Concerns/Complaints about EBS

1. The system takes an incredibly long time for staff to enter information because procedures are not well documented and the system frequently slows down or crashes. Thus, using it takes far more of staff time and creates frustration.

2. The payroll system for undergraduate learning assistants, in particular, has worked very poorly. Temporary staff processing information entered at the unit level have lost forms and caused students to not get paid for up to 5 weeks on end. This is bad business.

3. When staff contact the help line to ask for assistance, they frequently receive incomplete or wrong information.

4. Our business staff were instructed to create multiple sub-accounts to keep track of expenditures. However, when entering purchasing information there is no place on the forms to designate a sub-account (or even to describe what is being purchased). Hence, it is very difficult to keep expenses logged in the correct sub-accounts for tracking purposes. This must all be done by hand afterwards. And there is no way to pull up a report showing the financial transactions by sub-account.

5. All the pages of all the various forms have the same "look and feel" which makes it very difficult to tell what one is doing. Having more distinctive visual cues would be a help.

6. There is too much information within BI and you can't manipulate the tables within EBS - you have to download everything to a spreadsheet and re-create data into something you can use. It is also visually challenging because within BI you can't hide columns, column headings are only on first page and in order to see all of the information you have to shrink the font to a size that creates eyestrain. It is very hard to keep flipping back and forth within BI with no way to highlight or hide information you do not need, so shrinking it is less eye strain than flipping back and forth between columns or pages.

7. Absolutely every accounting form looks exactly the same - no visual changes, no color, no changes in fonts or visual breaks. Imagine filling out the same form for 10, 20, 30 years....... 

8. When you successfully submit Disbursement Vouchers, it allows you to print a Disbursement Voucher Cover Sheet which includes the Doc number and amount. No date, no description, no account number on it - it is useless.

9. "Help desk routinely has told me the wrong form to use when trying to transfer funding for various reasons, if they don't know the answer they prepare a ticket number for me and sometimes EBS will call me back and sometimes they won't respond for several days."
10. The Labor Distribution reports have too much information on them and you have to set up a filter under your name, download to an Excel spreadsheet and sort out what you need. Many more steps and very time consuming manipulating the data every month.

11. In a nutshell it takes hours to find information, it takes ten times longer and many more steps to process routine forms, routing through workflow can take a couple weeks if not a couple months, and the system goes down frequently right after you have just submitted a complicated form so you have to start all over.

12. “I question the accuracy of some of the reports - or, maybe they pull information from different sources. If so, it is hard to figure out which report you need to balance your accounts, or to figure out monthly salary expenditures by category or individual.”

Questions

1. When will the site be fixed so that it can be accessed with a standard Mac browser? For example Mac users get error message when trying to download pay slips!

2. How can one tell whether one’s overload pay is processed or not, and whether one is actually receiving the correct pay?

3. How do college’s create simple statements in BI by sub accounts that include: beginning balance, detailed description (of item, not the Doc # of purchase because not all faculty/staff have access) of expenditures, encumbrances and balance remaining by month.

4. There is no calculator built into the Disbursement Vouchers - they take so much longer than the older forms; you have to scan and attach every receipt and keep track of the amounts on a calculator at your desk. The travel worksheet has a built in calculator, why can't something so basic be built into the disbursement voucher?

Some Positive Comments

:) Not all doom and gloom - I do like the fact you can change the account numbers on individual procard charges via edoc when the charge comes through for Fiscal Officer approval.

I also like the ability to pull up salary history by individual/date range (HRP062), this is very useful when transferring/changing/correcting salary distribution or to get a sense of how much we actually spend, for example, on student employees by sub account.
- Training/workshop availability was good, but the training does not always apply when using the system in the real world. Training was done before the system was live. Now, individuals have to figure out each problem as they work through using the actual system. Several people mentioned this issue. One person suggested that additional training using the live system (with guidance/support) would be greatly beneficial. In fact, it would probably make the system more efficient because there are probably quicker ways to do things in the system, but people are unaware of the shortcuts. This is particularly true of the human resources side of the system (people seemed to have fewer problems with the financial portions of it).

