

NUPlans

NUPlans Forecasting Basics

Reference

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Top Ten Ideas

#	Idea	Explanation
1.	Forecast within the current forecasting period.	The current forecasting period is the most recently closed accounting period. Example: After the January month end close, the forecasting period is January. After February closes, the forecasting period is February.
2.	Forecast in child budget groupings.	Data entry is allowed in child budget groupings (☐#) but not allowed in parent budget groupings, which are identified by the sigma icon Σ.
3.	Forecast using predefined methods.	A number of methods are available to forecasters, chosen from a drop-down list. Find a list of methods and definitions in the latter half of this reference.
4.	Default forecast methods do much of the work for you.	The system default works by populating the forecast column with the amount budgeted. Areas can define other default forecasting methods that increase productivity even further.
5.	Focus on exceptions and actuals.	Because the default forecast method is Use Budget, you can focus on exceptions. And because the forecast is a projection of actuals at year end, it is likely that actual current revenue or expenses should be included in the forecast in some way.
6.	Forecast at a level of detail that makes sense for your area and the time of year.	NUPlans Forecasting enables forecasting at various levels: full chart string (account), base chart string, account category, and fund. Law and Feinberg forecasters work primarily at the account level in Detailed Forecasting views.
7.	Forecast at the most detailed level (account) to use the forecast during budget preparation.	Only forecasts entered in the Detailed Forecasting application flow to the budget preparation file in NUPlans Contributor. If you rely on a detailed forecast for budget preparation, use a detailed approach to forecasting.
8.	Enter a forecast in three steps.	The only required step is to select a method. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Optional: Choose a basis for the forecast from among the columns of data on display. 2. Optional: Enter EITHER an amount OR a percentage. 3. Required: Select a method. Result: NUPlans calculates and saves automatically, unless you turn off auto-recalculation, in which case...
9.	Click Recalculate  to save.	Just Recalculate. There is nothing else to do to save data in NUPlans Forecasting.
10.	Unsaved data is green . Saved data is black .	Track your changes since you last recalculated (saved) by observing the data in green font. After you edit, values are green that are entered but not saved. When you recalculate, NUPlans calculates the forecast, updates all affected cells, and displays results in black font.

Toolbar Icons



Icon	Definition
	<p>Automatic Recalculation is on by default.</p> <p>Automatic Recalculation is a terrific convenience. Notice that this icon is outlined, which means it is currently on already for you. This causes NUPlans to save every time you use the drop-down menus, such as method, and recalculate every field affected by your data entry. It is possible to turn this off. Click it again to turn it back on at any time.</p>
	<p>Use Recalculate to save data.</p> <p>Recalculate is a way of saving data entries when auto-recalculation is off or not available, such as when you enter descriptions into text fields. Unlike Contributor, there is no keyboard equivalent of Recalculate. Pressing the <Enter> key does not save data in NUPlans Web.</p>
	<p>Undo and Redo</p> <p>Undo and Redo data entries are both available in forecasting, after you recalculate. The Undo icon undoes every change since you last recalculated. For that reason, recalculate (save) often, and rely on Automatic Recalculation, so that you can take advantage of this feature.</p> <p>An alternative to the “undo” icon is the <blank> method. Select the <blank> method and recalculate to undo one forecast at a time.</p>
	<p>Suppress Zeroes is on by default.</p> <p>Like Auto-Recalculation, the next icon is also on by default. It prevents rows with no data from appearing in the view. If you turn it off accidentally, the view may expand with dozens or hundreds more accounts; or if you’re authorized for a large Prep File, the view may not even load at all, if there are too many rows to display. The solution is to reset the view. Select Actions Menu > Reset View.</p>
	<p>Swap Rows and Columns is possible but probably not useful. If you click this icon by accident, the solution is to reset the view. Select Actions Menu > Reset View.</p>
	<p>The Actions Menu groups some icons and functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Save View is for advanced users to create and name a view with a new layout. Likewise, Save As is a way to create a new view from an existing view.  Export the current view to Excel or PDF. At NU, the snapshot option is best for most views. PDF works for some reports.  Reset Data is available for unsaved data in green. It erases the values you entered.  Likewise, Save Data Changes is available for unsaved data entries in green. It saves the values you entered without recalculating. A simpler choice is to click Recalculate.  Reset View reestablishes the default layout of the view and restores all default behavior, including auto-recalculation and zero suppression. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use it if the view goes blank or looks skewed. • Use it if you turned off auto-recalculation or if you turned off suppress zeroes. • Use it before and after you manipulate the view (to show or hide rows or columns). <p>X Close, Close Others, and Close All are three ways to close views that you opened.</p>

