

Double Issue!

The Score

Volume 2 • Number 1

January/February 1998

The monthly review of the Oberlin Project for Unified Systems for the staff and faculty of Oberlin College

special report

Human Resources goes live on BANNER

At approximately 4 p.m. on December 29, 1997, the Office of Human Resources and the Payroll division officially went live on the BANNER system.

What took place that afternoon was the process that College employees hold nearest and dearest to their hearts: printing paychecks. Approximately 280 bi-weekly paychecks and 200 direct deposit stubs were processed out of BANNER successfully. And that successful paycheck run means just as much to the HR/Payroll conversion team as to the employees that got their checks on time: "It means we are over the hump, finally," sighed Accounting Manager Marcia Miller on December 30, the day after the cutover. "I almost can't believe it."

Director of Computing John Bucher, who was on hand in the Controller's Office on the 29th for the running of the checks, is delighted with the success of the first payroll. "It was great to see those checks come out of the printer!" Bucher says with a grin. "Although I knew very well that this

activity was only a small part of the entire effort put forth to implement the new HR



Happy New Year! Marcia Miller, Linda Amburgy, Millie Modic, and John Bucher make some noise to celebrate HR's successful cutover to BANNER on December 29, 1997.

system, it's tangible evidence that the implementation was successful."

a reason to celebrate

Bucher's delight is shared by the entire HR team, especially those who were directly responsible for running that first set of paychecks through BANNER. "It's one thing to say 'oh yeah, we're going live at the end of the month,'" Miller commented, "but it's a whole other story if someone doesn't get their check!"

In addition to running checks, the HR and Payroll staff are now also using BANNER for their day-to-day work. Since the end of December, the BANNER system has been working successfully in the Office of Human Resources and in Payroll. Sandy Youngeberg-Fox, HR Budget Director and the team leader of the HR implementation team, reports that her staff is comfortable on the software and that day-to-day operations using BANNER are running smoothly. Ruth Spencer, Director

continued on page 2...

opus focus

The countdown to the cutover

December 29 will now go down in the Oberlin record books as "the day" that HR and Payroll officially went live on BANNER, but that one day is only the most minuscule tip of the iceberg. The real work of going live took months and months of difficult, time-consuming, heavily detailed work on the part of the Human Resources and Payroll staff. Furthermore, the actual process of going live itself took over two weeks of database work: fine-tuning data, checking numerous processes, and seemingly endless testing.

For this particular module, "going live" focused on successfully running the first batch of

bi-weekly paychecks out of BANNER. Here's a look at what it took to make that happen.

December 13

Up till today, the HR and Payroll staff have been working with a practice database called the preproduction database, or "preprod." The purpose of working in preprod is to provide a place for staff to practice using the system in an environment that won't affect

continued on page 3...

in this issue

- 2 opus notes
- 4 what's new
- 5 opus profiles: the HR team that made it happen
- 6 opus faq
- 8 calendar of events

...special report

...continued from page 1

of Human Resources, is thrilled with the successful conversion and notes that the implementation of BANNER means a more productive HR office in the future. "Unlike our previous HRS system, BANNER allows us to secure and modify much more information that is specifically useful and applicable to HR operations," says Spencer. "This gives us a much better picture of the real costs for employees."

For most of the HR implementation team members, however, the overwhelming feeling is one of relief that the cutover is finally behind them. "Life is certainly a lot better now," says Millie Modic, the lead analyst/programmer for the HR conversion. Linda Amburgy, Payroll Technician, says that she's "a whole lot less stressed out now, that's for sure," and her colleague in the Controller's Office, Sharon Jaycox, agrees. "The time has been very stressful, with very long weeks," Jaycox says. "I've learned a lot about the new system, though, and am confident that everything will run as smooth as can be expected."

on solid footing

OPUS Project Manager Monica Wachter sees the success of the HR conversion as a good sign for the rest of the project. "The Human Resources and Payroll Office's success with their production cutover date puts us on solid footing for meeting our future production cutover dates," Wachter says. "It also provides us with a valuable knowledge base that will enhance our approach to the other components of

OPUS."

Sandy Youngeberg-Fox also points out the importance of getting payroll live, since it impacts the HR system as a whole. "Payroll is a critical piece of the HR system," she notes. "It goes without saying that paychecks are important to all of us, hence the majority of the focus of the project so far has been on the payroll function. Now that we have had a successful bi-weekly and student payroll—and there's no reason to believe that we won't have a successful monthly payroll as well—we feel that a major hurdle has been overcome."

