

Lean Process Improvement

Institution: Cornell University

Summary statement: After talking with NCCI colleagues at Miami Ohio, Carleton University, and University of Washington in fall 2012, Cornell launched Lean process improvement and to date have completed 82 launches, saved or repurposed \$4,950,643 plus \$6.5M in deferred maintenance, spent \$583,694 in Lean participant FTE costs for a total Lean added value of \$4,266,949.

Problem/challenge: Cornell decreased by approximately 1,000 staff in 2009 and was not in a practice of revising processes over time, leading workloads to continue growing and trying to do all of the same work, plus new work with fewer staff. Lean process improvement was implemented to address issues of workload. It was believed that if we improved processes we could reduce workload or focus on value added work. In addition to helping in these areas, we have found Lean is a great team building activity, increases communication, develops expertise and individuals which in turn may lead to people moving into new or expanded roles. For Cornell, learning about Lean through NCCI colleagues has been a huge gain. We are thankful that NCCI is a huge value-add.

Solution/intervention: Cornell learned what other universities were doing around Lean. In December 2012 a few Cornell staff traveled to the University of Washington and learned about the tools they were using and came back, created the tools to work for our environment, and launched our first team in January 2013. Since then we have launched 82 teams, After talking with NCCI colleagues at Miami Ohio, Carleton University, and University of Washington in fall 2012, Cornell launched Lean process improvement and to date have completed 82 launches and colleges and divisions have completed countless other Lean projects because our method is "teach them to fish," meaning Organizational & Workforce Development (OWD) does not have to be in the room for a group to launch a team. The 82 Leans OWD has launched have led to saving/repurposing \$4,950,643 plus \$6.5M in deferred maintenance while spending \$583,694 in Lean participant FTE costs for a total Lean added value to date of \$4,266,949.

Key words: Lean, process improvement, streamlining

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Further information: <https://www.hr.cornell.edu/life/lean.html>