Forecast Method Definitions

Method	Definitions
<Blank>	Use the blank in the Method column to undo a forecast or to delete a mistake.
Add Amount to Budget	This adds your input in the Amount column (positive or negative) to the Budget.
Add Amount to Actuals	This adds your input in the Amount column to Total Actuals.
Add PY To Go to YTD Previous Year (PY)	Year To Go is the amount measured from the given period last year to the end of last year. It answers the question, "What did you receive or spend from this point forward last year?" That amount is added to the current year YTD column.
Adjust Budget with % Change	This adds a percent change to the Budget amount using your input in the % Change column.
Adjust PY Actuals with % Change	This adds a percent change to Past Year (PY) Actuals using your input in the % Change column.
Adjust Total Actuals with % Change	This adds a percent change to Total Actuals using your input in the % Change column.
Apply 3 Yr Avg Run Rate to Total Actuals	Run Rate is a percentage that indicates the rate at which receipts or spending progresses toward a year-end total. This method uses year-end Total Actuals from the three prior years and applies the 3-year average run rate to the amount in the Total Actuals column. It requires three years of data to compute. If run rate is 0, the result is #N/A.
Apply 3 Yr Avg Run Rate to YTD	This method applies the 3-year average run rate by the amount in the YTD column. It requires three years of data to compute. If the run rate is 0, the result is #N/A.
Apply PY Run Rate to Total Actuals	This method applies the past year run rate to the amount in the Total Actuals column. If the run rate is 0, the result is #N/A.
Apply PY Run Rate to YTD	This method applies the past year run rate to the amount in the YTD column. If the run rate is 0, the result is #N/A.
Straightline Total Actuals	Straightline is a calculation that extends the present rate per month forward through the end of the year. This applies a straight line to amount in the Total Actuals column.
Straightline YTD	This applies a straight line to the amount in the YTD column.
Use Total Actuals	This method uses the amount in the Total Actuals column.
Use Amount	This method uses your input in the Amount column.
Use Budget	This method uses the amount in the Budget column. <i>It is the system default.</i>
Use Previous Forecast	This uses the previous month's forecast.
Add Amount to Detail	***Not available in the Detailed Forecasting views*** This adds your input in the Amount column to the Detail Forecast. The method isn't available in Detailed Forecasting input views.
Use the Detail Forecast	***Not available in the Detailed Forecasting views*** This method indicates that Detailed Forecasting input is the source of the forecast.
No Method	***Available to Prep File users in the Preload Forecasting Method form only***

	This allows Prep File users to indicate they want to preload a blank method. A practical application of this method is to reset anything that was preloaded previously.
Total Budget %	***Available in the Grant Input view only*** This applies a percent of the total grant budget to determine the forecast.

Methods by Base Column

Methods are applied to a column of your choice in the input view.

Below is a summary of the methods and the columns to which they refer.

Base (Column)	Method
<Blank>	<Blank> (Use the blank in the Method column to undo a forecast.)*
Budget	Use Budget (This is the system default.)* Add Amount to Budget* Adjust Budget with % Change*
Total Actuals	Use Total Actuals* Add Amount to Total Actuals* Adjust Total Actuals with % Change* Apply 3 Yr Avg Run Rate to Total Actuals Apply PY Run Rate to Total Actuals Straightline Total Actuals*
This year to date (YTD)	Add PY To Go to YTD Apply 3 Yr Avg Run Rate to YTD Apply PY Run Rate to YTD Straightline YTD*
Previous Year (PY) Actuals	Adjust PY Actuals with % Change
Amount	Use Amount*
Previous Forecast	Use Previous Forecast*
Detail Forecast	Use Detail Forecast
Grants – Total Grant Budget	Use % of Total Grant Budget

