



# BUSINESS AFFAIRS

# NEWSLETTER

June 2024

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## EMPLOYEE *Spotlight*

Meet Karina Palma, our featured employee this quarter!



**Karina Palma**  
Financial Analyst II  
**Accounting Services**

## DEPARTMENTS:

- Accounting Services
- Budget Office
- Contracts and Grants Accounting
- Finance Systems Management
- General Services
- Payment Services
- Purchasing Office
- Student Business Services



# EMPLOYEE

# Spotlight

**What is your role at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso?**

As a Financial Analyst II for the Accounting Services department, I am responsible for reviewing and analyzing financial activity under state funding to ensure accuracy and conformance to governing regulations.

**Before working at TTUHSC El Paso, what was the most unusual or interesting job you've ever had?**

Before becoming a part of the TTUHSC El Paso family, I worked for an advertising agency as a social media manager for a coffee business. I had the opportunity to travel and learn the coffee process from their farm in Puerto Rico to the coffee shops in NYC and the distribution internationally. I learned to make coffee, and I was part of fairs in places like San Juan and Maricao, Puerto Rico, Miami, NYC, Montreal Canada and Chicago. It was a great personal and professional experience for me.

**What do you love most about your job?**

What I love most about my job is that I can learn from people who are very knowledgeable and committed to their roles. I appreciate working in a friendly environment where we all respect and value one another.

**What do you enjoy doing outside of work?**

In my free time, I enjoy reading and taking long walks with my dogs.

**What is one thing you can't live without?**

The one thing in my life I can't live without is my baby dog! Her name is "Pia." She will be 6 this June, and she is the most important thing in the world to me.

**What is a dream that you want to make come true one day?**

My dream is to live in London. I had the opportunity to visit a couple of times, and it is an amazing city where there is a lot of exciting things to do.

**What do you think is the most important skill that a successful professional needs to have?**

I believe that to be a successful professional, the most important skill you can have is your determination. Set your mind to believe you can achieve something, and you will!

**What are some of your favorite travel/vacation memories?**

My most recent trip was to Japan. It has been the most special one by far! The food was great and the scenery was amazing.

**What are some of your favorite local spots to visit?**

This little pizza place on Piedras, the 1/8 Pizza Pub, is very cozy and romantic; perfect for an intimate dinner with a loved one. I also love getting my favorite coffee, the Mazapan Latte, at Coffee Box near San Jacinto Plaza. It has a patio where you can enjoy the view of the park.



*Thank you, Karina!*

## INTERNAL CONTROLS:

**Internal controls** are processes designed to ensure financial information is reliable, accurate, and complies with policies and procedures, as well as promote effectiveness and efficiency. This includes **Segregation of Duties**, which is intended to minimize errors and/or fraud by segregating duties and tasks over the lifespan of a transaction among different individuals.

### Duties that need to be segregated are:

- Recording transaction
- Approving transaction
- Custody of asset
- Reconciling of activity

### Examples of Segregation of Duties:

- Individual who submits requisitions should not approve the purchases.
- Individual who approves purchases should not reconcile financial reports.
- Individual who reconciles bank statements should not deposit cash.

### Why is this important?

It reduces the risk of errors and/or wrongful actions. Any and all errors should have an opportunity to be discovered by another individual at some point in the transaction lifespan. Segregation of Duties is one of the most important internal controls to implement in your procedures.

### How to implement?

This will ensure effective internal controls and will create a system of checks and balances.

- Ensure no individual has access to initiate, approve, and record a transaction.
- Ensure adequate and periodic reconciliations are conducted.
- Document internal policies and procedures and personnel assigned to specific tasks.
- If there is not enough personnel, cross-train and rotate tasks periodically.

# FUND MANAGER RESONSIBILITY:

Per **HSCEP OP 50.03**, fund managers are responsible for financial and operational management of their funds.

Please ensure the following reviews and analyses are routinely completed:

- Ensure budget is sufficient for all planned expenses and on Budget Account Codes (BAC) commonly or routinely used for fund(s).

## **Cognos > HSC El Paso Finance > Finances Relative to Budget > Budget Account Code Summary**

- Ensure compliance with fund restrictions. Student fees, THECB grants, SEED grants, etc., all have particular purposes and/or restrictions.
- Ensure open encumbrances are not duplicated and are still needed; especially aging encumbrances greater than 1 year.

