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Shelly Leachman

The Path Forward

On the heels of successful rollouts at three pilot locations across the University of California — and culminating six years of planning and preparation — UC Santa Barbara in September will deploy UCPath. The modern payroll, benefits, human resource and academic personnel solution replaces the 35-year-old Payroll Personnel System (PPS).

Among the first campuses to formally launch the comprehensive tool that is a UC-wide strategic priority, UCSB and UCLA both will “go live” with UCPath in September, 2018. The first paychecks issued from UCPath will land with UCSB employees in October.

“This is now really happening,” said Joel Michaelsen, UCSB’s interim vice chancellor for administrative services. “As one of the first non-pilot campuses to launch UCPath, we have the chance to work closely with the Office of the President UCPath team to optimize our implementation efforts. Additionally, our geographic proximity to our go-live partner UCLA provides opportunities for collaboration. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, our campus has been diligently planning and preparing for UCPath for six years.

“Making the transition this fall means we will reap the payoff of our efforts sooner and will be able to shift our focus back to our core educational and research missions, equipped with modern, more powerful and more effective administrative tools,” Michaelsen added.

Part of UC's broad and long-range Working Smarter Initiative to elevate administrative operations to the same level of excellence as its academic and research enterprise, the UCPath program will unite every UC location with a single payroll, benefits, human resource and academic personnel system for all employees. With standard technology, consistent processes and a shared services center (based in Riverside), UCPath is meant to create a foundation upon which new capabilities and improvements can be developed into the future.

Once the tool is live systemwide, every UC employee will have access to the UCPath portal to view their personal job data and payroll information, enroll in direct deposit, update tax withholdings, view or enroll in benefits, see vacation and sick leave balances and more (At Your Service Online will eventually be retired, but will be available for a period of time to view historical employment information). Service delivery and reliability are expected to improve dramatically over PPS, which has been in use since 1982, with 11 different localized versions and separate staffs for each. The new system also provides managers with better tools, data, reporting and decision-making capabilities, according to the UCOP Central UCPath Project office.

"Standard technology and processes, combined with centralization of data, will enable the university to capture information and see it in a way that is just not possible today," said Nathan Brostrom, UC's executive vice president of business operations and executive sponsor of UCPath. "Requests for information that today might take a month will be possible to get overnight. And, with better information and reporting, new opportunities for efficiency will begin to emerge."

Throughout May and into June, UCSB is holding a series of UCPath "Readiness Roadshows" to provide a primer for every area on campus on the new system, the timeline for implantation, how to prepare and how things will change. The events are intended for department chairs, faculty who supervise employees, business officers, MSOs, PPS preparers and department benefit representatives.

A campuswide UCPath Town Hall meeting is scheduled for July 26 at Corwin Pavilion.

The change will have wide impact, and fluency in the new system is expected to take some time, according to Michaelsen.

"The UCPath leadership team is committed to doing everything in our power to support a smooth transition, but there will be bumps along the way. UCPath is not a 'one-and-done' implementation," Michaelsen said. "There will be a learning curve for

our campus, as well as for the UCPath Center, as we collectively work to fine-tune the new system. Each individual on campus has a role to play in their personal and organizational readiness. Engaging with your colleagues now in planning activities paves the way for a successful go-live in September 2018.”

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.