- The more people understand and use the system, the better it is getting. However, using this system has not eliminated delays in the processing. For example, rather than spending time copying documents, people spend time scanning them into the system. Or, rather than a paper copy sitting on someone's desk in contracts and grants (without approval), it sits electronically in the system. So, people waiting for approvals are still making phone calls to find out the problem and move things through the approval process. Another example is that if someone disapproves a document or transaction, you have to start all over. So, people still need to call or email people to ask questions and fix documents.

- A big benefit of the system is being able to track when things were submitted and where they are in the process electronically. Although it doesn't always speed up the process, you at least know where they are and who to call.

- Units are being criticized for not being efficient and moving things through quickly, but some university policies slow things down (even with the system). For example, the university requires a background check for every employee if they have not been paid for the past six months. Thus, staff members have to wait for the background check every year for part-time instructors who only teach during one semester. They cannot process the reappointment in the system until they receive the background information. It is also extremely frustrating to the people being reappointed.

- The system will only work with Internet Explorer, version 9. Cannot upgrade or use another web browser.

- The system is not intuitive. For example, when adding time, you have to claim time (record it) and then also release it. “Save” is not “save;” it is releasing time. In another example, someone mentioned a screen in which there are three “evaluate” buttons on one page without any instructions about when to use each one. People mentioned that some of these problems are being fixed.

- The organization and searching capabilities for forms for new positions are difficult if they did not go through. For example, the individuals' names (the appointees) do not show up on the list page, making it difficult to find out what didn’t get done.
I talked to a few people in my department. They seemed to be a bit unhappy with the system.

1) Sometimes they complained about receiving too many emails (50 a day, could users be given the option of collapsing all the daily messages in just one message?).

2) Sometimes they complained about the relevant people not receiving the relevant notifications.

3) Occasionally, users get unintelligible messages (garbled text) when interacting with the system.
Questions:

1. Are there step-by-step directions for each access to current pay stubs? Is so, please provide at the meeting.

2. Are there step-by-step direction for changing supplement retirement funds? Is so, please provide at the meeting.

3. Is there any way to program the system to calculate the maximum contribution to supplemental retirement funds for the full 7 months and 2 half months, so that faculty do not have go in and make the change at the beginning and end of summer?
There are no specific questions at this time; however there are some observations.

1. Adaptation to the system probably has been challenged by the introduction of the Human Resources and Financial Modules at the same time.

2. In the Human Resources Module, the system has resulted in more work, extra steps, delays, and notable confusion.

3. The new system is not at all like the old system. In order to adapt to the new system there can be a tendency to develop and maintain shadow systems, such as maintaining paper records. While these shadow systems involve additional steps, they may be temporarily helpful. However in the long term these steps can hamper adaptation to the new system.

4. The EBS system can become an issue for faculty if personnel processes and paperwork are not processed as efficiently as in the old system. For example, processing of appointment recommendations and raises may not be as efficient.

5. There have been extensive opportunities for training, and our college personnel have taken advantage of it. However it seems that for optimal implementation, users will need to understand not only the components of the system that directly relate to their own positions and functions, but the entire system. This is a significant challenge.

Despite these issues, we are taking an approach to the new system that is positive and realistic. We are confident in positive outcomes over time and with more experience with the system.
Here are the questions/problems regarding EBS:

a. We submit several Personal Services Contracts each year as part of our grant-funded fellowship program. Most are people we have used for several years, and we are very careful to follow all instructions. Here is the problem: some PSC's go through without problems. Others get returned asking for information already provided--consultant name, institution, how consultant was chosen, institution, consultant activities, payment per hour, how that amount was determined, total hours, total compensation, etc. Why does this happen? Needless to say, this is very disconcerting to our staff, who have no idea why some PSC's completed by the same person go through and some do not.

b. Another issue: In the event a faculty or staff payroll check is not issued, payroll no longer has the ability to issue a check within 24 hours. Why?