

CSU Reduces Research Faculty's Administrative Burden

Colorado State University (CSU) is recognized as one of the premier research institutions and routinely ranks in the top of North American universities in research expenditures. Like many institutions that are trying to understand the new regulations related to effort reporting, CSU is focused on ensuring compliance while minimizing administrative burden.

Challenge

CSU leaders were struggling with a cumbersome, paper-based system for effort reporting and were looking for a solution that would enhance efficiencies and streamline processes to free up their research administrative staff for more high-value activities.

They worked with Huron to implement the organization's [Employee Compensation Compliance \(ECC\)](#) solution that integrates with financial, payroll and research administration applications to maximize compliance with documentation standards for personnel compensation.

Approach

The approach went beyond a mere technology implementation, incorporating principles of change management to ensure the transformation was sustainable long term. The six-month project involved six phases of execution — planning, designing, configuring and building, testing, training and deploying.

First, the team worked to understand the university's current-state processes for effort certification, identifying barriers and bottlenecks throughout.

Results

In less than a year, CSU realized a number of improvements.

- Reduced its number of certifications per quarter by more than **1,000** (from more than **2,700** to fewer than **1,700**)
- **Decreased** its administrative burden
- Provided **better** financial transparency to the investigators
- Enabled **stronger** internal controls for its office of sponsored programs
- **Mitigated** compliance risks around personnel compensation tracking

Then institutional stakeholders, along with Huron experts, integrated the ECC solution, providing critical quality checks, employee training and expert guidance throughout the duration of the project. As part of the work, CSU also moved to a more future-focused, project-based approach to certification that allowed the institution to support and broaden the efficiencies realized via the ECC technology.