations to be curated and distributed by IR. By widely deploying Power BI, we have guided two primary innovations at the University: First, our analyses and data visualizations are more interactive than before, allowing new approaches to how we address various important issues with colleagues, most notably in the area of student success. Second, with access to Power BI, our campus partners can start immediately visualizing and analyzing their own data independent of IR, allowing for more efficient and effective collaborations in later phases of work with IR. Multiple annual reports and data models have been moved from Excel and paper copies to standardized data reports and visualizations, shared and manipulated through an internet browser. It has expedited functions and processes performed by campus units dependent on receiving new/updated data and reports on a regular basis.
Computing Technology Support
Alex Morales, Associate Director IT
Jason Penley, IT Manager
Gage Bevis, IT Support Specialist
Nick Chau, IT Support Specialist
Will Atkins, IT Support Specialist

Estimated Cost Savings: $1,115,000
University computers were frequently found to be running outdated software, thereby creating security risks. The team implemented a software patching service to consolidate and automate deployment and installation of common-use software updates available to university-owned computers, including those used in classrooms and computer labs. This service significantly reduces man-hours previously required to update computers. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, this service significantly decreases the deployment and installation time required to ensure computers are reliable and secure. Overall, this achievement consolidates a good portion of the roles and responsibilities of various IT operational units across campus into a single unit for consistency, reliability, efficiency and compliance with internal IT security policies and industry best practices.

Information Technology Services
Gerardo Garcia, Director, App Dev Services
Derek Dean, Assistant Director

Estimated Cost Savings: $20,000
FSU ITS developed an internal COOP (Continuity of Operations) Application that cuts the cost of thousands of dollars to the university instead of purchasing a COOP solution which is roughly $15,000 per year. FSUPD was looking for a way to notify the campus quickly when seconds matter. FSU ITS quickly developed an API to communicate with Everbridge so when FSU Police Dispatch Center clicks a button, the Emergency alert system is activated and sends emergency messages to the FSU community via email, text, social media, web posting, sirens, desktop notifications, etc. within seconds.

International Programs
Louisa Blenman, Associate Director
Chuck Stratton, IT Manager
Dustin Lynch, Program Manager, Admissions
Michelle O’Brien, Communications Coordinator

Estimated Cost Savings: $19,400
International Programs designed and developed our Student Portal, a student facing interface that houses pre-departure tasks students must complete before studying abroad. This new software integrated & consolidated a wide variety of departmental business processes that were once completed in-person or on paper into an easy to use online system. The team embarked on this multi-year project to centralize & streamline internal business processes, eliminate redundancy, and increase student accessibility to our program information & communications. After a thorough review of current business process, International Programs designed, built, and implemented a custom software solution that simplified the application, admission, and pre-departure processes for study abroad students & staff.

College of Medicine
Andres Castaneda, Database Administrator

Estimated Cost Savings: Increased efficiency
Students apply to medical school through a national organization called the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). The FSU College of Medicine receives thousands of applications from the AAMC each year, each of which must be transferred into internal databases and into the greater university’s student application database. This process is of crucial importance to the college in reviewing applicants and enrolling students.
College of Law Juris Master Program Team
Manuel Utset, Jr., Associate Dean for Juris Master Programs
Laura Sellati; Juris Master Program Director
Courtney Allen, Juris Master Program Specialist
Mary Ann Montague; Juris Master Program Assistant
Susan Bowers, Juris Master Program Advisor

Estimated Cost Savings: $9,315

The Juris Masters Team at Florida State University increased enrollment in the online Juris Master degree program by 49% through implementation of a streamlined admissions process and enhanced applicant support, growing the number of students enrolled in the program from 166 to 247 between Spring 2019 and Spring 2020. These graduates, who will be trained in complying with complex industry regulations effectively and efficiently, have the potential to save state agencies and private companies significant expense. The new admissions process, which implemented for Spring 2020 applications, saves students $115 each due to no application fee, and is supported by in-house staff.

Application information for the 2020 Prudential Productivity Awards competition will be announced to the University community as soon as it is received from Florida TaxWatch. Application information for the 2019 Prudential Productivity Awards competition will be announced to the University community as soon as it is received from Florida TaxWatch. For more information, visit the Florida TaxWatch Productivity Awards website or contact Sandra Dixon, Associate Director, Training and Organizational Development at hr-ppacoordinator@fsu.edu.