Youngeberg-Fox points out, however, that the BANNER HR module is extremely complex and involves much more than just the payroll function. "We need to now turn our attention to BANNER's other capabilities," Youngeberg-Fox says. "Our old HRS system had become simply a 'glorified payroll system,' and we need to avoid letting that happen in BANNER." Currently, Youngeberg-Fox is working with Bob Knight, the College's Budget Director, on ways to utilize BANNER's budgeting capabilities. She is also working on ways to interface the HR budgeting process with the current Finance system, since communication between the two is critical. That communication will be much simpler after July 1, when the Finance module is scheduled to go live on BANNER.

Ruth Spencer is also looking ahead at the work to come: "The future will require fine tuning the systems and maintaining high

continued on page 8...

opus notes

ACAC votes in new Chair

Following the December departure of John Jacobson, Assistant Dean of the Conservatory and ACAC Chair, the Administrative Computing Advisory Committee has chosen a new leader. Brian Lindeman, Associate Director of Financial Aid, was voted in as Chair during the Committee's last meeting of 1997 and officially began the duties of Chair at the January 12 meeting of ACAC.

Lindeman is looking forward to his new role. "This is an exciting time to be involved with OPUS and ACAC," Lindeman says, "especially since we're now officially 'live' on BANNER in Human Resources. It's the culmination of a lot of hard work and a good indicator that the other modules will be successful as well." ■

BANNER system requirements

For offices that will need to update their computer equipment in preparation for BANNER, system requirements are now available. For Macintosh machines, users should ideally have 64 megabytes of RAM and a 1 gigabyte hard drive, and a Mac operating system at 7.5

or higher. Windows machines should ideally have 64 megabytes of RAM and a 2 gigabyte hard drive, along with the NT 4.0 platform. Keep in mind that these are recommendations only, and users with questions or problems should contact their OPUS team leader or e-mail OPUS@oberlin.edu. For more information on ordering new computers for BANNER, see the article on page 7 of this issue of *The Score*. ■

Student Senate looking for hand-me-down machines

Offices purchasing new computers for BANNER that aren't sure what to do with the old machines may consider donating them to the Oberlin College Student Senate. Currently, the group has limited computing capabilities and is looking for machines that would allow them to have direct connections to MacServe, QuickMail, and Alpha from the Student Senate Office. They are also interested in machines capable of handling desktop publishing software.

If your office is interested in donating such a machine, please contact Student Senate representative Dan Persky at x6975 or 775-

0161, or e-mail osenate@oberlin.edu or Daniel.Persky@oberlin.edu. ■

OPUS's new Web address

OPUS on the Web has a new location. The new URL is <<http://www.oberlin.edu/~acs/opus/opushome.htm>>. There are also new features on the OPUS web site, including detailed training schedules and FAQs. ■

Gilson joins Registrar team

In order to alleviate the workload associated with the BANNER implementation, a new staff member has joined the Registrar's Office. Ken Gilson, a member of the Wheaton College (IL) administrative staff prior to coming to Oberlin, joins the team as the Associate Registrar for the three-year term of the OPUS project.

According to Registrar Lori Gumpf, Gilson's arrival couldn't be better timed. "Ken is here to keep me from going absolutely insane!" Gumpf says. "He's going to be a big help in keeping the Registrar's office functioning and moving forward while I am concentrating on the BANNER implementation." ■

...opus focus

...continued from page 1

the “real” data. But today all that changes. Darrick Strange, the analyst/programmer in the Computing Center responsible for database administration, copies the preprod database over into the actual database that HR will use once they’re live and that the first checks will run out of. This process, called “cloning,” means that from now on, the HR and Payroll staff will be working with “live” data—the data that runs your paycheck, holds your tax, benefit, deduction, and insurance information, and identifies you as an employee in the system. No more practice; this is the real thing!

Two weeks before

For the HR and Payroll staff, this week is packed, even more so than the past few months. There is an enormous amount of data to be entered and checked over for accuracy. Benefits and deductions need to be on the mark. Employees need to be assigned their correct jobs in the system and be associated with the correct account numbers. Reports are run constantly out of BANNER and compared to data from the old HRS system. It’s important to make sure that information is fed into BANNER in the same way as it was into the old system.