### **Please review all open encumbrances and identify the following:**

- 1) For open encumbrances with no payment activity, please confirm the following:
  - Have all goods/services been received?
    - If yes, please complete a receipt in TechBuy.
  - Have all invoices been received?
    - If no, please contact the vendor to ensure all invoices are being sent to Accounts Payable El Paso.
- 2) For encumbrances that have been paid in full and have a zero balance, please submit a PO/Encumbrance Change Request to close PO.
- 3) If you have an encumbrance balance and all items have been fully received, invoiced, and paid for; please submit a PO/Encumbrances Change Request to release the remaining funds.
- 4) If you have an encumbrance balance and no future deliveries/services are expected, please submit a PO/Encumbrance Change Request to close PO.

## **Cognos > El Paso Finance > Essential Finance Reports > Open Encumbrances Outstanding**

- Ensure fund balances remain positive by analyzing expenses and open encumbrances against current balances and expected revenues/transfer ins.

**Cognos > HSC El Paso Finance > Fund Balance > Statement of Changes in Fund Balances**

Failure to comply with HSCEP OP 50.03 could result in removal of fund manager designation. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at [accountingelp@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:accountingelp@ttuhsc.edu).



Accounting Services would like to welcome **Gabriel Ramirez de la Torre** to the team. Gabriel will oversee General Designated, Indirect Cost Recovery, and Student Fee funds.

**We're happy to have you on board!**

**REMINDER**

Upon request, copies of checks issued to vendors or for patient refunds can be provided to the departments for up to seven years.

Please keep in mind that copies are only available for checks that have already cleared the bank and can be requested by emailing us at [accountingelp@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:accountingelp@ttuhsc.edu).



**CONGRATULATIONS**

**YAY!**



Congratulations to **Karina Rodriguez** for her promotion to Associate Managing Director in Accounting Services. Karina will be taking charge of financial reporting for the institution.

Congratulations to **Norma Felix** for her promotion to Associate Managing Director in Contracts and Grants Accounting.



# BUDGET OFFICE:

# VINCE LANTICAN, DIRECTOR

As departments finalize their **FY25 Budgets**, please ensure the following has been addressed:

- Merits for eligible staff have been entered in salary planner and that total merits are within your allotted merit pool.
- Sufficient fringe and longevity budgets have been entered on local funds.
- Sufficient longevity budgets have been entered on state funds.
- When using endowments to fund salaries, please review **HSCEP OP 02.08** for guidelines and required approvals.
- Student fee budgets have been updated to reflect new fees or increases in rates and enrollment.
- Budget templates have been sent to the Budget Office.
- PASS requests are entered in the system by the **June 7** deadline.

As we approach the last quarter of the current fiscal year, please note available budgets on non-salary budget account codes on state funds will be swept starting in July. Please plan accordingly to ensure funds are encumbered for purchase orders in a timely manner.

All budget related questions should be directed to [budgetelp@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:budgetelp@ttuhsc.edu).



Contracts and Grants Accounting would like to congratulate **Susan Stanchos** for her promotion to Chief Analyst.

YAY!



Contracts and Grants Accounting would like to welcome **Daniela Gutierrez** to the team. She will be overseeing private funds, including gifts, and clinical trials.

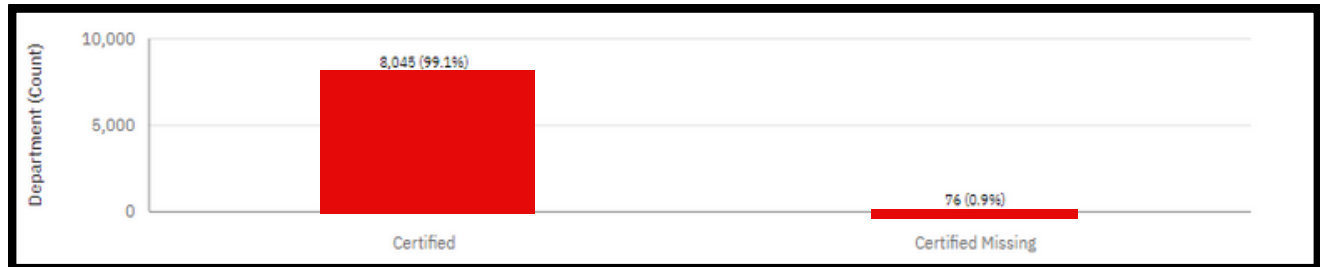
## Year-End Reminders:

