



Central Washington University and Sierra-Cedar's Strategic Partnership Results in a Comprehensive PeopleSoft ERP Environment



Central Washington University

BACKGROUND

Central Washington University (CWU) is a comprehensive, four-year public university, granting baccalaureate and master's degrees from its main campus in Ellensburg, Washington, where approximately 8,500 students attend. An additional 2,000 students attend classes at one or more of the six distance-learning centers located in Pierce County, Lynnwood, Moses Lake, Des Moines, Wenatchee, and Yakima. CWU's approach is to take each student's future personally. In support of the institutional vision and goals, CWU has created a current, comprehensive ERP environment using the Oracle/PeopleSoft applications. Sierra-Cedar has been a strategic partner to CWU through much of this progressive process by implementing one and upgrading three PeopleSoft applications.

CHALLENGES

CWU laid the foundation for its ERP environment beginning in August of 1999, when it went live with 7.5 of Human Capital Management (HCM). This achievement was followed by the successful implementation of the Financials Management System (FMS) in July 2001. However, by March of 2004, CWU recognized the need to upgrade FMS from 7.5 to 8.8. They knew that the upgrade would be complex due to the multi-version migration that entailed moving from the PeopleSoft client-server technology to the current web technology. CWU also faced the issue of sizing new hardware to accommodate the upgraded financials database.

CWU extended the ERP environment to the student domain, beginning in 2002, with the implementation of the Campus Solutions application. This introduced new challenges, including the need to upgrade HCM to be compatible with Campus Solutions 8.0. Another challenge was the time-consuming task of converting more than 97,000 student records, involving almost two million course records. Three years after successfully implementing the Campus Solutions application, CWU determined that it was time to upgrade the HCM and Campus Solutions applications to take advantage of the technology and functionality of the new releases. However, CWU had limited funding that precluded a full lab upgrade or a consultant-heavy approach. They also had limited resources to migrate the customizations within the identified timeline.

SOLUTION

CWU selected Sierra-Cedar to assist them in implementing Campus Solutions 8.0 by providing project management, functional and technical consulting services. Sierra-Cedar assisted CWU overcome the conversion challenge by sharing pre-developed conversion templates and programs. We also conducted iterative unit testing and data validation to confirm the accuracy of data conversion. To optimize the benefits of the Campus Solutions software,

Industry	Higher Education
Services	Implementation, Upgrade, and Lab Upgrade services; project management, functional and technical consulting
Application & Modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PeopleSoft Financials upgrade 7.5 to 8.8 • PeopleSoft HCM upgrade 8.0 to 8.9 • PeopleSoft Campus Solutions implementation and upgrade from 8.0 to 8.9
Project Timeline	March 2004 to October 2007
Client Since	2002

we facilitated the re-engineering of CWU's business processes. As a result, CWU successfully converted the data and fully implemented Campus Solutions 8.0 in September of 2004.

In April 2005, CWU and Sierra-Cedar began the upgrade of FMS from 7.5 to 8.8. Sierra-Cedar assisted CWU with complex set-up issues and provided access to other Sierra-Cedar resources including the Upgrade Lab. Sierra-Cedar and CWU successfully completed multiple upgrade passes, including significant changes required to support Commitment Control. The upgrade was successfully completed in May 2006.

CWU continued its strategic partnership with Sierra-Cedar through a targeted consulting approach with lab support to upgrade the Campus Solutions and HCM applications from 8.0 to 8.9. The onsite consultants addressed the fit/gap, prototyping and testing of the upgraded system, as well as project management support. The lab provided customization migration and helpdesk support.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

The result of Sierra-Cedar's support in upgrading FMS was that CWU users quickly adapted to the major changes such as Commitment Control, upgrade of nVision reporting, changes in some of the business processes and the new Web navigation. Year-end processing was very successful.

Central Washington University successfully implemented a major upgrade of the Financial Management System with key assistance from Sierra-Cedar. Without their expert knowledge, flexibility of approach and ability to access other resources, this project may have required far more time and resources to bring to completion. The University has talent, but limited technical and functional staff, so the experience and project knowledge provided was a very key success factor. I can't say enough good things about our Sierra-Cedar consultants.

Donald Diebert

Director, Project Management and IT Services

The Campus Solutions software exceeded performance expectations. For the first time, full prerequisite and repeat checking could be done at time of enrollment. Applicants, students, faculty and staff have experienced a new level of information access via extensive use of web-based self service. With the most recent cost-effective lab upgrade to 8.9, CWU and Sierra-Cedar reduced the number of customizations by almost 20%. Many areas in Human Resources were redefined utilizing best business practices and CWU policies, procedures and processes. The aggressive 40-week project is on schedule, and the upgrade is anticipated to be completed at the end of October 2007—significantly under budget.

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