



Bowie State University Upgrades to Human Capital Management and Campus Solutions 9.0 Using Sierra-Cedar's Upgrade Lab and Onsite Support



BACKGROUND

Founded in 1865, Bowie State University (Bowie) is the oldest Historically Black College/University in Maryland and one of the ten oldest in the country. Bowie's 5,400 students, along with faculty and staff, come from many ethnic backgrounds. As an institution of the University System of Maryland, Bowie carries out the System's mission of providing high-caliber, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities. Bowie offers 25 undergraduate and 30 master's, doctoral, and advanced certification programs. Its advanced research facilities include one of the world's 100 most powerful supercomputers and a satellite operations control center managed in conjunction with NASA.

CHALLENGES

To ensure that it had continued support for PeopleSoft Campus Solutions and HCM after support for 8.0 ended, Bowie established an aggressive upgrade schedule. However, the University had limited staff to support the upgrade in-house and limited funding for full-time consulting. Bowie was also concerned about the lack of documentation from its original implementation and the level of PeopleSoft knowledge among its current staff due to the many staffing changes at all levels since the original implementation. Consequently, leaders of the PeopleSoft project at Bowie thought it might be best to "re-implement" PeopleSoft as they moved to 9.0 rather than simply upgrade from 8.0.

SOLUTION

Bowie recognized that a reimplementation was likely to be costly and time consuming; but without detailed information on the system issues it faced, it was not clear what its real needs were. Bowie turned to its original implementation provider, Sierra-Cedar, to address this issue and to upgrade the applications using the most cost-effective approach. Sierra-Cedar initially conducted a detailed PeopleSoft 9.0 Assessment, which was completed in August 2007. The results of the Assessment indicated that a reimplementation was not necessary, but that specific business processes had to be prioritized and targeted for improvement. The results of the Assessment also identified, recommended, and prioritized extended tasks to position Bowie with the functionality, training, and documentation it needed to increase the value of its system. By doing the Assessment, Sierra-Cedar was able to help Bowie organize its staff for the upgrade, which helped to expedite the upgrade process and optimize staff time.

Industry	Higher Education
Services	Lab Upgrade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Account Management Functional Consulting Technical Consulting
Application & Modules	PeopleSoft Campus Solutions 8.0 to 9.0 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Advisement Admissions and Recruiting Campus Community Financial Aid Student Financials Student Records Self Service PeopleSoft CRM 8.0 to 9.0 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources Benefits Time & Labor Payroll Interface Commitment Accounting
Client Since	2002

Sierra-Cedar helped us to minimize costs and accelerate our timeline to upgrade Oracle/PeopleSoft's Campus Solutions and HCM applications from 8.0 to 9.0. Sierra-Cedar conducted a thorough Assessment that resulted in a cost-effective upgrade approach. By using the Sierra-Cedar Upgrade Lab, we were able to keep the project on schedule and optimize the time of our technical staff. Sierra-Cedar flexibly staffed the project by sharing consultants among the USM campuses, which facilitated knowledge transfer and leveraged our staffing resources.

Marivic Weiss

Interim Vice President for Information Technology

Using the Sierra-Cedar Upgrade Lab to do the technical upgrade work addressed the challenge of the aggressive timeline, provided a formal structure for the project, and gave the Bowie technical team time to become familiar with the new software and tools. Bowie used remote Sierra-Cedar technical consultants to assist with some of the retrofit development work; but for the most part, the Bowie technical team was available to do retrofit work with modifications they were most familiar with and would need to support in the future. The Sierra-Cedar support provided a boost to the development effort that needed to be completed to ensure a successful upgrade and freed up time for Bowie staff for more strategic technical tasks. The majority of the development work was completed early in the upgrade, which allowed sufficient time for detailed testing of the upgraded customizations.

Sierra-Cedar consultants created a Detailed Task List (DTL) and module-specific Upgrade Workbooks that supported the Bowie functional leads so they could take ownership of all aspects of the upgrade. Sierra-Cedar created maps for the current flow in Financial Aid and Admissions and enhanced functionality flow documents

for some of the new functionality Bowie wanted to implement. We created a testing book for each module that contained the test plan, test scripts, and testing results from each test move. The testing book enabled Bowie to take responsibility for the detailed and iterative testing process that is required for an upgrade.

Utilizing the upgrade lab allowed the Bowie State applications team the opportunity to focus on the core technical work that needed to be accomplished rather than on becoming experts in a task that only needed to be performed for upgrade purposes. This allowed us to leverage our limited resources to ensure all stakeholders were satisfied with the retrofits and customizations necessary for a successful upgrade. The Sierra-Cedar technical and functional teams were excellent and made knowledge transfer a priority, were extremely responsive, and were a major contributor to the upgrade success. I have been working on implementations and upgrades for 15 years and I have never had one that had so few conversion and post upgrade issues. This is directly attributable to Sierra-Cedar's attention to detail and professionalism of their entire team.

Margo Ray

Former Project Manager

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

While focusing on a successful upgrade, Bowie was able to incorporate many new and improved business processes by taking advantage of additional 9.0 capabilities such as Self Service features, Equation Engine, Satisfactory Academic Progress, Population Select and Population Update, Communication Generation, XML Transcripts, etc. The cost of the upgrade and extended support were kept down by utilizing the Sierra-Cedar Lab and sharing resources with other University System of Maryland (USM) upgrade projects, enabling Sierra-Cedar consultants to share documentation and transfer knowledge to Bowie and other USM institutions concurrently.

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