The analyst/programmers in the Computing Center are also under pressure to get things done. Millie Modic, the programmer in charge of the HR module, runs back and forth between her office and the Service Building constantly, answering questions and fixing problems. Dave Waldron, the programmer in charge of creating the procedures that will actually print the checks, is busy setting up the print program, creating the print routine, and running test after test to make sure it all works.

One week before

The week of December 22 is the last chance to check the data before the attempt at a payroll run on the 29th. This entire week (no Winter Shutdown for the HR/Payroll team) is spent in “data cleaning”: cleaning out the live database to make sure no extraneous data is lurking around that might foul up the payroll-printing process.

Another big job this week is making sure that all employee tax information is ready for 1998; just another “minor” detail that can’t slip through the cracks. The staff is also busy practicing the check-printing procedure that Dave Waldron has created to make sure they know the drill backwards and forwards. It would be a real disaster to miss the cutover deadline because the printer didn’t work!

Detailed testing continues. Whenever a report from HRS doesn’t match up with a report out of BANNER, the disparity needs to be researched, identified, and fixed. This is an incredibly time-consuming (and sometimes frustrating) process. It has to be done before Monday, however, when real timecard information will be entered into BANNER and real checks printed from that information. Any missing or bogus data in the system could prevent that from happening.

The team takes Christmas Day off to spend time with family and (hopefully) relax, but then it’s back to work.

The Day: December 29

9 a.m. This day begins early, when Linda Amburgy, Payroll Clerk, begins the job of verifying all the bi-weekly time cards. She makes

sure that the cards are filled out properly with the correct information. She also must put the cards in order so they can be entered as quickly as possible by Karen Arcaba and Debbie Williams in Production Services, who do the data entry for payroll. Linda’s deadline for verification is 10 a.m.

10 a.m. The timecards are handed over to Karen and Debbie, who have spent the past month or two practicing on the BANNER system to get used to the new data entry process. They are all set and ready to go...until Karen’s machine goes down. It turns out that the last installation of BANNER hasn’t been put on her computer properly, so the software refuses to run. Time entry is delayed for half an hour while a solution is found. At 10:30, with Karen now working on Millie’s computer, the first time entry in BANNER begins.

1 p.m. With the data entry completed, the preliminary check verification process begins. The Payroll staff must go through the entered data before running the paychecks to make sure the information is correct and cross-check with benefits, deductions, insurance, and other variables. This preliminary verification is particularly important this time, since the team has never gone through the process for real before.

4 p.m. Multiple tests have been run, data has been checked and rechecked, and the time has come for the moment of truth: printing the checks. Everyone holds their breath and...it works! Approximately 280 bi-weekly checks are printed out of BANNER successfully!

But it’s not time to celebrate yet. At this point, the team begins printing the second half of payroll: the direct deposit stubs.

4:15 p.m. The printer jams.

Obviously, Murphy’s Law didn’t take Winter Shutdown off either.

4:20 p.m. After a mercifully short delay, the printer problem is fixed and the direct deposit run is restarted. It runs smoothly. The team breathes a collective sigh of relief.

4:30 p.m. Uh oh, that collective sigh of relief came too soon. There’s a problem with the way the system updates itself after a payroll run. Fortunately, Jane Kramer, the Systems Administrator in the Computing Center, is on hand to help.

6 p.m. An hour and a half later, the update problem is solved and the day is finally over. Bi-weekly payroll has now run successfully. The checks and direct deposits have been printed, verified, and sent downstairs to be folded and stuffed into envelopes. The team celebrates with champagne and chocolates. It’s over! That is, until next week when the student payroll has to be run...

OPUS congratulates the entire HR/Payroll team: Linda Amburgy, Sharon Jaycox, Marcia Miller, Bev Pycraft, Debbie Sutorius, Sandy Youngeberg-Fox, and analyst/programmer Millie Modic. You’ve helped pull all of us a bit further into the future! ■

Welcome to your new paycheck

It may not be quite as exciting as finding more money in your paycheck, but starting this month, all College employees will see a change in the look of their check or direct deposit stub. We've outlined the changes below.

This is your BANNER ID number. This number identifies you within the BANNER system.

This is the total net amount for the current pay period.

