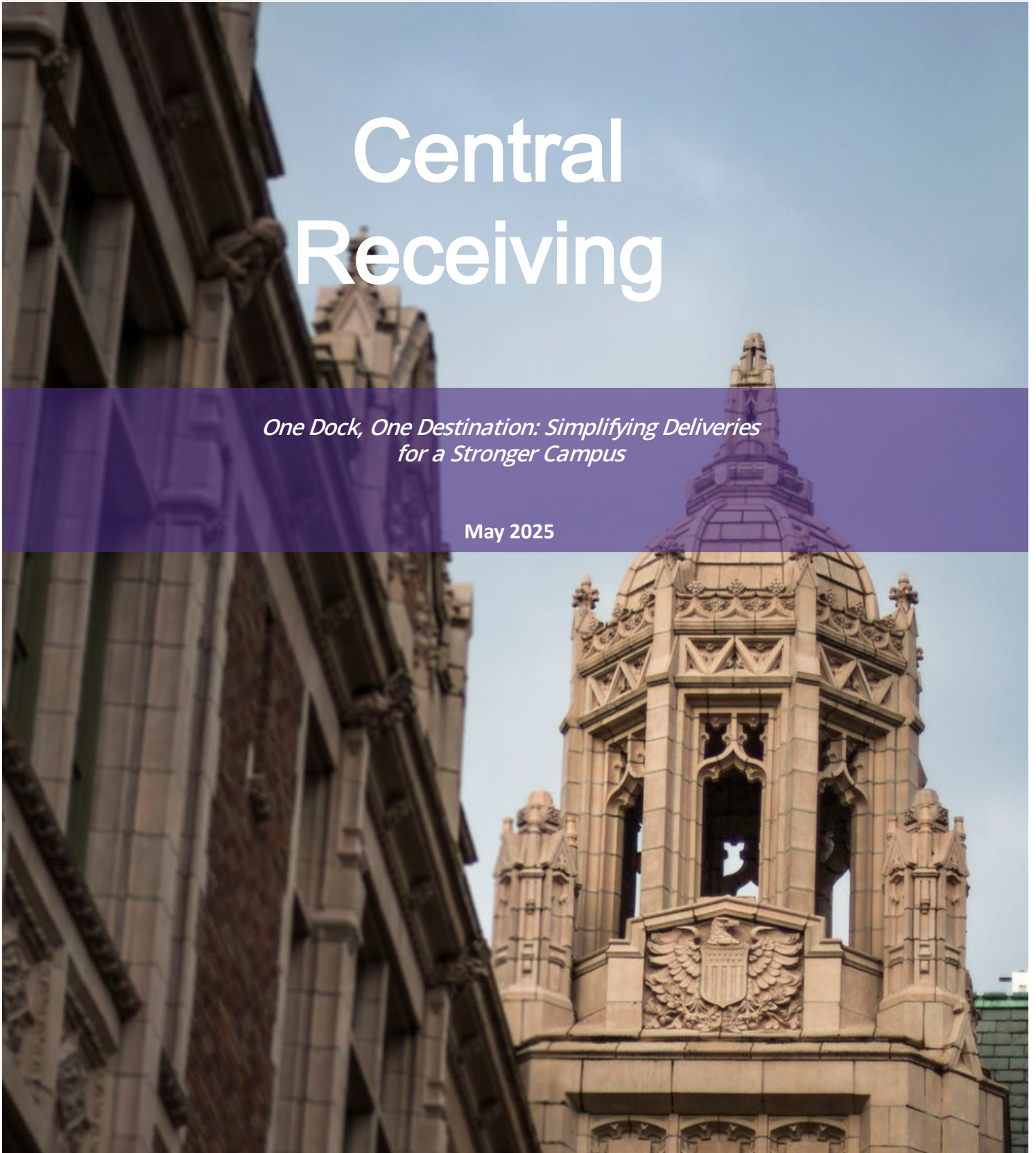


Central Receiving

*One Dock, One Destination: Simplifying Deliveries
for a Stronger Campus*

May 2025



Central Receiving

Currently, the University of Washington operates under a decentralized receiving model in which goods are shipped directly from suppliers to individual campus departments. Upon arrival, department-level staff are responsible for receiving the goods, manually processing receipts in Workday, and maintaining packing slip documentation. This structure has led to variability in process execution, inefficiencies in payment release, inconsistent documentation, and added administrative burden on departmental staff. To align with industry best practices and improve operational efficiency, Finance Planning and Budgeting proposes transitioning to a centralized receiving model, leveraging the infrastructure and expertise of our existing central mailing services within Creative Communications (C2).

What is Central Receiving?

Central Receiving is a supply chain best practice used widely across higher education institutions and other complex, distributed organizations. In a central receiving model, all campus-bound goods are shipped to a designated facility where they are:

- Received and inspected for accuracy and damage.
- Recorded in the institution's system of record (Workday).
- Tagged with relevant delivery and tracking information.
- Distributed internally to the appropriate department or individual.

Central receiving ensures consistent documentation, enhances visibility of shipments, strengthens internal controls, and streamlines the delivery and payment process.

What about controlled substances and animal deliveries?

We recognize that certain categories of deliveries—such as controlled substances, live animals, or time-sensitive scientific materials—require specialized handling and regulatory compliance. **These fringe cases will be thoughtfully carved out** of the central receiving model.

Our approach will ensure these exceptions are managed outside the central model in coordination with appropriate campus departments, while still maintaining oversight and accountability. The goal is to preserve compliance and operational integrity without compromising the benefits of central receiving for the broader campus.

Our Vision for UW Receiving

UW's Central Receiving Center will be located within the Publications Services Building, and follow this process model:

- All goods ordered by campus departments will be directed to C2 as the delivery location.
- Existing, trained staff at C2 will open, inspect, and receive items in Workday.
- Packing slips will be scanned and uploaded to Workday, ensuring a complete record is maintained for auditing and reconciliation purposes.
