Report on travelVU

Tony Grayson, Director of Financial Systems Planning, recently made a presentation about travelVU to the Staff Life Committee. The following statements are a summary of his presentation. More details about travelVU are available on the following website.

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/travel/

travelVU was first announced in October 2011 and has three components.

1) Rolling out during the summer of 2012, all travel authorization forms including: expense reports, prepayments, and cash advances, will be converted into a web-based electronic workflow. The workflow in this instance, as envisioned, would begin with someone being approved for travel, including the specification of the cost center(s) to be charged. When anyone returns from a trip, they can scan their receipts and attach them to their expense report and submit it. Once submitted, it will go through an electronic workflow for approvals and final processing.

Reimbursements will follow the same path as your paycheck's automatic deposit. Only 5-6% of all employees do not use automatic deposit of their paychecks, and those employees are being approached about switching to automatic deposit.

On a side note, there is also a plan to provide automatic deposit on all check requests.

2) Vanderbilt's Travel Portal has been revamped.

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/travel

3) Vanderbilt has contracted with Frosch Travel, based in Houston, Texas, essentially consolidating contracts for seven agencies into one. For instance, Expedia had no one to support our travelers when they needed assistance while on travel. Frosch offers 24/7 support on all types of travel. Northwestern University is also a customer of Frosch.

The following information was copied from Frosch’s business cards that Tony distributed during our meeting.

Frosch / travelVU
Dedicated Agent Team
Toll Free: 866-841-3834
vanderbilt@frosch.com
Hours: 8:00AM - 5:30PM CST
Monday - Friday

After-Hours Service
Toll Free: 866-841-3834
615-463-4115 (college from outside the US)
Access code: Sabre N1PG
www.frosch.com/vanderbilt

Lost Pcard: Call US Bank 800-344-5696

Groups & Meetings:
vugroups@frosch.com
866-961-6752

Dedicated Leisure Agents:
vuleisure@frosch.com
877-830-5713

As an enticement for people to use Frosch, all booking fees are being paid by VU Office of Finance for the foreseeable future according to Vice Chancellor Brett Sweet.

For help, you can contact a live agent 24/7 or you can use the online booking website, which is hosted by Reardon Commerce. They have access to Southwest's deep discount flights, and they use VUnet ID and e-password for authentication. You can book travel for anyone through this interface, including people with no Vanderbilt affiliation, e.g., visiting scholars, prospective hires, etc.

Will there be reimbursements for early bird Southwest flights? That is under heavy consideration.

If we are using grant money for a trip, can we follow our own local rules while using this website? Yes, but all general Vanderbilt rules apply and cannot be superseded by local policy, e.g., you cannot be reimbursed for alcohol if you are charging the trip expenses to a grant.


The government says that a per diem is allowed on grants, but it must be consistent with the University's approach.

Why doesn't Vanderbilt do this? We don't want to be abused. For example, recently someone submitted an expense report that included $25 for every meal, for a total of $600 for meals on this trip. We returned the expense report and ask that they resubmit with correct amounts. When it was resubmitted, the total for meals was a more reasonable $175.

How will this system help us in managing student travel? Call Frosch for travel arrangements. Managing the expenses is complicated. Contact Tony’s office if you have a special case.

Student debaters often travel on their coach's personal credit card. A separate form must be completed for each student. This is very time consuming. The Travel Office is working on these
sorts of special needs and working with the Pcard office. They are seeking a smart solution. One option they are considering is reloadable VISA cards.

Vice Chancellor Williams frequently has to change his travel plans several times each day, including while he is away on a trip. Can Frosch handle this real time need? Probably not. You don't have to use Frosch. They may not make sense for our high mileage travelers. Typically, the airlines will offer better deals directly to their premium customers than agencies like Frosch can provide. In general, Frosch can handle most of our travel needs.

Tony Grayson is spreading the news via continuing education about Frosch.

Frosch has a low fare guaranteed. They will match the lowest fare you find.

So, all travel needs can be handled online? Yes and no. Invoices must be sent to VU and must be for business travel only. You may use Frosch for personal travel, but you will pay the booking fees, typically $20 per order.

Does this new system provide any efficiencies in completing travel expense reports?
- You can use a delegate to complete your forms.
- If you use a Pcard and associate a travel budget number, then your expenses will appear in your expense report automatically.
- The designated approver can go online anywhere at any time to approve. This is much faster with no more waiting for someone to return to his/her office to approve.
- Email notifications will be sent to the designees.
- Eventually, you will be able to pay vendors online.