This is a sample of the new paycheck. It looks fairly similar to the old paycheck, but there are some noticeable differences, such as the BANNER ID number and, if you're a union worker, your available sick/vacation time listed at the bottom of the pay stub.

Your gross year-to-date earnings are listed here.

This is a list of your deductions, both current and year-to-date. Your total current deductions are listed here.

The total net amount of your check is listed again here.

If you're a union worker, the information at the bottom of your stub indicates how much sick/vacation time you have available.

This is a sample of the new direct deposit stub. Note the new information on your stub: the total amount deposited into your account, your BANNER ID number, and for union workers, your available sick/vacation time listed at the bottom of the stub.

This is your BANNER ID number. This number identifies you within the BANNER system.

This is the total deposited into your account(s). On the old stub, this number was always zero. Now, it shows the actual amount deposited.

Here is the distribution for your direct deposit, including your bank account numbers and how much has been deposited into each account.

This is a list of your deductions, both current and year-to-date. Your total current deductions are listed here.

Your gross year-to-date earnings are listed here.

Your net year-to-date earnings are listed here.

For union workers, you'll see how much sick/vacation time you have available at the bottom of the stub.

The team that made it happen

The Human Resources/Payroll team responsible for the successful conversion to BANNER has been working hard for almost a year to make the implementation a success. In some cases, these folks worked twelve-hour days, seven days a week to get the job done. Just who are these dedicated staff members and what could they possibly have been doing all that time? Read all about it.

Linda Amburgy and Sharon Jaycox, Payroll Clerks, Controller's Office Linda and Sharon are two people you want to keep on good terms with: they're the ones who are responsible for the practical side of getting your paycheck to you on time. During the BANNER implementation, these two had to maintain the payroll process in the old computing system ("I don't even want to think about the phone calls we'd get if one paycheck was late," Linda says with a faint smile), while setting up mounds of data in the new system. Linda and Sharon were responsible for setting up people in the new system so they could be paid out of BANNER, and also verified the payroll calculations (like deductions and benefits) to make sure the data added up. There were also account distributions to be checked and accrual information to be gathered and tracked, and Linda and Sharon took care of



Sharon Jaycox gives BANNER a big thumbs-up as colleagues Bev Pycraft, Marcia Miller, and Linda Amburgy look on.

those details as well. They also helped with time entry, and Linda assisted in the training of the folks in Production Services, who do the majority of data entry for payroll. Linda and Sharon are also responsible for the hands-on portion of running payroll: managing the new print process for BANNER and learning how to use the new automatic folders and stuffers for sending the checks out.

Marcia Miller, Accounting Manager, Controller's Office As the manager of the payroll procedure in the Controller's Office, Marcia was perhaps the one with the highest ulcer potential on cutover day. She was responsible for everything from designing the new check and direct deposit forms to setting up the earnings, benefit, deduction, and tax code rules that are responsible for running

paychecks accurately out of BANNER. She also set up the rules for tax reporting, managed the process of automating procedures that were previously done manually, and performed a mountain of tests to make sure that each employee class was set up correctly. Marcia also concerned herself with making sure that BANNER would improve business practices in her area, such as the creation of a system in BANNER that would accrue leave time so that employees can now see their available vacation and sick time balances on their payroll stubs. Marcia also coordinated the effort to educate bi-weekly employees and student supervisors on the documentation changes associated with BANNER, which included a new procedure for student payroll, and new timecards for both students and bi-weekly workers.

Beverly Pycraft, Human Resources Benefits Technician Bev's major task was a whopper: developing a separate rule table in BANNER for each union or job classification (rule tables define specific calculations within the system). In addition, she also had to develop rule tables for each and every benefit within that job class. Bev assisted the programmer/analysts with data mapping, making sure that information stored in the HRS system would convert successfully into BANNER. Bev also coordinated another conversion process, converting all the existing benefits codes into new table codes that could be understood by BANNER. Developing a procedure manual for setting up benefits also took a good deal of time, and Bev is now known as the Queen of Screen Printouts. In addition, Bev actively participated in the data entry effort, making sure that the thousands of pieces of information that needed to be in BANNER got there. Bev also checked the entered data for accuracy, helped train new data entry staff, and answered questions regarding procedures and BANNER navigation.

