Nomination for the President's Staff Innovation Award:

Team:
- Amy Conger, Director of International Programs, College of Engineering
- Stacie Edington, Honors and Engagement Program Officer, College of Engineering
- Lisa Emery, Product Manager, Information Technology Services
- Lynn Lyke-Whiting, ERP Business Systems Analyst Lead, Information Technology Services

Achievement:

Amy Conger, Stacie Edington, Lisa Emery and Lynn Lyke-Whiting are the pioneers who had the vision to collectively imagine a more efficient system for administering education abroad programs across the decentralized UM campus. Because of their foresight, knowledge, good humor, and skillful collaboration, the entire UM campus has benefitted. Collectively, this team worked to implement and expand across the UM the use of M-Compass, a webportal and database supporting international experiences, yielding greater efficiencies for students, faculty and staff, reduced costs, improved health and safety, and several unanticipated indirect benefits for the climate of the university.

This team of staff drove the implementation of the M-Compass system at the University of Michigan, first as a pilot project within the College of Engineering and then into a university-wide platform to support international experience advertising, registration, tracking, and even emergency notification for our students as they engage globally. The implementation of this system has provided exceptional efficiency for our operations. By using a common and well defined platform to announce study abroad programs, as well as other global engagement programs including volunteer abroad and co-curricular programs overseas, our international programs staff in all 19 schools and colleges save time and effort and our students have a single-stop shop to find programs of interest to them.

Because of the efficiency provided by the M-Compass platform we increase the productivity of our study abroad advisors; they spend less time working with idiosyncratic systems to promote programs and less time chasing students to complete applications and necessary pre-departure forms. These productivity savings are directly responsible for cost savings; in the College of Engineering we estimate that we have avoided hiring one full FTE because of the efficiency provided by M-Compass. LSA reports similar cost savings, both in direct resources and reduced staff-time spent on this routine logistics work.

The benefits of the system have been seen across units from large to small. Pardip Bolina, Associate Director of the LSA Center for Global and Intercultural Study, has written,

"I know within LSA, we had our own database that was not nearly as efficient or comprehensive as M-Compass. I imagine other units had their own on-line systems or were operating entirely by paper. Bringing M-Compass to UM created a space whereby we could share different unit best practices. This has resulted in the overall quality of services improving for all units."

Sandy Wiley, International Engagement Coordinator for the Penny Stamps School of Art & Design has written

"As an administrator from a smaller academic unit who was charged with increasing student participation in education abroad, I was looking for ways to scale up my own productivity to meet student demand without additional staffing, generate reliable data to analyze trends, and build institutional memory for my one-person office. I first heard a presentation about M-Compass from Amy Conger and Stacie Edington and was immediately struck at its value to meet my own needs and how piloting the software created opportunities for discussion about policies and procedures, both within units and for the campus as a whole."

The system has also improved the health and safety situation for international experiences. Because it automatically pushes registered students into the m-pathways travel registry we have much higher compliance on registration of students on international travel. M-Compass also provides facilities to easily email or text message all students in a given international region should the need arise (capabilities that the M-Pathways travel registry system does not have).   The way we collect and track health data has been greatly strengthened, resulting in more secure practices with the implementation of M-Compass. The legal language in our releases and participation agreements is now consistent campus wide, which means that smaller units get the benefit of documents that previously only some of the larger units had. Sharing of legal documents also reduces the staff time needed in the Office of General Counsel to review unit-level processes and paperwork.

The system has also led to greater collaboration across units, as Schools and Colleges have come together to share best practices in registering students for international activities as part of implementing and maintaining the M-Compass system. The implementation of the system provided, and continues to provide, a new model of collaboration between ITS and academic units; the system provides greater capacity for identifying and promoting emerging news (benefiting the UM News Service); fosters cross-campus communications; creates new research opportunities to analyze student learning and innovative experiential teaching methods, and enhances the UM reputation as an innovative leader in education abroad. It is critical for students and faculty to be aware of all of the global opportunities available to them here at UM.

The implementation of M-Compass allows units to maintain autonomy regarding their programs while simultaneously allowing students and faculty to go to one source to learn about the different types of international experiences that are available. We already see benefits, as students are already discovering great opportunities offered by units other than their own, and will continue to reap this benefit as more and more units join M-Compass.

The M-Compass project has proven that it is possible for units to work together across campus to create something for the greater good, looking beyond individual job descriptions and across Schools, Colleges and central units to identify commonalities and improve the student experience. Because of this shared sense of purpose and commitment to students, units were able to sift through priorities and make decisions for the good of the institution, even when it resulted in having to change and adapt their own unit's policies and procedures and yielding individual autonomy and control.

The four nominees were the key team that brought M-Compass to our campus. Stacie Edington and Lynn Lyke-Whiting certainly did the heavy lifting of implementing the system within the broader UM IT infrastructure. Amy Conger was the leader in planning and lobbying for the pilot of the system within the CoE and then deployment as a UM-wide system. Lisa Emery was the project leader for ITS in the campus-wide deployment.

The International Programs in Engineering (IPE) office, under Amy Conger's directorship, played a critical role by initially funding and piloting the system and developing direct experience of its use within the UM environment. Most importantly, the IPE team implemented the system with an eye to future collaboration, obtaining a campus wide site license and configuring the system to align with campus needs beyond the College of Engineering. IPE shared what had worked well for them and developed an understanding of disadvantages in various options within the system. This proved invaluable as the system went UM-wide; implementation team meetings could be focused on high value tasks for each unit, because many of the technical behind-the-scenes work and experimentation had already been carried out by ITS and IPE. Units outside of CoE have noted IPE's willingness to take the UM-wide perspective even while piloting the system within Engineering. Sandy Wiley notes "Amy and Stacie in particular sacrificed a great deal of immediate efficiency and productivity in their own unit in order to reach out to the rest of the campus community, help us identify our own specific needs and trained us in how the software could meet these needs (or not) from the end-user perspective." Lynn and Lisa used this opportunity to test out a new way for ITS to collaboratively develop projects with end-users. Even though this is a time-consuming and deliberative process, their facilitative leadership made a learning experience in the positive sense of the phrase.

These four staff, Amy Conger, Stacie Edington, Lisa Emery, and Lynn Lyke-Whiting, have saved the university money, made our systems more efficient and productive

for both students and staff, enhanced the health and safety of our study abroad and international engagement programs, and improved the culture of collaboration of the university.   Together, they built an open, positive, respectful environment that allowed us to objectively assess the technology and determine how to adapt it to the needs of the campus as a whole without sacrificing unit control or bending to the needs of one unit without consideration of others.   This team is exactly the kind of team that the President's Staff Innovation Award was designed to recognize, and their contributions are exemplary. I believe they should be recognized.