**Project Statement:**
Review current procedures and university policy with the intention of further automating the Banner refunding process by running jobs in a nightly chain.

**Program: Banner Initiatives**

| **Created and submitted by:** Leslie Pinkston | **Date Created:** 11/8/2011 |
| **Process Owners:** | **Date Modified:** 1/12/2012 |
| Michael Ulrich – Accounting Services | **Version:** V_11 |
| Bob Putich – Student Financial Services |
Current Situation

Student Financial Aid refunding is automated by a combination of Banner baseline and Western written processes. Refunding is controlled at the detail code level. These detail codes determine whether a credit transaction in Students Account Receivable is qualified for refund.

A student can also request a refund of their account if they have a credit balance. This is an entirely manual process in which after receiving the request, Student Accounts personnel will review the account and submit the refunding request to Accounting Services. Prior to year end, all credit balances in Student Accounts Receivable will be refunded to clear off all outstanding credit balances.

Student Accounts and Accounting Services joined effort in 2010 and agreed that any refund amount that is equal to or less than $250.00, no manual review is required and the amount will be automatically selected and the refund will be generated and sent to the students. However, this process has not been completely defined yet and some issues remain as to how to accurately select these accounts for refund.

It is a known factor that manual reviewing of student accounts in this process has been in part, due to one banner baseline process not currently being utilized. Implementation of this Banner process will be included in this review.

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Note: This paper is focused on the students refunding process and will not include review of General A/R Refund which has a separate business and system process.

1. Business Processes to Be Reviewed
   a) Western’s current student refund policy. (See Appendix A)
   b) Current Refund schedule; Analyze whether current refund schedules meet the students’ needs, provide best customer service and maximize use of staff members’ time.
   c) Analyze Banner Accounts Receivable and payment jobs and automate current manual refund process. Some examples of these Banner jobs are:
      TGRUNAP - Unapplication of payments or TGRAPPL for application of payment.
      These jobs might replace the manual review and payment application processes
   d) Custom Western Banner jobs to be reviewed and analyzed are; TWPRPOP and TWPLOAD ensure seamless integration and automation of the student refund process.

2. Functional Areas That Will Be Impacted

   Place an “x” in the proper field(s) below to identify the project’s effect on functions and resources as follows:
   Impacted = Project changes will affect these areas
   Resources Required = Resources are required from these areas/departments to complete the project.
   If selecting “All Others”, list the functional area below the table.
### 3. Identify Stakeholders

- Mike Ulrich - Accounting Services
- Bob Putich - Student Financial Services
- Jean Meyer - Student Financial Aid
- Nicole Goodman – BFA Policy Coordinator
- Donna Foley - BFA Business Services – Accounts Payable
- Kurt Willis - Associate Director University Residences Business Information System
- Lise Fitzpatrick – Director EE Admin and Finance

### 4. Identify Team Members

- Leslie Pinkston - Finance Systems Support
- Mike Ulrich - Accounting Services
- Diane Fuller - Accounting Services
- Loa Semrau - Accounting Services
- Sheryl Sparling - Accounting Services
- Bob Putich - Student Financial Services
- Lynn Plancich - Student Financial Services
- Jean Meyer - Student Financial Aid
- Tom Baldridge - Student Financial Aid
- Donna Foley – payment consultant
- Suzie Merrick – Cashier supervisor
- Kurt Willis – University Redidences
- Lise Fitzpatrick – Extended Education

### 5. Relationship to Banner Initiatives Objectives

**Banner Initiatives Objectives**

- Simplify and automate business processes by implementing best-in-class practice
  - Avoid human errors
  - Improve data integrity
  - Reduce process cycle time and unnecessary paperwork and handling
  - Increase productivity and improve accuracy
  - Integrate systems and reduce/eliminate redundancy and shadow systems
- Improve services to campus and boost customer satisfaction
- Improve reporting capabilities on:
  - Management reports
  - State and federal reporting requirements
- Deliver effective training program to all identified end-users across different departments prior to “go-live”
- Provide efficient post implementation support to end-users

Reviewing refunding processes may allow:

- Simplify and automate business processes implementing best-in-class practice by:
  - Reviewing and updating, if necessary, the current university policy for refunding credit balances to students.
  - Run processing jobs during the evening using Banner chain feature, eliminating manual execution of these jobs and free up for more value-added tasks.
  - Improve data integrity by removing the human review process which is always susceptible to human errors.
  - Automation of this refunding process will streamline the current review process which is highly manual and done through two departments - Accounting Services and Student Financial Services.

