



**Northern Illinois  
University**

# **Advancing Administrative Efficiency**

**Sarah Chinniah & Bryan Perry**  
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# Administrative Efficiencies



What are the administrative practices, policies and procedures that need to be transformed, simplified or eliminated? Suggested categories:

- Contract approvals
- Employee lifecycle
- IT investment
- Payroll
- Staff recognitions and awards
- Travel



# Administrative Efficiencies



- Focus on increasing administrative efficiency by digitizing and automating processes
  - Eliminating need for paper via digital forms and electronic signatures
  - Improving workflow by streamlining and automating approval processes
  - Improving integration between systems to reduce need for manual data transfer
  - Supporting flexible work environments and remote working
- Draw on the insights of the community to identify needs & opportunities
- With opportunities for enhancement exceeding available resources, we must prioritize efforts, based on guiding principles
  - Advance the mission and operation of the university
  - Provide positive impact to students, faculty, and staff
  - Make best use of NIU's resources

# An Inclusive Process



- 2 Large-scale user surveys conducted with  
150 + respondents
- 7 Leadership groups engaged
- 80 Individuals consulted

Resulting in 74 projects identified & evaluated

# Project Portfolio



Over the course of the effort, 74 projects were identified. These were divided into the following categories:

1. Projects that are complete, or on the cusp of completion (12)
2. Projects that can be managed locally (8)
3. Projects that leadership has determined will not be considered at this time (24)
4. Projects that require development before implementation (9)
5. Projects to be considered now for implementation priority (21)

# Notable Progress



- Digitizing forms
  - Change of grade
  - Tuition refund appeal
  - Employee Pcard agreements
  - Outside consulting reporting
- Automating processes
  - Additional pay requests
  - Key control
  - Class fee requests
  - Room scheduling
  - Curricular changes
  - Travel vouchers
  - I-9 reporting for new hires
- Creating new tools
  - Environmental Health & Safety training dashboard
  - Selfservice gender identification
- Integrating information
  - Consolidating teacher licensure info. into Chalk & Wire, linking to NIU

# Prioritization Process



- High-level criteria identified
  - Impact
  - Alignment with strategic action planning framework
  - Ability to implement
- Information assembled about each project
- Projects prescreened to focus project list
- Rubric constructed to evaluate projects against primary drivers
  - Impact
  - Contribution to mission
  - Contribution to operational efficiency
- Additional/strategic considerations noted:
  - Time & effort required
  - Risk mitigation
  - Enabling projects
  - Cost
  - Revenue generation/cost savings

# Prioritization



Tier I: High	Tier II: Middle	Tier III: Low
Time and benefit reporting (interim)	Electronicsignatures	Retroactive changes to grant salaries
Registrar/student transactions	Curricular approval process	Performance evaluation
PeopleAdminupgrades	Vendor Invoice/Voucher Interface	Graduate Student forms
Inventory	Encumbering salaries on grants	User testing
Grant management financial tracking	Purchase order and contract e-signatures	Check requests
Sensitive student financialaid doc.	Student financial aid forms	Research joint appointment coding
Data for compensation analysis	Manager dashboard	Job data modernization



# Tier 1: High



Projects	Contributions
Time and benefit reporting (interim)	Automates process for users
Registrar/student transactions	Automates grade changes & other processes for students & instructors
PeopleAdmin upgrades	Improved data integrity; speed multiple HR processes
Inventory	Partially automate process; enable further automation; reduce errors
Grant management financial tracking	Provides better management of grants; better compliance & reporting
Sensitive student financial aid documentation	Speeds processing, reduces staff time, increases security of family data
Data for compensation analysis	Supports DEI goals & compliance

# Tier 2: Middle



Projects	Contributions
Electronic Signatures	Provide consistent set of tools & guidelines for self-serve implementation of e-signatures
Curricular approval process	Speed approval process, simplify tracking
Vendor Invoice/Voucher Interface	Reduce manual transcription, speed & simplify payment process
Encumbering salaries on grants	Reduce errors, reduce grant over spending, improve compliance
Purchase order and contract electronic signatures	Complete automation of POs & pilot of complex digital/e-sign processes
Student financial aid forms	Speed action on fin. aid decisions
Manager dashboard	Provides managers w/ consistent access to standard HRS info. for their unit

# Next Steps



- DoIT will work with and functional unit partners to develop implementation plans for top tier projects, taking into account
  - Project priority
  - Project scope and complexity
  - Staff requirements vs. availability in DoIT and functional units
- After leadership review of the plan, implementation will begin, with ongoing involvement of the user community.
- Project information and tracking will be available on the web
- There will be periodic reviews and updates of the priority rankings and project scheduling. New projects will enter the queue as projects are completed.

# Your Involvement



- Patience with prioritization
- Provide input as processes are calibrated
- Support streamlining
- Continue to share ideas for new opportunities
- Use these changes to your advantage