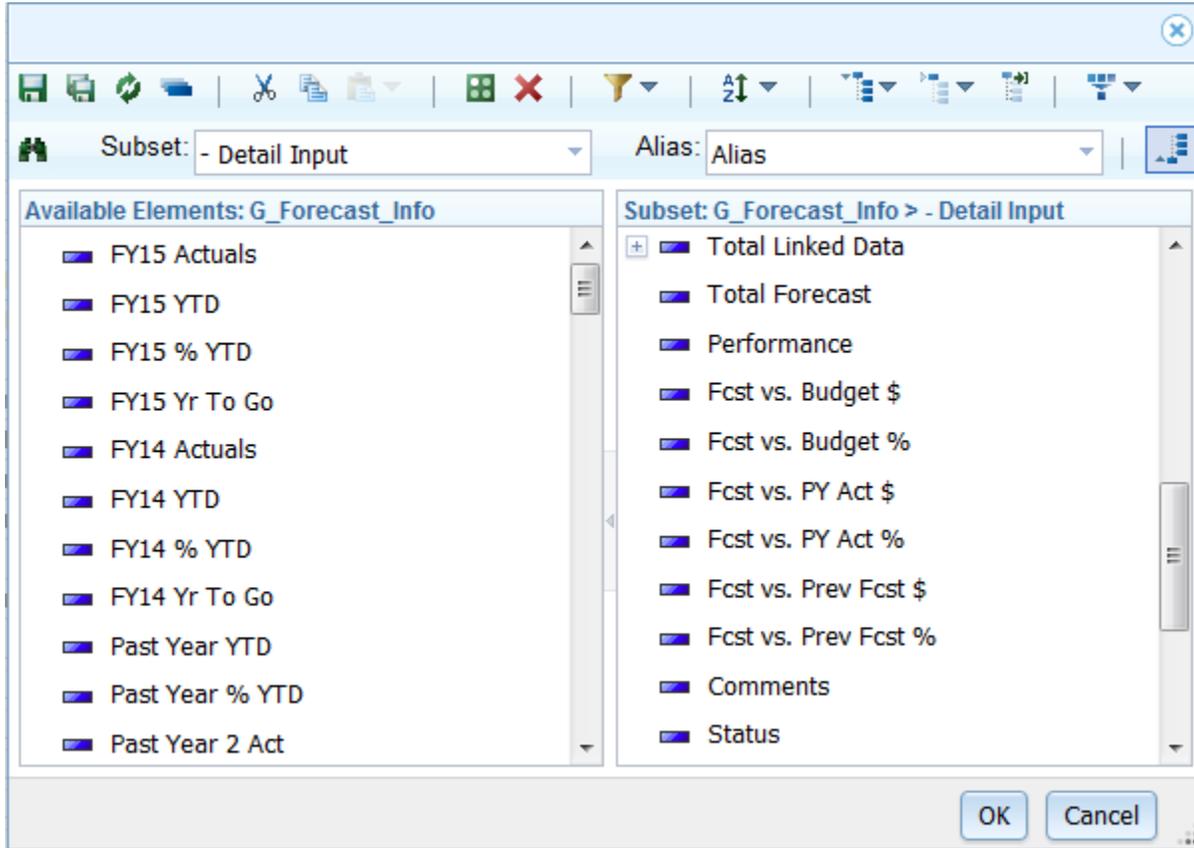
* Methods marked with an asterisk are also available in the Grant Input view for forecasting.