Deborah Sutorius, Human Resources Administrative Assistant Deb's contribution to the BANNER migration was twofold. Not only was she responsible for keeping parts of the old HRS system up and running (don't forget that until December 29th, HR was essentially doing their jobs in two separate systems), she also spearheaded a massive data

entry project, entering hundreds of positions, benefits, deductions, insurance details, and other records into the BANNER system. In addition, she checked all electronically converted information for accuracy, making sure that the data that came from HRS translated correctly into BANNER. Deb also helped train the temporary data entry staff and became a resource for questions about procedures and navigation. According to Sandy, "Deb also kept our humor level up with her witty commentary and jokes!"

Sandra Youngeberg-Fox, Human Resources Budget Director As the team leader for the HR/Payroll module, Sandy was the one most responsible for coordinating the entire conversion to BANNER and making sure that the team set goals and met deadlines. Sandy assisted the programmer/analysts in mapping HR data so it could be converted from the old HRS system into BANNER. Perhaps most importantly, Sandy was solely responsible for the weighty job of creating "positions," the entities in BANNER that define the jobs



Sandra Youngeberg-Fox

assigned to employees of the College. This process involved converting massive amounts of information from the old HRS system into new position numbers for BANNER; it

also meant creating a logical process of conversion, using information from the constantly-evolving Finance Chart of Accounts, and assigning appropriate salary budgets to each position. Currently, Sandy continues to work on the BANNER implementation by assisting in the development of the interface between the HR budgeting process and the BANNER Finance module. ■

Dear OPUS: Frequently Asked Questions

Got questions? We got answers. The most Frequently Asked Questions about BANNER are answered below. FAQs are also accessible from the OPUS web site; send your questions to OPUS@oberlin.edu.

Q: WHY WHY WHY are we changing all the computers?!? The computer system in my office has always worked for us just fine...why go through all this bother to change?

A: An excellent question and probably the most important one to get straight. There are two parts to the answer, one of which has to do with computers in general and the other with Oberlin in particular.

In terms of computers in general, the "Year 2000 problem" makes it critical for the College to overhaul its administrative computing systems before the year 2000. Briefly, the Year 2000 problem means that when the date turns over to January 1, 2000, the vast majority of the world's computers will think that it's actually January 1, 1900. The reason for this misunderstanding is complicated (translation: I don't really understand it either). If you're interested in finding out more about the Year 2000 problem, a good reference is a web site called The Year 2000 Information Center, which provides an in-depth explanation of the problem and the solutions. The site is located at <http://www.year2000.com/>.

In terms of Oberlin College in particular, the truth is that many of our administrative computing systems don't work "just fine." Because every office on campus has a different system, the systems can't communicate with each other. This means that work that could be done only once is being done countless times in separate offices, which wastes time, energy, and money. In many offices, the computer system was developed by a staff member (or even a student) who is long gone, meaning that no one really knows how to fix the system when there's a problem or improve it to meet new needs in the office.

When OPUS is complete, administrative and academic offices will all be using software that will allow our computers to talk to each other. Users will be able to pull information that is entered in one office through to another office, streamlining the process and cutting down on repetitive data entry and reports. Don't get me wrong: OPUS will not allow you to turn on your computer and then sit back and read magazines while it does your work for you. But it will eventually make it easier for you to access information, which hopefully will make you more efficient in your job.

Q: How exactly will the BANNER software get on my machine? Is it like Word or Excel that I just load onto my computer and then I'm done?

A: Well, sort of, but not really. BANNER is software that will, eventually, get loaded onto your computer. In some ways, it will operate like other mouse-driven software that you use: to open it, you'll click on the BANNER menu item, much like you'd click on your Word or Excel menu item (or icon if you're using a PC). BANNER would then open on your machine like any other software. You'll use a mouse to navigate around BANNER, much like in Word or Excel, by clicking in various places on the BANNER screen and entering/retrieving information.

The similarities, however, pretty much stop there, especially

when you take into account how the information you're entering or retrieving in BANNER gets to your computer. If you're working in Excel, for example, all the data you work with is saved on your computer. When you're working in BANNER, however, not one little bit of the information you see on your screen is actually housed in your computer. You can get to it, see it, work with it, change it, enter it, and save it, but at the end of the day, the data that you work with in BANNER lives on another computer. The only BANNER thing that lives permanently on your computer is an Oracle program (Oracle is the database software that the BANNER software runs on, but this is something that only the techie-types have to worry about) that tells your computer how to talk to the information that lives on that other computer. Actually, it lives on two computers. But I digress.

