

Western University finds an **affordable solution** for its **Effort Certification and Reporting.**



Western University of Health Sciences, Pomona, CA

Situation: The Office of Sponsored Research and Contract Management at Western University of Health Sciences has been challenged by the school's rapid growth. Since its inaugural year in 1977, the Pomona, California University has mushroomed from a single college with 36 students to nine colleges and multiple research centers. Research funds at the school have also grown incrementally as have the demands to meet federal requirements on tracking time and effort. In fact, the rapid growth in research funds had made it virtually impossible for the institution to continue with the manual accounting of time and effort.

It was time to automate the process, but the school's general ledger software was incapable of handling the task, and the majority of traditional time and effort solutions on the market were too complicated and just too expensive.

Solution: One of the biggest challenges for the University was finding a solution that was user friendly enough to engage the entire team. Matthew Katz, Western's Assistant Vice President of Sponsored Research and Contract Management, understood the importance of team buy-in. "Up to that point Nancy Riker, our Director of Post Award/Grant Accounting, had been doing all our time and effort reporting by hand. The process was excessively time consuming. We needed a more effective and efficient system," said Katz. "That's when we discovered Effort Administrator™ from IT Works."

Effort Administrator™ is a web-based effort certification and reporting solution that allows faculty and research staff to review and certify their own effort as well as the effort of their research team. "This solution seemed to have a true understanding of the situations faced by institutions like ours," said Katz. "IT Works immediately touched on all of our hot button issues: Increase faculty participation and meet federal reporting requirements in a timely manner. And they were able to do so at an affordable price."

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—Matthew D. Katz, MHA



Matthew D. Katz, MHA, is Assistant Vice President of Sponsored Research and Contract Management at Western University of Health Sciences.



Nancy Riker is Director of Post Award/Grant Accounting for Sponsored Research and Contract Management at Western University of Health Sciences.

Results: The Effort Administrator™ system has been up and running at the University since September 2010. Matthew Katz and his team have had a chance to reflect back on where they were before Effort Administrator™ and how far they’ve come since then. “To be honest with you, when I first looked at the system, it was exactly what we were looking for. And then the price just made it more attractive,” he said. “I’ve been here 15 years, and we went from about \$300,000 in research funds back then to over \$7 million today. So we’re growing, but we still have budget constraints. The price factor just made our decision that much easier.”

While the price made everyone at the University happy, for Matthew Katz and Nancy Riker the most important factor behind the success of Effort Administrator™ is the system’s unique ability to engender total team participation. “Obviously, it’s important that a system like this allows us to easily meet federal reporting guidelines, and at a reasonable cost,” said Matthew Katz. “But getting everyone involved was the key.” Now, anyone on the team can use the system to generate certified effort statements and other reporting requirements. Nancy Riker is pleased with the ease at which the software can be utilized.

Moving forward, Matthew Katz is encouraged that his entire team has bought into the new process and is pleased at how quickly and seamlessly it all fell into place. “At first, trying to get our faculty together was like herding cats. But once we got them involved, it took them all of five minutes to learn how to use Effort Administrator™.”



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