Dimension Definitions

Type	Dimension Name	Definition
Rows	[G_ChartString_Base]	See the base chart strings (1) with separate rows for the total of all chart strings in the view, (2) without separate total rows, or (3) in different arrangements. Show and hide chart strings. Available subsets include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total Chart Strings - Detailed Chart Strings - Chart Strings by Fund
Rows	[G_Account]	See subsets of accounts, or show and hide accounts. Available subsets include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Account Subtotals - Detailed Accounts - Non-Benefit Salary Accounts
Rows	[G_AccountCategories]	Show and hide account categories.
Columns	[G_Year]	See the past, current, or future fiscal years. Available subsets include Fiscal Year.
Columns	[G_Forecast_Info]	See subsets of columns, or show and hide columns. The Subset Editor contains a list of columns available, including some columns not visible in the view by default. Available subsets include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chart String Input - Chart String Input – Expanded - Detail Input - Detail Input – Expanded - Fund Variance Info - Summary Input - Summary Input – Expanded - Summary View - Summary View – Expanded - Total Actuals – All Years
Context	[G_Month]	Change the forecasting period that you are viewing. Past and future forecasting periods do not allow data entry.
Context	[G_BudgetGrouping]	Budget groups are arranged on a hierarchical tree with expandable nodes. Click  to expand a parent. Click  to collapse a parent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent budget groups summarize but do not allow data entry. Child budget groups, indented on the tree, do allow data entry. Change budget groups, if you have access to multiple. Scale up the budget hierarchy to see summaries at each parent level.
Context	[G_MgmtLevel_Type]	In the Summary and Chart String Forecasting views, use this context to change management levels, if they apply to your area.

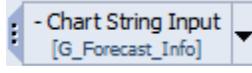
Using the Subset Editor

Below is a tour of the subset editor. In this example, you see the column dimension G_Forecast_Info.



Feature	Definition
	This icon represents an element (row or column) that you can show, hide, or rearrange. The left pane of "Available Elements" is a list of all elements in the dimension. The right pane is a list of all elements currently displayed in the view. With the lists, you may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drag and drop elements from the left pane into the right pane. ▪ <Shift> + Click to select a contiguous series of elements. ▪ <Ctrl> + Click to select multiple non-contiguous elements.
	Click to hide selected elements from the view. They are not deleted and can be reshown at any time.
	Click to show selected elements (and hide all others). You can use Show or Hide but not both.
Subset	Within the subset drop-down field are predefined layouts. Subsets with names preceded by a dash were made with end users in mind. Select one and click OK to see the layout in the view. See the previous page for a list of available subsets.
	Click to see all elements available in the view, including OPTIONAL columns. Use this icon after showing or hiding the elements to repopulate the list with all elements available. Your security access profile may apply.
	Use the binoculars to find elements based on text matching. Click the icon and type any text string to find matching elements. For example, type "Comments" to find the Comments column. Click the Up and Down arrows to find the other instances of the text string you entered.
Cancel	Click Cancel to exit the Subset Editor without applying your changes to the view.
OK	Click OK to exit the Subset Editor and see your selections and changes reflected in the view.

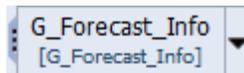
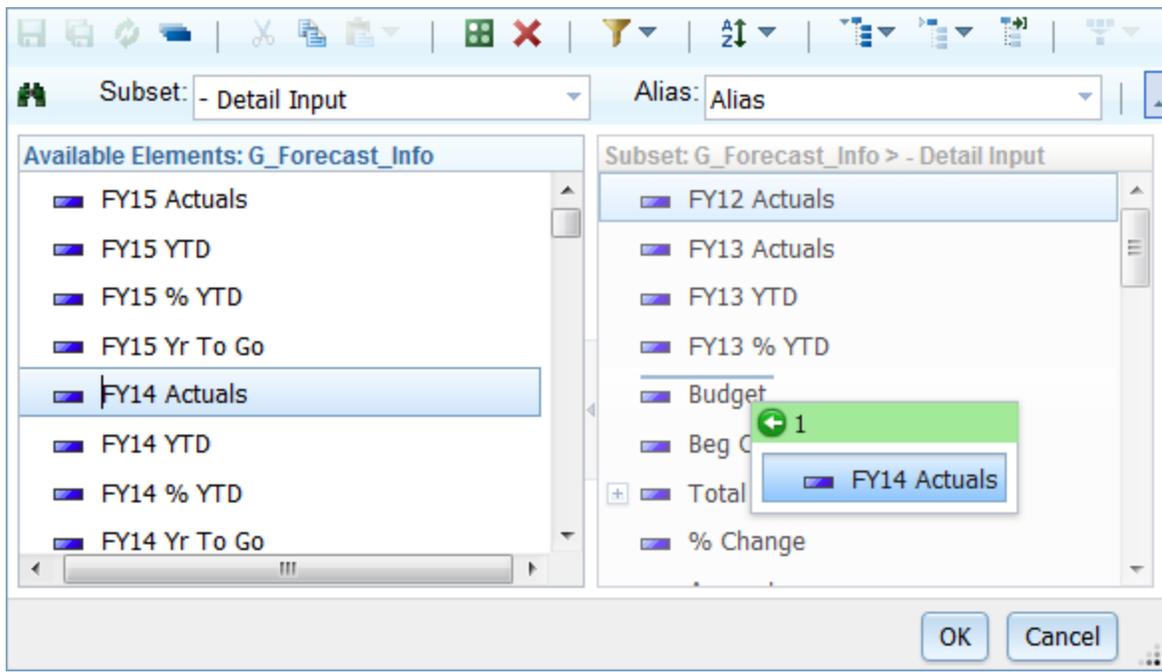
Show/Hide Columns or Rows