Here's how it works. BANNER is a client/server system, which means that clients (like your computer) retrieve the information by accessing a server, which is a big computer that lives in the Computing Center. BANNER actually lives on two servers, each of which stores a different kind of information. The first server is the database server, which stores the actual data that you enter and retrieve in BANNER. This server is named BRAVO. Whenever you ask BANNER for any sort of data (names, addresses, GPA, graduation year, major, etc.), your computer will pull that data from BRAVO.

The other server is the forms server, where the BANNER forms are housed. The forms server is called OCNS4. The forms are not data; they are the formatted screens that make up the BANNER system. When you ask BANNER to get you to a certain screen (the screen where you can enter addresses into the system, for example), your computer pulls the form from OCNS4.

Although this client/server setup initially may sound extremely complicated, it's what will eventually help the College work more efficiently. Since everyone at Oberlin will be pulling information from (and putting information into) the same place, it will be much easier for offices and individuals to communicate with each other and make more informed decisions.

Q: Who's going to teach me how to use the new system?

A: There are two stages of training on the new system. In the first stage, called "functional training," the OPUS project team members attend training sessions taught by consultants. The consultants come from the vendor of the software the office will use and specialize in that particular piece of the system. Since most of the offices on campus are migrating to BANNER software, most project team members will attend functional training sessions taught by consultants from SCT Corp., the company that makes BANNER.

The project team members (PTMs) are individuals in an office that are already involved in OPUS. This is important, since the PTMs will be responsible for conducting the second stage of training, called "user training." In the user training stage, the PTM goes back to her/his office and trains colleagues on the new system about two months before the office "goes live". The advantage here is that most users will learn the new system from someone who is actually in their office on a day-to-day basis. That means that when you have questions or problems with the new system, there's someone right around the corner or across the hall that can help you out. ■

The end of the dinosaur age: buying new machines for BANNER

For many College offices, OPUS doesn't only mean new software, it means new computers altogether. Some Oberlin offices and departments are working with "dinosaur" machines—computers more than four years old—and these older computers don't have the memory or hard drive capacity to run the BANNER software. As a result, many offices will have to purchase new computers simply to be able to load BANNER on their machines.

"But who's going to pay for all those computers!" you scream. "And how do I know what kind of computer to buy? I've never bought a new computer for the office before! And who's going to set it up and put BANNER on it and teach me how to use it and....!"

In fact, there are already a number of policies and procedures in place that are designed to make purchasing machines for BANNER as hassle-free as possible. Here are the steps to follow in replacing your office's "dinosaurs."

Step One: Determine if you really need a new machine in order to run BANNER.

Making this determination depends on how new the computers in your office are. In order to run the BANNER software on a Macintosh (and have enough room for all the other things you run on your computer), the machine should have 64 megabytes of RAM and a 1 gigabyte hard drive. You should also have the Mac OS 7.5 operating system (or higher) and a 15 to 17 inch monitor.

On a Windows machine, your computer should have 64 megabytes of RAM and a 2 gigabyte hard drive, plus the NT 4.0 platform.

If none of this gobbledygook makes any sense at all to you, e-mail us at OPUS@oberlin.edu. We can help you figure out what you need, or at least get you to someone who can help.

Step Two: Figure out the best time to purchase the new machines.

The timing of your purchases depends on a number of variables. When is your office cutting over to BANNER? When will you and your colleagues begin training? If your office is one of the last to go live on the new system (and some offices won't begin using BANNER until the year 2000), it's best to hold off on buying new machines for BANNER now, although it's never too soon to start planning for your future needs. On the other hand, if your office is scheduled to go live within the next twelve to eighteen months, it's time to start thinking about your desktop machine needs and how to work them into your departmental budget. And if you have questions about the timing of OPUS and when your office is going live, drop us a line at OPUS@oberlin.edu.

Also, keep in mind that the computer industry releases "new and improved" machines about once every six seconds, and as a result, it's

important to time your purchases wisely. You don't want to order sixteen of the latest and greatest machines only to find that the brand new latest and greatest version is coming out the day after they're delivered.

Step Three: Plan ahead so you can factor your purchases into your departmental budget.

