EXCELLENCE IN ACTION
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RECONCILIATION OF GST REBATE
RESULTS IN SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS

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THE CHALLENGE
As stewards of buildings and grounds at Simon Fraser University, Facilities Services staff are continually striving to deliver the best foundational services that a great university expects. For Financial Analyst Boyoung (Sally) Lee, nothing could be more foundational than ensuring the financial health and well-being of the department.

When Boyoung first joined the University in 2017, she noticed Facilities Services had accumulated a number of significant rounding errors in work-in-process (WIP) transactions across departmental financial and operational management platforms. As a result, the un-reconciled errors produced inaccurate work order costs thus leading to incorrect billing to FS clients.

THE OBJECTIVE
To perform a complete analysis of departmental accounts, address the underlying issues, and recommend a procedure to avoid or minimize future instances.

THE APPROACH
"In order to reconcile the data properly, we had to make sure that the numbers we were entering during transactions were correct," says Boyoung. "So, starting around the fiscal year end of 2017, I established a process where every month I would monitor on-going transactions and randomly check data ensuring that the transaction we recorded in our system were precisely the same as the amount paid to our vendors."

If a discrepancy was found, Boyoung meticulously logged the information in order to seek out potential patterns that might hint at what might be causing the issues. Through a slow but methodical process, Boyoung was able to identify the primary root cause of the issue - instead of passing exact costs to our customers, there was a difference in how the GST rebate was being calculated resulting in a loss for the department. Boyoung created a model to re-calculate GST ensuring exact actual costs were transferred to the client for reimbursement. Additionally, she provided departmental leadership with a report proposing a procedure to avoid/minimize such errors in the future.

THE RESULT
Boyoung’s work in reconciling the rounding errors in WIP transactions have led to an astounding yearly savings of around $22,000.00 for the department. The proposed process will help ensure that GST rebates are calculated correctly and that if adjustments are needed, they can be done quickly. While her work is a significant achievement for the department, Boyoung is already looking to the next challenge.

“I am glad I could find a positive result and it feels like a burden has been lifted from my shoulders. I’m still thinking about how I can improve the system because I know there’s always room for improvement.”

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