Introduction to Project Management Methodology

The primary objective in publishing the PMO Project Methodology Guidelines is to facilitate projects:

1. Completing on time.
2. Completing within budget.
3. Making sure they meet stakeholder requirements.

To achieve this, a series of standard documents and definitions have been created in the following documentation. The format of this documentation was created to offer a recommended timing of the use of the forms and to explain the meaning of key terminology used on all projects.

One of the most important things to understand is that a successful Project Management process requires flexibility because not all projects are executed the same. The population of projects has:

1. Different staff resources with different personalities and skill sets.
2. Different stakeholders with different goals and objectives that sometimes conflict with each other.
3. Different attitudes from management on the importance or priority of the different projects that are worked on at any given point in time.
4. Varying levels of product and approach knowledge.
5. Varying levels of experience with requested functionality.
6. Varying levels of experience with recommended technology used to implement a requested project.

Project Management is a discipline that is best exercised by Project Managers who are experienced with the components of the methodology and can recognize how and when to execute the components. The documentation contained in this process is not intended to be a cookie cutter approach where all of the components are always executed in a straight forward and pre-defined way. For example, the Project Initiation phase of the process calls for the Steering Committee (SC) identifying the project Measure of Success (MOS) and High Level Achievements (HLAs) which may take several meetings for a large scale project. However, when dealing with a small scale project, the SC may consist of 2 individuals who can complete the MOS and HLAs within an hour meeting and signoff on the Initiation phase the same day. The documentation attempts to define the procedures of the process as they relate to how to use each of the forms. It also attempts to acknowledge that flexibility in the judgment of when to use the forms is required.

The question is "Why is all of this so important?" Recent research reveals that 44 percent of project managers do not know what percent of their organizations projects came in on time; 64 percent do not know what percent of their projects came in as budgeted; it only gets worse: 84 percent did not know what percent of their projects met requirements specifications. Moreover, there is a variety of statistics that portray the percentage of failed projects caused by:

1. Poor stakeholder input.

2. Stakeholder conflicts.
3. Vague requirements.
4. Poor Cost and Schedule estimation.
5. Skills that do not match the job.
6. Hidden costs of going "lean and mean".
7. Failure to plan.
8. Communications breakdowns.
9. Poor architecture.
10. Late failure warning signals.

There is no easy answer to the question posed above and the Project Management process does not provide absolute solutions to each encounter of these causes. However, it does provide a consistent framework that addresses most of the causes of failure and provides the necessary basis for bringing a complete portfolio management solution to UMDNJ.