- Review the activity on the fund throughout the project period to ensure expenses comply with the sponsoring agency and TTUHSC El Paso policies and guidelines. Refer to [\*\*HSCEP OP 65.03\*\*](#).
- Check if open encumbrances are still valid. If the open encumbrances are not valid, submit a request to close them through the [\*\*PO/Encumbrance Change Request System\*\*](#). Remember that the services or goods must be received before the sponsored program end date for them to be an allowable expense.
- Make sure that the labor has been allocated to the grant or contract. If labor is pending, submit labor redistributions through the [\*\*Labor Redistribution System\*\*](#). Labor redistributions for prior fiscal years will **not** be processed in the following fiscal years; therefore, it is important to review if all the labor has been allocated to a sponsored program.
- Fund managers of sponsored programs and departmental effort coordinators should periodically review the effort allocated to restricted funds AND cost share funds. This review can be accomplished by reviewing available Cognos reports, such as the Payroll History report and the Payroll Distribution report, and reviewing the effort statements compiled throughout each quarter in [\*\*eCrt\*\*](#).
- If a grant or contract is ending by fiscal year-end and it will get extended or a no-cost extension will be requested, now is the time to start working on getting an amendment.

For questions, contact us at [\*\*grantsaccountingelp@ttuhsc.edu\*\*](mailto:grantsaccountingelp@ttuhsc.edu).

## Property Management:

Property Inventory Certification for FY24 has been officially finalized! Thank you for everyone's dedication in efficiently completing this task on time. Here are the final figures for this year's certification:



To those departments that reported missing assets, please continue efforts to locate them. Safekeeping inventory is a continuous responsibility. Per **HSCEP OP 63.10**, departments that reported missing assets during certification will receive a follow-up meeting within a six-month timeframe to verify if any of the equipment reported missing has been found.

Regular audits and checks should be conducted to ensure that all items are accounted for and in their designated locations. This involves updating locations and recording serial numbers and locations for any new assets in the **Property Management System**.

Our goal is to foster a culture of responsibility and transparency, ensuring that all assets are managed efficiently and effectively. Thank you for your cooperation and diligence in this matter.

Please note, a **new surplus process** for computing devices has been created. Visit the **link** to get more information on the new proces.

If you have any questions, please contact Property Management at **baelp-asset.accounting@ttuhsc.edu**.



## TRENDING TOPICS IN CHROME RIVER!



### Pre-Travel Reminders

Travelers should ensure that travel expenses are the most cost-effective considering all relevant circumstances regardless of funding source. Travelers must use the federal **per diem rates** provided by the U.S. General Services Administration for both in-state and out-of-state travel.

To ensure that your department has enough budget upon your return from the trip, it is important to estimate your expenses. Remember to include the lodging taxes under the **Miscellaneous Expense** tile.

### Expense Report Reminders

- **Report Name**, when creating a Pre-Approval and Expense Report name for employees, be sure to use the following naming convention: TE. Last Name, First Initial, Destination City, State, Start Date of Trip.

- **Travel Dates** must reflect when the traveler departs and returns to headquarters.
- **Business Purpose** must be a detailed description for the trip that affirms the travel is related to TTUHSC El Paso business. Do not use acronyms.
- **Non-employees** including students, do not have access to Chrome River to provide approval for travel reports submitted on their behalf. After submitting an expense report for a non-employee, the delegate must submit a Non-Employee Signature form to obtain the electronic approval from the traveler. Travel reports that are awaiting electronic approval from a non-employee will reflect a status of PENDING>EXTERNAL APPROVER. Once the form is submitted by the delegate and completed by the non-employee, the report will continue to route.
- **Agenda or Brochure** must be attached to confirm the travel dates of the conference/meeting along with the location.

# TRENDING TOPICS IN CHROME RIVER!

- **Receipts** must be itemized and show proof of payment.
- **Additional Information or Documentation** may be requested from the traveler at the time of review.

## Reports with No Reimbursement

If submitting an expense report with a net zero reimbursement to the traveler, send an email to [travelep@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:travelep@ttuhsc.edu) informing them that a zero-dollar report has been submitted. The report will remain in the External Approver queue unless you notify the travel office. These reports do not require approval from the traveler. The travel office will reassign the report so that it moves to the next approver in the queue.





## TRAVEL CALCULATOR

Payment Services would like to introduce the **Meal Calculator**! The Meal Calculator will assist to calculate the traveler's reimbursable amount for meal receipts that include non-reimbursable items and/or tips greater than twenty percent. When using the Meal Calculator, attach a screenshot of your results with the corresponding meal receipt to support the reimbursable amount determined.