Machines for BANNER are principally financed by your office/department's equipment or capital budget. That's why it's so important to start planning purchases now, even if you won't be cutting over for another two years. Assess what your equipment needs are and make that a factor in future budgets.

Step Four: Once you've made the decision to purchase, put a requisition in for the new machines.

This step is very easy. Call Reg Lyman, the Computer Store Manager, to schedule an appointment. He'll help you fill out a requisition form that describes the kind of machines you need and make sure you have the proper account number to charge it to. The Store will then order your computers from the manufacturer.

Once the computers are delivered to the College, Reg will arrange a date and time with you to install the new machines in your office. They'll even have BANNER pre-installed on them so you'll be able to get to work as soon as possible.

When your office is in the planning stages of making computer purchases, keep in mind that the Computer Store's busiest time of year is from early July through mid-October. This is the time when "Back to School" computer purchases for students are in full swing, and delivery and installs of new administrative computers are difficult to schedule. Make sure you're in communication with the Store so you know exactly when you can reasonably expect your new machines.

This is freaking me out! We need all new machines! This will break our budget! But I'm going over to the Computer Store and ordering ten of everything anyway!

Step Five: Don't panic.

If you have any problems, questions, or concerns about the machines you'll need for BANNER, contact us here at OPUS before making any purchase decisions. E-mail OPUS@oberlin.edu or talk to your OPUS project team leader; you don't want to waste time or money on computer purchases that may be unnecessary or inappropriate for your office. ■

...special report

...continued from page 2



Millie Modic, Marcia Miller, and Linda Amburgy gaze lovingly at the first paycheck printed out of BANNER.

volumes of data," she points out. "We also need to add some elements to the BANNER programs that will provide us with the reports we need in a format that is useful to us."

tangible changes

Speaking of useful things, there will be some changes in College business practices now that BANNER is live. The change that will be most apparent to employees will be their new paycheck or direct deposit stub. With the move to BANNER, Payroll now has the ability to print additional information on these documents (for a rundown of the new checks and direct deposit stubs, see page 4 of this issue of *The Score*).

Another BANNER-related change—the updated student payroll procedure—was announced before Winter Shutdown to all staff members that supervise students. The new process involves a revised student time card and eliminates some of the paperwork for offices that employ student workers. Aida Reyes, Assistant Director of Financial Aid and the overseer of the Student Employment Office, notes that "supervisors will find the new process beneficial, since it combines the old time card and time sheet into one form, reducing paperwork and the amount of time supervisors must spend transferring information

from one record to another." Reyes also points out that the new filing procedure (all student timecards will be kept permanently in the Controller's Office) means more secure record-keeping for the College, which will be a plus during the auditing process.

In addition to new student timecards, bi-weekly employees who punch in using timecards have also seen changes as a result of the new system. Beginning in December, those employees began using a new timecard that includes information (such as the employee's BANNER ID number) issued by the BANNER payroll process.

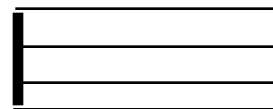
Because of BANNER, department and division heads will also notice a change in the way their budget rosters look—"quite a dramatic difference," according to Youngeberg-Fox. She also notes that the rosters for the OCOPE Executive Board and UAW representatives will also look different; more information about the changes in these rosters will be distributed in the near future.

All in all, the HR/Payroll team is relieved that the last few months have ended with a successful cutover, and anxious to get back to their "real" jobs. It's tax season now, which means there are W-2's to get out and a whole other set of data to check and recheck. With BANNER up and running now, hopefully those tasks become just a bit easier. And with a good deal of the implementation work done, the team might even get a chance to relax every once in a while. "The best feature about the completion of this phase," says Ruth Spencer, "is that after a year my staff will have most of their weekends off again!" ■

calendar of events

- 1/13-15 Finance functional training
- 1/19-22 Student functional training
- 2/16-18 Finance preproduction cutover training
- 2/23-26 Student functional training

The Score



The Score is published on a monthly basis by the Irvin E. Houck Computing Center and the Oberlin Project for Unified Systems.

Editor: Ami Berger

Questions and comments should be directed to:

The Score
Houck Computing Center
Oberlin College
Oberlin, OH 44074
440-775-6643
OPUS@oberlin.edu

<http://www.oberlin.edu/~acs/opus/opushome.htm>