6. Risk Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evening chains may fail due to password change or when system is down.</td>
<td>Refunding is not completed on time.</td>
<td>Add a program to send exception notification via email to selected stakeholders when chain job fails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain job may need to be run during work hours if the scheduled automation was not functioning.</td>
<td>Staff resources would need to be shifted to run refunding processes next day.</td>
<td>Provide step-by-step work procedure and train the responsible staff to run the job manually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some accounts may be refunded in error due to removal of manual review.</td>
<td>Accounts refunded incorrectly.</td>
<td>Carefully configure the automation of all Banner chain jobs to build in correct selection criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource conflicts within Student Accounts, functional analysts and ADMCS due to competing projects.</td>
<td>Project will be delayed.</td>
<td>Ensure to work closely with business owners and portfolio manager to prioritize and balance workload. Engage temporary help or consultants to complete necessary tasks if it fits with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7. Research
What other banner schools are doing? (See Appendix B).

Contact with the following banner schools:

- Texas A&M, College Station, TX
- University of Oklahoma Norman Campus, Norman, OK
- Higher Education Institution, Lubbock, TX
- Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA

### 8. Process Review Budget
There should be no additional expenses to reviewing the processes and programming a nightly chain.
Appendix A

Authority: RCW28B.15.600

POLICY

Effective Date: November 15, 2006

Approved By: President’s Council

POLU5352.05 ISSUING REFUNDS FOR CREDIT BALANCES ON STUDENT OR GENERAL RECEIVABLE ACCOUNTS

This policy applies to all university departments.

Definitions:

Student Account – the record of charges, payments, and adjustments for each student including student tuition, fees, oncampus housing and certain other campus charges. Every student has a student account. Most financial aid money is directly credited to the student account. Fines, amounts charged as a penalty for a statute or rule violation, are not included in charges to the student account.

General Receivable Account – the record of charges, payments, and adjustments for nonstudent customers. Fines are not included in charges to the account.

Credit Balance – occurs when the total amount of cash payments and credits applied exceeds the charges on a student account.

Best Practices – the use of programs, initiatives or activities that have been shown through research and evaluation to assure high quality results, efficiency, and consistency.

1. Bursar Issues Refunds for Credit Balances on Accounts

The Bursar will refund credit balances resulting from the application of financial aid on students’ accounts within seven days. The Bursar will refund credit balances resulting from other means upon request by the student or at the end of the academic year.

Credit balances on general receivables will be refunded upon request by the Financial Manager of the fund initiating the original charge.

2. Bursar Reviews Refunds Prior to Issuance

Bursar ensures accuracy of refunds and compliance with regulations. The Bursar may assign the review function to an employee(s) other than those initiating and processing the refunds.

3. Bursar Uses Best Practice Methods to Issue Refunds

Best practices used by the Bursar include electronic deposit of the refund into the student’s bank account.
Appendix B

Contact email:

Banner student refunding via TSRRFND
by Leslie Pinkston on 11/15/2011 03:43 PM 12 comments, 101 views
Categories: Accounts Receivable
Hello,

At WWU we are reviewing our refund policy and processes for best practices and I thought maybe the commons would be a good place to start the conversation.

Western is a banner school, running AR version 8.3 and using baseline refunding along with a few western written processes to issue refunds. We are not using Parent Plus refunding as we had already developed a work a round and chose to continue with what we developed. As we revisit how we process refund I thought it wise to come to the commons for input.

Questions:
Is baseline working for your purposes?
Is anyone using customized refunding for their students?
Is anyone running refunding via a chain after hours?

Any tips and tricks would be appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Leslie Pinkston, ITSP
System Support - AR
Western Washington University
Appendix B continued:

Responses:

Texas A&M:

Hi Leslie,

Texas A&M University is also using AR 8.3. We only use TSRRFND for TIV refunds. It works well for that, except that it takes unexpectedly takes a long time to run, and it seems to us it t-pays backwards.

We have created a customized refunding program for the rest of the refunds. All refunding is done after hours using UC4 (formerly AppWorx) process flows.

If you want particulars please contact me directly.