The Meal Calculator can be found on the Payment Services website under **Helpful Links**.

Home > Finance & Administration > Business Affairs > Payment Services > Helpful Links

## Travel Links

- [Chrome River Expense Management System](#) 
- [Travel Reimbursement System](#) 
- [National Travel Systems \(NTS\)](#) 
- [Travel Meal Calculator](#)  ←

## PURCHASING YEAR-END GUIDELINES:

Please see link for [Year-End Purchasing Guidelines](#).

A few key details to remember:

- All FY25 orders must have an accounting date of Sept. 1, 2024, or later.
- No TechBuy Punch-Out orders using FY25 funding may be entered/submitted prior to Sept. 1, 2024.

Please contact TTUHSC El Paso Purchasing with any questions at [purchasingelp@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:purchasingelp@ttuhsc.edu).

### Requisition requirements for TTUHSC El Paso artwork:

- Artwork - TTUHSC El Paso artwork (Seal, Double T, etc.) is to be attached to requisitions when being printed on items (promotional items, lab coats, etc).
- Must be routed to Marketing and Communications for review and approval (**File must be labeled as ARTWORK and/or PROOF and must be in PDF Format**).



TTUHSC EL PASO

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso

### Non-Compliant Purchases:

The ordering of goods or services prior to the issuance of a purchase order is considered an obligation without authority. Purchase orders should only be distributed to the vendor by the Purchasing Department. No employee, except those who have express delegated authority to do so, may sign a letter of intent, agreement or contract.

Please review [HSCEP OP 72.01, Purchasing Supplies, Equipment and Services](#), for further guidance or contact the Purchasing Department at [purchasingelp@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:purchasingelp@ttuhsc.edu) for any questions.

# PURCHASING TRAINING:

TechBuy training will now be available the second Wednesday of every month. In order to comply with the training requirements, set forth in Texas Education Code §51.9337(b)(5) and Chapter 07 of the Texas Tech University System Regents' Rules, employees are required to complete this training on the use of appropriate procurement methods and information resources procurement technologies.

This course is required for all faculty, staff members, and student employees (collectively "employees") who exercise purchasing or contracting authority on behalf of the University. This includes those with the status of financial manager, approver, requestor, and those individuals with shopper permissions in TechBuy; any employee authorized by Regents' Rules to make decisions on a contract; or any employee with authority to use a PCard.

Please email [purchasingelp@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:purchasingelp@ttuhsc.edu) if you have any questions about this training.

YAY!



Purchasing would like to congratulate **Ivan Mena Saavedra** on his promotion to Financial Analyst II.

## FUND MANAGER TOOLKIT:

If you're new to the subject matter or need a refresher, check out the following links for an introduction to the fundamentals. For those seeking to stay up-to-date with the latest developments, these resources are also an excellent reference.

- [Fund Manager Responsibilities](#)
- [Understanding Fund, Account, Organization, and Program Code Structure](#)
- [Finance Forms and Systems Applications](#)
- [Cognos Training - Essential Finance Reports](#)

## CASH COLLECTION POINTS:

### **Attention: All non-clinic cash collection points**

As of Monday, June 3, the cash/check deposit location has relocated from the first floor of the Clinical Sciences Building to the second floor, Internal Medicine Clinic, room A200A.

All currency and coins should be dropped off in a secured deposit bag. Place all contents, currency/coins and cash receipt report, inside the bag. Tear off the receipt and keep with your department's records. Peel the liner off the adhesive strip and seal the bag. Confirm that the bag is sealed shut.

The outside of the bag should include the following information:

- From: Department name
- Authorized Signature: Deposit preparer
- Date: Current date
- Account #: Bank code, i.e., Bank 80
- Cash: Total deposit amount

Check deposits can be dropped off in a manila envelope. Include the cash receipt report inside the envelope along with the check(s), and be sure the back of each check is endorsed with the TTUHSC El Paso endorsement stamp.

The Internal Medicine attendant will log the receipt of your deposit. The depositing department is responsible for ensuring that each deposit is logged prior to leaving the deposit location.



Student Business Services will provide an initial supply of deposit bags and manila envelopes to all non-clinic cash collection points. Please coordinate with **Erica Reyes** to receive this initial supply. Each department will need to procure their own supply of deposit bags once this initial supply is depleted. You can order directly from **Staples** using **item number 818848**.

For questions or concerns, contact Student Business Services at 215-5680 or email **cashreceiptsel@ttuhsc.edu**.

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latest Business Affairs  
news!



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