Case Study

CAMPUS℠
MANAGEMENT

UNION
GRADUATE
COLLEGE

Challenges

- Establish an independent graduate institution separate from the undergraduate school

- Migrate from the undergraduate school's administrative system to a new system in time for the opening of a new graduate center

- Produce meaningful reports without searching multiple databases or having to know code

Solution

- Campus Management's student information system

- CampusNet® Cloud

Results

- Migrated to student information system in less than six months

- School of Education sees 100% online registration for the first time in its history

- A 360 degree view of students with a single database and enhanced reporting

Union Graduate College

Profile

Union Graduate College (UGC), located in Schenectady, NY, is a graduate-only institution, dedicated to providing exceptional Masters Degree programs, including graduate degrees in management, healthcare management, secondary education, engineering, and clinical leadership and bioethics. With a heritage that is traced to Union College and other Union University colleges, the professional graduate institution became an independent college in July 2003 in response to the growing regional demand for full-time and part-time graduate study. Involving much more than a separate charter and name change, Union Graduate College would eventually transition away from the undergraduate college's student information system, and in 2009 moved administration, student services, and academics across campus to its new graduate center.

Challenges

Rhonda Sheehan, director of admissions for Union Graduate College, recalls this transition period as both a challenge and an opportunity: "this was really an opportunity for us to reassess our processes and technology, especially the challenges we were experiencing with the existing administrative system." At the time, Union Graduate College was on the same system as the undergraduate school and running two systems at the time: one system for marketing, recruiting, and admissions, and another system for student administration. "Everything was double entry," says Sheehan. "Entering and retrieving information was a very manual, labor intensive process."

"Campus Management's student information system is much more intuitive and easy to use. It thinks like I do."

Reporting Challenges

There were also issues with the reporting capabilities of the software and ease of use. "No one could look anything up other than demographic information. Trying to do searches or to pull anything, you either had to understand the UNIX language or rely on other people to create meaningful reports," says Sheehan.

Amy Nevin, associate director of institutional research at UGC, says it was like being in a time machine. "We were looking at DOS prompts, dealing with truncated fields, and referring to big books of translation code. If a student forgot to enter her social security number on an electronic form, we would have to start the whole nine-step process over again, rather than just add the social security number. And clearing house reporting took an entire day."

Implementation Deadline

The implementation timeframe was also a key issue for UGC. The institution began the search process for a new software vendor in the winter of 2008, with the expectation that the new student information system would be implemented and operating in parallel with the legacy system for at least two terms prior to the move to the new graduate center in September 2009.

Solution

After a competitive selection process involving three leading ERP system providers, UGC chose Campus Management's student information system.

"We started looking at vendors, visiting a lot of companies, and went to a user conference before putting out an RFP and inviting several companies to submit proposals," says Sheehan. "We spent time looking at the businesses and talking with their customers. In the end, we chose Campus Management for the quality of the product, their managed hosting option, and track record for rapid implementation. We were looking at a very aggressive timetable

and had exactly one IT person on staff, so 'rapid implementation' had to be more than a catch phrase. It was a huge factor in our decision-making process."

Managed Hosting

The student information system was deployed via CampusNet Cloud, Campus Management's managed hosting solution. This enabled UGC to deploy a new student information system without having to build and support the infrastructure or hire additional IT staff. "We would have had to hire more IT staff to facilitate not only the system transition, but the physical move to the new graduate center as well," says Sheehan. "What's great about managed hosting is that you can go anywhere. Even if there is a power outage on campus, employees can still access the system remotely."

Results

Campus Management completed the implementation of its student information system in less than six months. "And we were running on the system for two terms before we moved to the new graduate center in September 2009, just as we wanted," says Sheehan.

Enhanced Reporting Capability

With a single, unifying database across the system, Campus Management's student information system provides UGC a 360 degree view of student data for strategic decision-making. Administrators and executives can gain real-time insight into critical information such as percentages of applications to admits, admits to deposits, and deposits to enrollment.

"Before the student information system, we had two systems that didn't talk," says Nevin. "Now our registrar, for example, can see for herself how much financial aid a student is receiving without having to call the financial aid department. Before this,

I was pulling reports out of an Access database and updating it manually. Now that we have eliminated all the shadow systems, this is no longer a problem. I love the fact that everything is now all in one place."

Campus Management's student information system is also much more intuitive and easy to use. "It thinks like I do," says Sheehan. "In fact, it's so easy to use that students in our work study programs can help us out in the admissions office with very little training."

Web Self-Service

Prior to deploying the solution, UGC saw many students waiting in line to register for classes due to an increase in enrollments. Today, students go online to apply for financial aid, receive award letters, register for classes, and view their transcripts, while faculty use the software to post grades, measure attendance, and cut down on phone calls. "It is so easy to use that students were able to figure out the online registration process before they were technically supposed to," recalls Sheehan. "But we've come a long way. This was the first year, for example, that every student in the School of Education registered for classes online. We are a small, student-centric institution, and Campus Management's student information system has helped us maintain that reputation."

Joanne Fitzgerald, vice president of enrollment management, echoes these thoughts: "The strength and maturity of the solution really impressed us. It's clear that Campus Management shares our vision of providing a superior experience for today's graduate students, who have come to expect self-service access around the clock to virtually every aspect of the college."

Next Steps

There are remaining challenges that UGC and Campus Management are working together to resolve. Sheehan points to the challenge of

Union Graduate College

dual enrollments. "If we have a student who is getting his MBA from the School of Management and also wants to get an HR certificate, we still have difficulty registering him in both programs at the same time. But having a universal database serving all programs, combined with Campus Management's commitment to support, makes it easier to work through issues like these," says Sheehan.

Nevin recalls the learning curve at first for the SQL database and trying to create custom reports. "I'm now able to build custom reports and dashboards myself, but it wasn't easy at first. Campus Management is working on a new reporting table structure and hopes to update the database within the next few months," she says. "Campus Management is good about providing additional training opportunities when and where we need it. We have also taken advantage of the company's preconference training at CampusInsight, their annual event in Orlando," she adds.

About Campus Management Corp.

Campus Management is a leading provider of software, strategies and services which enable institutions of higher education to offer dynamic models of engagement & delivery. Over the past 27 years, Campus Management has supported higher education, both proprietary and traditional institutions, as well as foundations and other organizations through its cutting-edge student information system; constituent relationship management (CRM) software; and finance, human resources and payroll solutions.

Campus Management's solutions are specifically designed to provide institutions the flexibility they need to compete in the ever-changing higher education landscape by offering products that support changes in education delivery, recruitment, financial aid, finance, human resources, payroll, and regulatory compliance. Today, nearly 2,000 campuses in 18 countries utilize Campus Management to unite campuses and workflows, improve student outcomes and achieve goals.

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