UC SANTA BARBARA
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On the Right Path

UC Santa Barbara employees are officially on the path — UCPath, that is. This month marks the official “cutover” — in which UCSB transitions from the antiquated PPS software that has calculated and documented UC employee wages, benefits and accruals for nearly three decades, to a new online system. UCPath will officially go live at UCSB Thursday, September 27.

UCPath is the University of California’s priority program to implement a single payroll, benefits, human resources and academic personnel solution for all UC employees. The Riverside and Merced campuses, the Office of the President and Associated Students of UCLA have already transitioned to UCPath. UCLA and UC Santa Barbara are currently making the switch, and the remaining campuses and locations are expected to have done so by this time next year.

“The data conversion is by far the biggest challenge,” said UCPath Center executive director Dan Russi, who from the UCPath Center in Riverside has been overseeing the systemwide transition. His team, along with colleagues on the UC Santa Barbara campus, are working in close collaborative fashion to ensure that the data collected on the Payroll/Personnel System (PPS) software and At Your Service Online (AYSO) is properly documented and accounted for in the UCPath system. When UCPath goes live, AYSO information will remain accessible, but only in archived form for a limited time to provide access to historical data.

Despite all the diligence, Russi noted, there are bound to be a few errors — human and technical — that may still come through, as payroll and personnel specialists

catch up to the new way of handling employee data, and as the UCPath Center and UC Santa Barbara technical teams solve any computer glitches.

“In the end, everybody gets paid 100 percent,” Russi said, acknowledging the possibility that some of these glitches could result in inaccurate documentation of vacation or sick leave accruals or mistakes in paychecks. Paycheck discrepancies during the previous wave of UCPath deployment amounted to at most 3 percent of the employee’s regular paycheck and resulted in both over- and underpayment.

“If they’re underpaid, a check will be issued to them as quickly as possible,” Russi said. If the issue is an overpayment, UCPath will work with the individuals to set up a deduction to correct the balance.

To nip any potential problems in the bud, UC Santa Barbara employees are encouraged to log into the UCPath portal on Thursday, September 27 to make sure their personal information is correct. On that date, employees will receive an email with the link to log into UCPath using their UCSBnetID. Individuals who are paid monthly can view their earning statements in the UCPath system beginning September 27, in advance of their first UCPath paychecks on October 1. Employees who are paid biweekly can log in on September 27 and will be able to view their earning statements on October 1. Their first UCPath paychecks will be issued October 3.

Employees who identify small errors in their pay should report them to the UCPath Center by submitting a ticket online via the “Ask the UCPath Center” button in the UCPath portal. If the error in pay is significant and causes a personal hardship, employees should contact their Business Officer/MSO immediately. Instructions on who to contact for specific UCPath-related issues will be available on the UCSB UCPath website under the “Help” section. Telephone assistance from the UCPath Center also will be available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PDT Monday through Friday beginning September 27.

Moving forward, it will be crucial for employees to approve and submit their timecards *before* the deadline as payroll and paycheck processing will no longer be handled on-campus.

October 1 also will mark the beginning of the stabilization period, the next segment in UCPath deployment for UC Santa Barbara.

“It’s typically a four-month period where we are extra vigilant about two things,” Russi said. “One, making sure that the technology works properly. From a technology standpoint that’s all hands on deck, so all the people that have built the system in addition to the people that maintain the system, everybody’s available to help.” Second, he said, resources will be allocated for quickly resolving any issues that impact pay or benefits.

“We just want to make sure we take care of the employee, with the highest priority,” he continued. To that end, the team at the UCPath Center consists of several hundred specialists, each ready to assist with both technical and business issues that may arise as the UC campuses move their payroll and personnel systems to UCPath.

UC Santa Barbara and UCLA are in the second cohort to deploy UCPath; the pilot deployments involved UC Office of the President, UC Merced, UC Riverside and Associated Students UCLA. Each deployment offered lessons learned as the UCPath Center team continues to refine its approach. The lessons learned prior to the UC Santa Barbara and UCLA deployments have resulted in closer engagement in the planning phase as well as continued contact in the runup to go-live.

“With Santa Barbara and UCLA, we’ve actually embedded people there,” Russi said. “That, in my opinion, has made a big difference.”

Among the things employees can expect as a result of the change will be two W-2 forms for tax year 2018: one for earnings prior to the go-live date, and one for earnings following implementation. For employees not enrolled in direct deposit, paper paychecks will no longer be available for campus pickup; checks will instead be mailed to the address on file. Additionally, employees will receive new employee ID numbers, although numbers are not likely to trigger any direct impacts for day-to-day business.

Additional information about ID numbers and all things UCPath can be found at the UCSB UCPath FAQ page.

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.