- Workday's chain-of-custody functionality will be activated, allowing campus departments to track their packages from the moment they arrive at C2 until final delivery.
- C2 will manage physical delivery to departments across campus or facilitate convenient pick-up.

This model eliminates the need for individual departments to manage logistics directly, while ensuring consistent, centralized receiving operations that align with procurement and financial policy standards.

Benefits of Central Receiving

Operational Efficiency

Central receiving minimizes duplicate efforts across our campuses and relieves departmental staff of time-consuming and inconsistent receiving duties.

Improved Financial Controls

Workday transactions will reflect a standardized receiving process with proper documentation, which improves compliance, audit readiness, and accurate payment release.

Shipment Visibility

Units will gain improved visibility into the status and location of their orders through the chain-of-custody functionality in Workday.

Risk Reduction

Centralized inspection helps identify and address damaged or incorrect shipments before they reach departments, reducing errors and return processing later.

Service Excellence

C2 will continue to serve as a reliable partner for delivery needs across campus, offering a consistent and customer-service-oriented experience as is the case for Mailing Services.

Alignment with Peer Institutions

Central receiving is standard practice among our peer institutions and supports UW's broader goal of modernizing operations to meet the scale and complexity of our research and academic mission.

What's Next

We are currently in the preliminary design phase of this initiative. Our teams are actively working on the technical configuration of Workday to support centralized receiving workflows, including enabling chain-of-custody functionality and integrating with Space Manager to ensure accurate delivery location tracking across campus.

In parallel, our central offices are engaging with unit representatives and key stakeholders to gather input, understand unit-specific needs, and ensure the model is responsive to the diverse operations across the University. This collaborative approach is essential to the success of a change of this scale and will help us identify potential challenges early while building alignment and buy-in.

Questions or feedback?

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component in our shared success. Please share your thoughts with us.

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We propose rolling this initiative in phases, as we have for finance shared services, beginning with willing partners, and extending to others once the value proposition is clear. Future phases may include enhancements such as a centralized returns process managed by C2.