#	Icon	Action
1.		Click the black triangle on a column or row dimension. Example: 
2.		Select the rows or columns that you want to show or hide.
3a.		Click Show. Result: the columns you intend to see appear in the list. All others disappear from the list.
3b.		OR Click Hide. Result: the columns you intend to hide disappear from the list.
4.		Click OK. Result: your changes are applied to the view.

Add Column(s) to a View

All views in NUPlans come with a default series of columns chosen for their usefulness and for their interest to end users. Nonetheless, there may be times when you want to add a column to a view.

Below is an example that refers to the September forecasting period, when the previous year actuals column is available but does not appear by default.

#	Action
1.	Click the black triangle on the column dimension G_Forecast_Info. 
2.	<p>Click, hold, drag, and drop a column from the left to the desired position on the right. Select the column you want on the left and move the mouse over the list of columns on the right. A blue bar appears between column names to indicate the drop target. When you release the mouse, the column will “drop” into place where the blue bar indicates.</p> 
3.	Click OK. Result: your changes are applied to the view.

Column Definitions

The following are columns and their definitions for all the views of NUPlans Forecasting.

Most columns are available in all views. The location of the column is identified. Columns marked OPTIONAL are available to the view via the column dimension [G_Forecast_Info].

Column Name	Location	Definition
% Change	All Input Views	<p>The column accepts numeric data entry and, when the % sign is present inside the cell, converts whole numbers to decimal format.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the % sign is present, enter a positive whole number representing the percentage. NUPlans converts the whole number to decimal format when you exit the cell. Example: enter 10 and exit the cell to indicate a ten percent change. When the % sign is not present, and for negative numbers, enter the percentage in decimal format. Example: enter -.1 to indicate a negative ten percent change. <p>The percentage is applied to your choice of other columns to create a forecast based on a change in the number contained in the column that you choose (total actuals, budget, or past year actuals). Make the choice by selecting a method.</p>
% of Total Funds	Summary Input	The percent of total that a given line represents.
3 Yr Avg Run Rate	Input Views	<p>The column is available optionally, via the Column dimension [G_Forecast_Info]. Select one of the “expanded” subsets.</p> <p>Run rate is based on an average over three years. The calculation starts with total actuals / total periods to date.</p> <p>Shows 0 if there is not three years of history to support the calculation.</p>
Account	Detail Input Views	The 5-digit account code in a separate column. The purpose of this column is to enable auto-outline after exporting data to Excel.
Account Type	Detail Input Views	The account type (revenue or expense) in a separate column. The purpose is to enable auto-outline after exporting data to Excel.
Amount	All Input Views	<p>This column accepts number data entry (positive or negative whole numbers).</p> <p>You can enter an amount for the forecast, or add the amount to your choice of other column, such as the budget or total actuals, based on the method.</p>
Automatic Balancing	Input Views	<p>The column is available optionally, via the Column dimension [G_Forecast_Info]. Select one of the “expanded” subsets.</p> <p>For areas that opt in to automatic balancing within NUPlans Forecasting, Net is forced to zero (0) and the out-of-balance amount, if any, is associated with the Budget column on accounts 88991 and 88992.</p> <p>If forecasting with automatic balancing, current year performance is calculated based on a balanced budget. A surplus or deficit, if any, is created in comparison with the forecast.</p>
Beg CFWD	Detail and Chart String Input Views	The amount for current year carry forward on account 79999, imported from NUFinancials. This only shows at the account level, and at the expense subtotal level, but not at the chart string level.
Budget	All Input Views	The current year imported budget (original, recurring and non-recurring adjustments) imported monthly from NUFinancials.

