7-26-2004

Bill Benjamin : I am USF St. Petersburg

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Every day faculty, staff and students request everything from guest speaker honoraria and microscopes, to flag poles, ceiling tiles, and vacuum cleaners. But to acquire these items for campus use, there is one campus destination that cannot be bypassed – USF SP's Purchasing Department.

The department is led by Bill Benjamin, coordinator of purchasing. Bill strategically guides people through complex policies and procedures to help provide the best product for each person's needs. He determines the proper course of action for both major and minor university purchases. Whether it is an "Invitation to Bid" or a "Request for Proposal," Bill guides staff and faculty with the required steps to ensure that the process is fair and competitive, leading to University contracts with certified vendors.

Details, details, details! For every University acquisition, there are multiple factors researched by Benjamin and his team. This includes price, product quality, delivery schedule, warranties, guarantees, service contracts, vendors, and customer service. Plus, Benjamin says that post-purchasing procedures are equally important to sustain good vendor relationships.

"Purchasing's goal is to render consistent, stellar customer service in a timely fashion," said Benjamin. "We are all here for the students; this cannot be underestimated." Benjamin, along with his colleagues, takes pride in helping to create a functional and nurturing learning environment for USF St. Petersburg students.

As part of the USF St. Petersburg administrative services team, Benjamin reports to Abdul Nasser, vice regional chancellor for administration and finance, but also works with Purchasing at USF Tampa, a helpful and cost-effective relationship. As a public institution, USF works with other governmental agencies to expand purchasing options.

Another facet of Benjamin’s work is to train employees to use the PeopleSoft FAST financial system implemented last July at USF. Although Benjamin’s expertise is the "Procure to Pay" module, he is also on-call as the trouble-shooter for PeopleSoft problems encountered by staff.

The continuing growth of USF St. Petersburg has prompted some exciting new opportunities for the purchasing department. For example, two new ventures formerly handled at the state level included leasing space for the College of Business at Bayboro Station and the purchase of the Fountain Inn property. Benjamin’s multi-faceted involvement was critical to the success of these projects.

Bill has worked for USF for almost 17 years, first in Tampa for five years, and now 12 years on this campus. Before coming to USF, Benjamin managed the local U.S. Coast Guard Exchange. Bill plays on the campus community co-ed softball team that participates in a city league. Bill is regularly cheered on by his twin sons, Brian and Mark.

In Purchasing, Bill is assisted by John Slabbers, senior purchasing agent, and Olivia Jones, purchasing agent. Purchasing is located in TER300 and Benjamin can be reached at 3-4199 or by email benjamin@stpt.usf.edu.