

Campus Relations Outreach

Linda Fast - Facilitator

Linda began the discussion by explaining that communication with campus is key for their campus to understand who, what and why of the procurement process. She teaches a training program once a month that has been named Purchasing Plus. With this she teaches the why and how of procurement services. Topics discussed, included introduction to staff, commodity purchasing, best practices, bids, contracts, purchase and service agreements, travel, dollar limitations, p-card allowable and not-allowable purchases. Linda limits these classes to 10 people, enabling an atmosphere that encourages questions and class participation.

In addition to the classes taught in Procurement Services, Linda talks of also taking her training “on the road”. When she gets questions from various departments, she will customize the training specifically to the department, putting special emphasis on unique issues they are having, such as printing, sciences, bids or contracts. These sessions are held at the department location and for their specific personnel. This encourages a relationship with Procurement Services, and can be a safety line when faced with an audit.

E-Procurement Training is separate from regular purchasing procedures. The e-procurement catalogs are limited by the universities. Arkansas has 17 catalogs. Purchases made from catalogs are unlimited. This streamlines the e-procurement process. Fifty percent of all orders are received within 2 days.

Comments made from other participants around the table focused on training done in their departments, using sessions directed by procurement services related to cost limits, best practices, and items not allowed as p-card purchases. Some go to department to train; while others hold training sessions in house. Others depend on their websites for information. All require mandatory p-card training and testing before issuing p-cards. Some participants spoke of annual p-card training and testing.

Other topics covered the need and methods of notifying campuses of changes in procedures; websites and listservs, PowerPoint presentations, round table discussions, and training videos were all used for this purpose

Topics also touched on were contract environment, indemnification, fee approvals, and authorization for signatures, risk management, travel authorization and how important it is to keep communication channels open.

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