DATE: July 3, 2012
TO: UWRF campus
FROM: Elizabeth Frueh
   Assistant Chancellor for Business and Finance
SUBJECT: UW Travel Management and Operations

2011 Wisconsin Act 32 provided the UW Board of Regents with the ability to design a System-wide travel program, effective July 1, 2013, that best meets the needs of higher education business travel. This memo is being sent to inform all faculty and staff of travel changes being made and why these changes are necessary.

To begin developing a System-wide travel program, program goals, objectives, and scope were defined and vetted with executive institutional management. A Travel Management & Operations Committee (TMOC) and a Travel Executive Committee, comprised of representatives from across the UW System, were appointed. These committees are dedicated to developing, implementing, and maintaining travel policies that are simple, consistent, and coherent while at the same time meeting Internal Revenue Service regulatory requirements for employer-paid travel.

To meet these goals, the following high level initiatives were defined and approved by the Executive Committee, and are now in development:

- Implement discount agreements with major airlines and other travel service suppliers, to assist the UW System in reducing travel costs and increasing services for travelers.
- Take advantage of emerging technology for reporting, invoicing, and receipting.
- Improve and increase use of institutional payment methods, thereby reducing employee, student, and guest out-of-pocket expenses.
- Simplify travel policies by reducing the levels of documentation, approvals, and reviews.
- Automate business rules to simplify process requirements, including reimbursements.
- Develop an adequate per diem plan, or other travel rate structure, and a routine review process to ensure rates continue to adequately cover expenses incurred by business travelers.
- Develop a separate rate structure, policies, and business processes to adequately handle costs related to hospitality and UW-sponsored events.

In order to create a successful System-wide travel program, a balance needs to be achieved between meeting the needs of those who travel on university-paid business and containing travel costs. By consolidating System-wide volume, the UW System can leverage the approximately $90 million spent on travel annually, including $25 million on airfare alone. Both the airline and lodging industries require a consolidation of booking channels and travel processes in order to access discount programs and services. Raising travel-related rates, such as lodging and meal rates, will increase the amount the UW System spends on travel. This increase needs to be offset by cost containment measures. This can be accomplished by leveraging the combined spend of all UW institutions to obtain supplier discounts and fee reductions.

While our travel flexibilities do not take effect until July 2013, we have the opportunity to implement airline discount agreements prior to that time. Improvements will be made to airfare policies and business processes over the course of two phases. Phase 1 changes will be implemented next month with a re-
launch of an improved Concur (formerly Cliqbook) self-booking tool and implementation of airline discount agreements. In Phase 2, which is expected to occur after July 1, 2013, we will increase the number of tools and travel agency services in order to better address the unique needs of all UW business travelers.

**Phase 1 – Beginning July 2012**

The UW System's use of Concur for booking online airfares is mandated through the Wisconsin Department of Administration's contract with Fox World Travel until June 30, 2013. Since this one tool does not meet all UW travel needs, we will look to expand options for booking airfare in Phase 2. However, in Phase 1, in order to better meet the needs of UW travelers, changes are being made to Concur's configuration, the airfare policy, and support services.

Those who book domestic airfare via the internet should not experience difficulties finding suitable fares with Concur. Changes are currently being made to Concur to make it more user-friendly and simplify the booking process. Changes include expanding the search functionality to allow priority and visibility for those airlines that the UW System has discount agreements with, increase the number of flights presented for consideration, and more easily identify direct flight options.

Service fees associated with the use of Concur and Fox World Travel are in line with the industry and our higher education peers. These fees provide a number of advantages for travelers, including the ability to change or cancel flights within 24 hours of booking without an airline fee along with ticket refund protection.

**Changes to Policy and Business Process**

Changes are also being made to air travel policy and business process. Policy changes include a more reasonable and measurable definition of "lowest available airfare" as non-refundable, coach class. This simplifies requirements when booking airfare since price changes many times a day based on supply and demand. While the revised air policy does not mandate the purchase of airfare in Concur, the new policy clearly outlines the expectation to compare fares in Concur for individual, domestic airfare before searching for airfare on another internet site. Travelers may purchase from another internet site when the same flight is found elsewhere for at least $100 less than Concur. Booking through Concur is the preferred method because UW System’s airline discount agreements are tied directly to Concur volume. For those already using Concur, no cost comparisons are necessary.

**Concur Training, Support, and Communication**

Two new websites are provided to help communicate all changes made to the UW System’s travel program. The Travel Management & Operations Committee website [http://web.uwsa.edu/travelmanagement/](http://web.uwsa.edu/travelmanagement/) contains information on the new travel program’s development including ability to provide continual feedback the System-wide travel program initiatives. There is also a new System-wide travel portal that when complete, will be a one-stop shop for traveler resources including industry information, discount agreements and contracts, policies, and new business processes. The travel website launch will be announced shortly. It is important to note that both websites are protected and will require all employees to log in with their University credentials (the same user name and password used to obtain your payroll information).

**Phase 2 – For implementation after July 1, 2013**

A sub-committee made up of subject matter experts from across the UW System will be created in order to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP). The purpose of the RFP is to contract with travel agencies that can provide services and self-booking tools that meet the service needs of University travelers and support the overall goals of the University's business travel program. The TMOC is currently looking for volunteers to get involved in this process.

Please send your communications and feedback on the UW System’s travel program initiatives to [uwtravelprogram@uwsa.edu](mailto:uwtravelprogram@uwsa.edu). Thank you for your support.