California State University, Fullerton and Sierra-Cedar Expand User Involvement to Achieve Successful Campus Solutions Design and On-time Implementation

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY FULLERTON

Industry	Higher Education
Services	**Implementation** • Project Management • Functional Consulting • Technical Consulting
Application & Modules	**PeopleSoft Campus Solutions 8.9** • Academic Advisement • Admissions and Recruiting • Campus Community • Campus Self Service • Financial Aid • Student Financials • Student Records
Client Since	2006

BACKGROUND

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) was established In 1957 as the 12th State College in California. Originally named Orange County State College, by 1972, the name evolved to California State University, Fullerton. Today, there are more than 35,000 students attending the institution. Since 1963, the curriculum has expanded to include lower-division work and many graduate programs, as well as numerous credential and certificate programs. At CSU, Fullerton, faculty, students and staff work in close collaboration to expand knowledge in teaching and research. Fullerton is a comprehensive, regional university with a global outlook, located in Orange County, a technologically rich and culturally dynamic area of metropolitan Los Angeles. (www.fullerton.edu).

CHALLENGES

One of the challenges that CSUF faced was building user buy-in and involvement in this project to implement the California State University Common Management System (CMS) Campus Solutions 8.9. There was resistance to implementing a new system among some staff members, who were relatively satisfied with their highly customized and well supported legacy SIS Plus system. Another challenge was to control the number of customizations to the new system given the limited project timeframe and support implications. CSUF also had budgetary constraints that limited external consulting to support the project. The IT staff had competing priorities during this period because it was also concurrently upgrading its CMS Human Capital Management (HCM) and Finance systems. The Campus Solutions software was not as well understood by the staff as were the HCM and Finance systems. The CSUF Project Team experienced the reality of a slower decision-making process when implementing a student system.

SOLUTION

Sierra-Cedar responded to the budgetary constraints by using a flexible staffing model of rotating functional and technical staff into the project every other month. Sierra-Cedar and CSUF made a commitment of resources to the Campus Solutions implementation project by broadening staff participation in the project. This expanded involvement by functional staff resulted in increased user support for the new software. In keeping with this approach, we involved both functional and technical staff in the design of modifications. Sierra-Cedar consultants also focused on transferring knowledge to both functional and technical staff. The project also filled an important functionality void by developing a customization for Extended Education.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

The project was completed on time and within budget. Sierra-Cedar made one major adjustment to the project schedule by recommending that registration go live for fall rather than summer. This adjustment was critical to completing the project on time. As a result of implementing the new system, faculty can now access the system to review their course schedule and class rosters and post grades online. Faculty and advisors can also access the system to view student information, including unofficial transcripts and degree progress reports. Students can access the system to search the class schedule, register, get grades, review their accounts, and view degree plans online. Data is real-time and includes prerequisite information as well as exam schedule information.

The Sierra-Cedar team exceeded our expectations on our PeopleSoft Campus Solutions implementation project. The consultants' functional knowledge, combined with their technical expertise, complemented our internal staff for a successful project through the planning, fit gap, development, testing and go live phases. We were able to use a hybrid model that combined on-site and off-site services. This was a highly flexible and unusual approach for a consulting firm, but it ensured that our campus had maximum expertise available while minimizing costs. Most of all, Sierra-Cedar's willingness to listen to us to meet our needs— from top level management down to our individual consultants—guaranteed our success. I would strongly recommend Sierra-Cedar as a partner.

Amir Dabirian
Vice President for Information Technology/
Chief Information Technology Officer;

We have been very satisfied with Sierra-Cedar's consulting services. From start to finish and top to bottom they have demonstrated professionalism and a genuine customer service attitude that has been unparalleled. From the first, when they designed the interactive design and prototype sessions (IDPs) to be inclusive of key campus constituent groups, through their work with the campus to create flexible local and remote consulting schedules, Sierra-Cedar has provided an all-around solid value.

Sierra-Cedar consultants' depth of knowledge in designing efficient modifications to address our campus needs, their strength in bringing campus staff along through the learning curve, and their consistently speedy response to issues have been second to none. They have helped us optimize and migrate our existing processes, which has saved us incalculable re-engineering time. I would recommend Sierra-Cedar to anyone with a highly customized legacy system looking to make a transition to a new platform.

Chris Manriquez
Associate Vice President for Information Technology/
Academic Technology Officer
ERP/CMS Project Director

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