



ABOUT THE CLIENT

Industry:
Higher Education

Employees: 700

Students: 3,000

Project Timeline:
Holy Cross completed its migration to AWS in six months and went live in October 2021.

The College began its Fluid enrollment project in November 2022 and completed it in June 2023.

The College of the Holy Cross is a private Jesuit liberal arts college in Worcester, Massachusetts, founded by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Since 1843, Holy Cross has sought to educate students who, as leaders in business, professional, and civic life, would live by the highest intellectual and ethical standards. Holy Cross is a four-year residential undergraduate institution with approximately 3,000 students. The College has been recognized with an “A+” on Forbes’ list of College Financial Grades and an “A” on Niche’s list of Best Colleges in America.

Holy Cross Re-Platforms Its PeopleSoft Applications in the AWS Cloud and Implements Improved Student Experience

The Challenge

Like many colleges and universities, Holy Cross is under increasing pressure to remain agile in today’s competitive Higher Education landscape. After the recent losses of key IT staff due to retirements and competitive labor markets, the College faced the dual challenge of recruiting employees with hard-to-find PeopleSoft skills and the imminent need to replace its existing hardware. Holy Cross met both challenges by shifting capital funds to operations by hosting its PeopleSoft applications in the AWS Cloud and using Sierra-Cedar’s managed services to support the PeopleSoft infrastructure. With support from Sierra-Cedar, Holy Cross improved user experience and functionality through enhancements to its PeopleSoft applications. The College recently completed its Fluid self-service and enrollment deployment, including the rollout of custom class search options.

Objectives

- Scale to meet peak infrastructure demands for the Campus Solutions ERP application during student registration periods. Like most Higher Education institutions, Holy Cross experiences bursts of user concurrency demand on its student systems twice a year.
- Eliminate labor and system recovery single points of failure in supporting the PeopleSoft applications. Holy Cross previously had one individual responsible for supporting PeopleSoft technology and required investments to improve disaster recovery readiness.
- Stay up to date with important application and system updates. With access to additional resources and Sierra-Cedar’s proprietary FlexOps® orchestration and automation platform, Holy Cross sought to accelerate access to automated environment build, patching, scaling, refresh, and security monitoring abilities.
- Accelerate cloud transition strategy with an inclusive, SaaS-like service model that helps enable internal staff to focus on mission-critical needs supporting student success.
- Continue to support, enhance, and optimize the PeopleSoft functionality and user experience.

CLIENT BENEFITS



- Holy Cross chose to re-platform its PeopleSoft applications in the AWS Cloud rather than complete a “lift and shift.” Re-platforming allowed Holy Cross to take advantage of cost savings and rethink how the College can work more efficiently in the cloud. Becoming cloud-native allowed Holy Cross to achieve scalability, sustainability, resiliency, and intellectual capacity in its PeopleSoft environments.
- The average PeopleSoft system response time has improved noticeably during peak periods like student enrollment events. Student enrollment previously took up to 60 seconds before confirmation, causing students unnecessary worry and prompting numerous calls to the help desk to confirm registration. On AWS, the system now confirms student enrollment in two seconds or less.
- Clients like Holy Cross appreciate increased cost transparency after migrating to AWS, so it can view actual costs minute-by-minute and leverage that information into real savings. Holy Cross can now choose what to spin up and when, saving money by leveraging AWS environments (Development, Test) only as needed. Holy Cross used to require 15 App Servers to accommodate peak periods; with AWS, the College now only requires eight App Servers for peak periods and five App Servers during normal usage.
- Automated services to patch and monitor security events have resulted in fewer exposure events when compared to on-premises applications and less downtime for users, with most patching occurring with no downtime at all.
- The mobile-friendly Fluid enrollment deployment and the ability to scale up during peak registration periods dramatically improved the overall registration experience for College students and staff.
- The College of the Holy Cross met its objectives with AWS and Sierra-Cedar and continues to enjoy proactive, high-touch service for its PeopleSoft applications.

Working with AWS and Sierra-Cedar, the College of the Holy Cross has scaled our infrastructure to meet our peak period requirements during student enrollment. Course enrollment confirmations that previously took up to a minute are now completed for students in seconds running on AWS.”

Brian Bergeron
ERP Manager
College of the Holy Cross