UNIVERSITY OF **MARYLAND**
University College

Learning Resource

Business Process Modeling

Before identifying requirements for an information technology solution to support a process, it is critical to understand how a process is conducted currently—this is often referred to as the **"as-is" process**. Frequently, people within a process only understand their part of the process and even within the same group of users, the process may not be consistently (or correctly) followed. An important first step is to gather representatives of the process stakeholders to define collectively the current process. This information can be gathered through stakeholder interviews and/or a face-to-face session where individuals are together and map out the process on paper throughout the room. In addition to understanding what is performed in each step, it is important to understand why. For example, does the information need to be provided to another area in the organization to enable a related process to be performed?

Once the current process is documented and understood, it's time to focus on the best way to perform the series of steps needed to perform a task—this is referred to as the **"to-be" process**. Otherwise, it's possible to implement a technology solution that only succeeds in performing a bad process faster rather than actually gaining the improvements desired to help achieve the organization's strategy. The section *Business Processes* provides a simple example of a before (as-is) process and then an improved (to-be) process for purchasing textbooks at a college bookstore.

Understanding how a process can best be accomplished lays the foundation for defining requirements for a technology solution. Failure to clearly define all requirements can result in a solution that is incomplete. This results in a waste of resources and won't result in the expected benefits.