Regards,

Cris

Cris Labyer
EIS Functional Lead - Accounts Receivable
Enterprise Information Systems
Texas A&M University
crisla@tamu.edu

We wait too, but how we do it is different.

We have what we call "Refund Suppress" holds. After TSRRFND has been run in flag mode we have a local process that automatically unflags all the refunds for students who have either refund suppress holds or financial aid holds for aid charged back. Then we allow TSRRFND to post the refunds to the student account. It is those that are reviewed by our staff (which is a smaller number since the student with the refund suppresses or financial aid hold didn't get one). Our staff creates reversals on TSAAREV if necessary. The next TGRFEED will pick up all the refund entries for GURAPAY (including any reversals), so that when we create the files to send to the bank we send the net of the refund.

I should note that we do not have Banner Finance. I don't how our model would work with that.
Appendix B continued:

University of Oklahoma Norman Campus:

We run tsrcibl nightly as part of an appworx chain. It does everything expect for running tsrcibl in second time in USB mode. We like to look at the results before pushing the "go" button.

We run TGRUNAP and TGRAPPL as part of our nightly chain, along with tsrcibl in appplycred mode, sfrfasc, etc. We also have a script that is run that will create a population selection of accounts that are eligible for automatic refunding. We exclude accounts that are in collection, are paid by contract, etc. from auto refunding. These are put to a report that is reviewed to determine if the refund should be created to the student, a third party, or held until we can meet with the student (collections).

Our Customer service people review TSARFND for “weird” stuff. Stuff that just doesn’t look right - for example an excessively large refund amount. It’s rarely checked on an account by account basis as we have several hundred refunds during slow periods and thousands in the busy periods. I’ve always been a fan of exception auditing. That is, if the refund is a small amount, let it go. If it’s $10,000 we might need to take a look at it. I don’t think we spend more than 10 minutes scanning to list before sending it along to operations to generate the actual refunds.

Eventually, I would like to get us to the point where we can do 100% automatic (run in fnd mode overnight), but we still have some minor kinks to work out in our application of payments settings.

Sara
Appendix B continued:

Higher Education Institution, Lubbock, TX:

We do not find baseline sufficient. We have actually created a script to detect refund anomalies. The script creates a report of students to review and pulls the students out of the refunding process (basically unchecks them on TSAACCT).

After TSRRFND runs in flag update, the refund update script checks for:
-- student has a hold
-- student is deceased
-- student is not enrolled
-- student does not have a valid address
-- student has balance within same aid year
-- student has balance on previous term not within same aid year
-- student has a refund on a credit card which may require reversing entries on the previous credit card transaction
-- no address on parent plus loan
-- students flagged with special billing situations
-- refund is on exemption
-- refund is > $10k
-- student has state hold
-- student has TIV refund which has been on their account < 7 days, but do not have ACH setup (We offer these students the OPPORTUNITY to utilize electronic services to get their refund FASTER!)

THEN, we apply non-resident- alien tax on any applicable refund

AND FINALLY we run TSRRFND refund/update

We process ~10 terms between our main campus and our health sciences campus for each trimester. We are have 38k students for the 10 terms
Appendix B continued:

Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA

We have something much like Christy. We’ve set up a nightly job that does the following:
1. Runs TGRAPPL / TGRUNAP / TGRAPPL
2. checks to make sure TGRAPPL ran and kills the job if it didn’t
3. Builds a pop sel of “clean” credits by evaluating and excluding the following groups:
   a. All credit is for a future term (CE mostly)
   b. AR SOAHOLDS exist (we’ve developed a number of SOAHOLD for different situations specifically to prevent checks from being automatically cut.)
   c. Student has a deli code
   d. credit is from a credit card payment - those are done by refunding the card instead
   e. student is not enrolled at least half time for their level
   f. student has requested WA state funds to be provided to them directly instead of applied to the account balance
   g. there is no current active address (checks won’t out)
4. The “Clean” students are put in a pop sel and then TSRRFND is run in flag mode and then again immediately in refund mode.
5. The refunding cashier session is finalized and TGRFEED run
6. TGRAPPL is run again
7. lists of the “unclean” students (all the categories listed above) are sent to AR staff to review and flag / do manual transactions as needed.

We also have all detail codes set up as refundable.

If you will be coming to the Symposium at PLU in January, we can chat!