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Contact Us

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TO: Executive Committee Members, Assistant Vice Presidents, Chairs, Directors, Department Heads, Assistants to the Deans, and Vice Presidents, and Departmental Administrators

FROM: Andrea M. Marks, MBA, CPA
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

SUBJECT: Travel Agency Contract Enhancement

Business Affairs is pleased to introduce **Concur**, an online travel booking tool which a traveler (or his/her travel arranger) can use to research and book flights, reserve rental cars, and make hotel reservations. Concur is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, using one's desktop browser. There is also a mobile version of Concur for smartphones and tablets. Concur stores the traveler's profile and travel preferences which are automatically applied at the time travel reservations are made. Concur also stores travel itineraries, trip history, and electronic receipts.

Concur will be used by employees for official university-paid business travel (UPT). Any employee who travels (or is anticipated to travel) on university business *outside* of the employee's headquarters city will need to create a Concur account and profile. Concur will also be used by employees who routinely make travel arrangements for another employee(s), and as such, these employees also need to create a Concur account and profile.

Concur will be used for **domestic travel only**. Due to its complexities, international travel arrangements cannot be completed in Concur and will still require the assistance of the university's contract travel agencies, Corporate Travel Planners and Anthony Travel.

On Monday, March 3, 2014, university-wide registration for Concur begins. We have already piloted Concur in 20 university departments. In addition, Concur is already in use by many of the UT components and will eventually be used system-wide.

Corporate Travel Planners will be providing four live overviews of Concur. Employees who routinely deal with travel, either as travel arrangers or in an administrative capacity, will benefit greatly from attending one of the live overviews, or viewing a videotaped presentation when it becomes available.

LIVE OVERVIEWS OF CONCUR TRAVEL

- **March 5, 2014**

Location: Dental School Rm. 4.434T

Session 1: 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Session 2: 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

- **March 11, 2014**

Location: Dental School Rm. 1.284T

Session 1: 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Session 2: 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Prior to attending a live overview, employees are strongly encouraged to review the FAQs and job aids on our [university's dedicated webpage](#) on a site hosted by Corporate Travel Planners.

To register for Concur, employees should begin with the *Concur Quick Start Guide*. This guide is also available on our university's dedicated webpage. Employees should complete their Concur registration and set up their Concur profile as soon as possible. Registering and setting up one's profile in Concur takes just a few minutes. If an employee has an extensive number of frequent flier/traveler programs, these do not have to be set up when initially creating a travel profile. Employees can start by creating a basic profile and then revise it at their convenience, as often as needed. Naturally, the profile should be completed in its entirety prior to an employee's next trip.

One important change in the university's business process for travel relates to submission of the travel requisition to the travel agency. Travel bookings in Concur happen in real time without any intervention from a travel agency. So, when travel is booked in Concur, there is no need to send an approved travel requisition to the travel agency. In addition, Concur does not require an approved travel requisition to either hold airfare reservations, or to complete a booking. This makes Concur hugely advantageous when the traveler (or his assistant) need to take advantage of a time-sensitive, low cost airfare.

An employee's *authorization to travel* is still accomplished by completing a travel requisition in PeopleSoft Financials and submitting it for approval. There is no approval required in Concur; however, to complete a booking, Concur does require entering the traveler's department ID, the PeopleSoft requisition number, and the project ID used on the travel requisition. This is needed to ensure that the cost of the travel can be charged to the correct department and project ID. Additional transitional considerations for departments are discussed in the [Concur FAQs](#).

REVISED EXCEPTION TO MANDATORY USE OF CONTRACT TRAVEL AGENCIES

In general, UT System mandates use of the contract travel agencies for airfare purchases. Several exceptions to this general rule were outlined in [Business Affairs Bulletin 05-2013](#). One of these exceptions required that airfare purchased from an alternative source must be at least \$100 cheaper than a comparable fare available through a UT approved travel agency. Effective March 1, 2014, an exception will be allowed if the traveler can find a fare from an alternative source that is *less than or equal to* the cost of a comparable fare found in Concur (or obtained from one of the UT contracted travel agencies). Before purchasing the ticket from an alternative source, the traveler (or travel arranger) should seek advance approval from the department approver for the travel requisition.

The remaining exceptions outlined in [Business Affairs Bulletin 05-2013](#) still apply. They are: (1) Unplanned emergency situations that cannot be foreseen; (2) The traveler has access to meeting/conference rates or discounts that cannot be accessed by the approved UT travel agencies or Concur; and (3) The traveler's airfare is paid for by a third party.

Bear in mind that when the department does not use the UT approved travel agencies or Concur for booking travel, the travel agencies cannot provide customer support for the purchase. In addition, the traveler must pay up front for the airfare and wait until returning from the trip to be reimbursed. In addition, the department will be required to substantiate the alternative airfare purchase with documentation. The alternative airfare must be compared with a substantially identical fare found in Concur (or obtained from a contract travel agency). The fares being compared must be for the same travel dates, route, and booking class.

To document an alternative airfare purchase, obtain a *written* quote from the alternative source (usually via email). Then, obtain a quote from Concur, or from the university's travel agencies. Concur will email an airfare quote to the traveler (or to a travel assistant). Either of the UT approved travel agencies can also email. The date on the emailed quotes will be used to substantiate that the quotes were obtained on the same date. The quotes received should be attached to the travel voucher that the department prepares to request the traveler's reimbursement for the airfare and related travel expenses.

Please note that the UT approved travel agencies will provide airfare quotes for travel dates in the future at no cost; neither Concur nor the travel agencies can provide airfare quotes for past dates.