Column Name	Location	Definition
Comments	All Input Views	This column accepts comments in any white cell, up to about 600 characters total. Comments entered in one view do not flow to another. Comments are not aggregated; however, some reports do display comments associated with the same rows as other data on the report.
Default Source	All Input Views	This column indicates the default source of the forecast, if no method is chosen by the user. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The system default method in Detailed Input is "Use Budget." areas may override the default with other methods; and if so, those preferred methods appear in this column. The system default method in Chart String Input and Summary Input is "Detailed Forecast," which means that the default forecast flows into the higher levels from Detailed Forecasting views. Areas may override the default with other methods; and if so, overrides appear here.
Department	Detail and Chart String Input Views	The 7-digit financial Department ID. The purpose of this column is to enable auto-outline after exporting data to Excel.
Detail Forecast	Summary and Chart String Input Views	This column appears in views other than Detail Input to display the forecast coming from the Detail Input views.
Enc	Input Views	The amount imported from NUFinancials for current year encumbrances. Expand Total Actuals to see this column.
FY09 % YTD	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is the percentage that the year-to-date (YTD) actuals represents of year-end total actuals.
FY09 Act	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is year-end total actuals for FY09.
FY09 YTD	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is year-to-date (YTD) actuals for the given month in FY09.
FY09 Yr To Go	Input Views	OPTIONAL: Remaining actuals for FY09 based on YTD and Act for FY09. "Year To Go" is the amount received or spent from any given period in a prior year to the end of that prior year. For example, if from January 2009 to the end of 2009, a department spent \$7,000.00 of a \$12,000.00 year-end total, then \$7,000.00 is the FY08 "year to go."
FY10 % YTD	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is the percentage that the year-to-date (YTD) actuals represents of year-end total actuals.
FY10 Act	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is year-end total actuals for FY10.
FY10 YTD	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is year-to-date (YTD) actuals for the given month in FY10.
FY10 Yr To Go	Input Views	OPTIONAL: Remaining actuals for FY10 based on YTD and Act for FY10. "Year To Go" is the amount received or spent from any given period in a prior year to the end of that prior year. For example, if from January 2009 to the end of 2009, a department spent \$7,000.00 of a \$12,000.00 year-end total, then \$7,000.00 is the FY08 "year to go."

Column Name	Location	Definition
FY11 % YTD	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is the percentage that the year-to-date (YTD) actuals represents of year-end total actuals.
FY11 Act	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is year-end total actuals for FY11.
FY11 YTD	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is year-to-date (YTD) actuals for the given month in FY11.
FY11 Yr To Go	Input Views	OPTIONAL: Remaining actuals for FY11 based on YTD and Act for FY11. "Year To Go" is the amount received or spent from any given period in a prior year to the end of that prior year. For example, if from January 2009 to the end of 2009, a department spent \$7,000.00 of a \$12,000.00 year-end total, then \$7,000.00 is the FY08 "year to go."
FY12 % YTD	Input Views	OPTIONAL: This column is the percentage that the year-to-date (YTD) actuals represents of year-end Total Actuals.
FY12 Act	Input Views	This column is year-end total actuals for FY12.
FY12 YTD	Input Views	OPTIONAL: YTD actuals for the month for FY12
FY12 Yr To Go	Input Views	OPTIONAL: Remaining actuals for FY12 based on YTD and Act for FY12. "Year To Go" is the amount received or spent from any given period in a prior year to the end of that prior year. For example, if from January 2009 to the end of 2009, a department spent \$7,000.00 of a \$12,000.00 year-end total, then \$7,000.00 is the FY08 "year to go."
FY13 % YTD	Input Views	This column is the percentage that the year-to-date (YTD) actuals represents of year-end total actuals for FY13.
FY13 Act	Input Views	This column is year-end total actuals for FY13.
FY13 YTD	Input Views	This column is year-to-date (YTD) actuals for the given month in FY13.
FY13 Yr To Go	Input Views	OPTIONAL: Remaining actuals for FY13 based on YTD and Act for FY13.
Fcst vs. Budget \$	Input Views	The difference between the forecast and the budget for the current year, expressed as an amount.
Fcst vs. PY Act %	Input Views	The difference between the forecast and the past year actuals, expressed as a percentage.
Fcst vs. Prev Fcst \$	Input Views	The difference between the forecast and the previous forecast for the current year, expressed as an amount.
Fcst vs. Prev Fcst %	Input Views	The difference between the forecast and the previous forecast for the current year, expressed as a percentage.
Fct vs. Budget %	Input Views	The % difference between the forecast and the budget for the current year, expressed as a percentage.
Fct vs. PY Act \$	Input Views	The difference between the forecast and the past year actuals, expressed as an amount.
Flag	Chart String Input and Summary Input Views	This column appears in Chart String Type Input or Summary Input if users enter a high-level forecast, but had already entered a forecast at a lower level, to warn them they may be overwriting their work.

Column Name	Location	Definition
Forecast	All Input Views	Calculated forecast based on the method chosen by the user.
Fund	All Input Views	The 3-digit fund code in a separate column. The purpose of this column is to enable auto-outline after exporting data to Excel.
Linked from Compensation	Detail Input	This column displays the amount flowing from Compensation Input for salary placeholder forecasting. Expand Total Linked in to see this column.
Linked from Tuition	Detail Input Chart String Input Summary Input	This column displays the amount flowing from Tuition Input for tuition forecasting. Expand Total Linked in to see this column. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears in the Detail Input views if tuition forecasts are associated with an account Appears in the Chart String Input and Summary Input views if tuition forecasts are not associated with an account
Method	All Input Views	This column displays a drop-down list of forecasting methods from which to choose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting a method is the only required step of entering a forecast. Your choice of method determines which column is the base for the forecast. The default method is shown in the Default Source column. Areas may preload methods to maximize productivity. Preloading is possible per budget grouping, level, and/or fund. If so, the preloaded method appears in the Method column.
Performance	All Input Views	Performance is a comparison of Budget to Total Forecast. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue performance is Total Forecast – Budget. Expense performance is Budget – Total Forecast. Performance calculations use both budget and automatic balancing, in contrast to the forecast versus budget comparison, which does not include automatic balancing.
Previous Forecast	All Input Views	The forecasted amount from the previous forecasting period.
Project	All Input Views	The 8-digit project ID in a separate column. The purpose of this column is to enable auto-outline after exporting data to Excel.
Status	Detail Input	The chart string status (active, inactive, or an adjustment category). Adjustment categories designated chart strings that are not included in the calculation of performance because their use is generally reserved for financial activity related to the fund balance (capital project investments, buildup of endowment principle, and/or use of reserves). Account 79999 never has a status.
Total Actuals	All Input Views	This is a parent column that summarizes year-to-date (YTD) transactions and encumbrances (Enc). Click the plus sign to see the YTD and Enc columns.
Total Forecast	All Input Views	This is the total of Forecast and Total Linked Data.
Total Linked Data	All Input Views	This is a parent column that summarizes Linked from Tuition and Linked from Compensation. Click the plus sign to expand the column.

Column Name	Location	Definition
YTD	All Input Views	The imported amount for current year actuals (does not include encumbrances). Expand Total Actuals to see this column.

Copy Comments

It is possible to copy comments systematically from one period to another.

For example, comments entered in the past can be copied into the current period. Copy Comments form is available to most users inside the Administrative folder.

Navigate to Administrative > Copy Comments.

#	Action
1.	Select an application to which you have access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Applications” are the levels of forecasting: Detailed Forecasting, Chart String Forecasting, Summary Forecasting, All Funds Performance, and others. An error message appears at right if you select an application to which you do not have access.
2.	Select a budget grouping, or if the application you selected in Step 1 was All Funds Performance – Pre File Input, select the Prep File.
3.	Select a month and fiscal year in the past where the comments exist now.
4.	Select the current or any previous month and fiscal year.
5.	Click the Copy Comments button and click OK to confirm.

Results

Comments are copied immediately.

Errors

Messages appear to the right of any field where an invalid value is entered.

The general error message is “An error occurred. Please verify the comments were copied, or contact the Help Desk for assistance.”