Sierra-Cedar Implements PeopleSoft Campus Solutions 9.0 in iNtegrate Project for Nevada System of Higher Education

BACKGROUND

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) is comprised of two universities, a state college, four community colleges, and a research institute. NSHE is governed by an elected Board of Regents. Working on behalf of the Board, the Chancellor's Offices (north and south), also referred to as System Administration, develop NSHE strategy and implement Board policies.

The newest institution of higher learning in NSHE is Nevada State College (NSC) founded in 2002. With an enrollment of approximately 2,000 students, NSC is a comprehensive college located in Henderson, Nevada not far from Las Vegas, Nevada. The College also has a satellite campus in downtown Henderson and offers dual enrollment programs in partnership with community colleges across the state.

Industry	Higher Education
Services	Implementation and Integration
Application & Modules	• Oracle Service Bus 11.1.1.5 • SOA Suite 11.1.1.5 • WebLogic 11.1.1.5 • JRockit • Oracle Database 11g • JDeveloper
Client Since	2011

Great Basin College (GBC) delivers associate and bachelor degrees to approximately 3,600 students throughout rural Nevada. Its service area covers 62,000 square miles. The GBC Internet campus has grown rapidly as it serves students from across the nation and around the world. GBC is celebrating 37 years of service in northeastern Nevada.

The College of Southern Nevada (CSN) has been the backbone of the state's dynamic growth and prosperity since 1971, when the college first opened its doors to 402 students. Since that time, CSN has grown along with Southern Nevada and now has more than 43,000 students. CSN provides more than 3,000 courses per semester in more than 120 fields of study, including more than 25 degree and certificate programs that are entirely online.

With an enrollment of approximately 5,200 students, Western Nevada College (WNC) has been providing a wide range of educational opportunities to the people of Western Nevada, including college degrees, certificates, university transfer courses, work force training, and community education. The college, founded in 1971, is based in Nevada's capital, Carson City, with rural campuses in Fallon and Minden.

In 1979, the Board of Regents established Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC). It is now the fastest growing college in northern Nevada, serving over 13,000 students with programs leading to associate degrees and certificates in more than 50 academic and occupational areas.

In its 52-year history, the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) has undergone a transformation from a small branch college into a thriving urban research institution of 28,000 students and 3,300 faculty and staff. UNLV's 332-acre main campus is home to more than 220 undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programs.

The University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) was founded in 1874 as the State University of Nevada in Elko, Nevada, about 300 miles northeast of its present-day campus in Reno. In 1885, the legislature moved the University from Elko to Reno. Today, UNR offers its 16,800 students a comprehensive selection of degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level and is one of the top 120 American universities for funded research.

CHALLENGES

NSHE has dealt with a number of challenges, the most daunting one being a reduction in state funding. Proportionately, state funding for higher education in Nevada is substantially less now than it has been in the past 30 years. The irony of the current situation is that while state funding for higher education is declining, demand for higher education is growing. As a consequence, NSHE has had to find ways to serve a growing student base with decreasing state dollars.

Although NSHE had administrative systems that supported the business operations of the institutions, the 20-year-old systems were aging, highly customized and expensive to maintain. Many manual processes existed and the diverse business processes within and among the institutions needed to be redesigned to operate more consistently and efficiently. NSHE had nine separate and inconsistent student information systems that had no capability of sharing information with each other.

SOLUTION

To address these and other pressing challenges, NSHE established the iNtegrate Project, the brand given to the System-wide implementation of new information systems for all NSHE institutions. It was to be the largest information technology overhaul in the history of NSHE. The iNtegrate Project Implementation Team committed to the following goals:

- Complete the project on time and within budget
- Position NSHE's administrative applications to support significant growth and expansion
- Optimize the delivered capabilities of the software to adapt business processes, improve productivity, personalize service, enable self service, and provide access to services
- Implement the most upgrade-compatible system feasible and minimize total cost of ownership
- Implement a reliable, secure, and scalable technical infrastructure

The Sierra-Cedar team of project managers and consultants are experts in Higher Education business processes, knowledgeable about all aspects of PeopleSoft Campus Solutions, innovative and creative in their approach to modifications; but most importantly, they are completely focused on achieving the Nevada System of Higher Education's project vision and goals. The Nevada System of Higher Education is a complicated and uncommon system of mixed-mission institutions—community colleges, a state college and universities. As a result, we have encountered numerous implementation challenges, as well as exceptional opportunities! From our one-of-a-kind NSHE ID, which is an ID that stays with the student as they move among our institutions, to our unique multi-institution shared instance, we found our ideal project partner in Sierra-Cedar.

"In Memoriam" Robyn R. Render
Vice Chancellor for IT & iNtegrate Project Director
Nevada System of Higher Education

Giving priority to improving student services, NSHE determined that the first information system to be implemented would be the Oracle/PeopleSoft Student Information System (Campus Solutions). The implementation model was structured as follows: (1) two institutions would serve as pilots to design, configure, test and implement the Campus Solutions software; (2) the remaining institutions—the co-pilots would follow immediately thereafter; (3) all institutions would have the opportunity to participate in person or via video conferencing in the design of the system; and (4) there would be one project manager and one implementation team. The designated pilot institutions were UNLV, where the project team would reside, and TMCC where there would be regular visits from the project team.

The NSHE Board of Regents selected Sierra-Cedar as the implementation services provider for the implementation. The project was launched in July 2008, with a completion date of October 2011. Sierra-Cedar's approach to the implementation was as follows: (1) facilitate effective system-wide decision making, (2) structure a 37-month timeline around the student life cycle and academic calendar of each NSHE institution, and (3) utilize a business process-centric methodology.

The scope of the iNtegrate project includes the implementation of selected modules of PeopleSoft Campus Solutions 9.0 system including Recruiting and Admissions, Student Records, Academic Advising, Financial Aid and Student Financials. The iNtegrate project also encompasses the NSHE ID, a common system-wide identification a student will keep throughout their education, and Data Warehouse solutions. To accommodate the diversity of institutional types and sizes within NSHE, the iNtgrate Project determined that there should be three database instances of the Campus Solutions software. One instance is for UNLV, one for UNR, and the third instance is shared by the remaining institutions of CSN, GBC, NSC, TMCC and WNC.

The iNtegrate Steering Committee provides oversight and deals with major operational aspects related to implementing the iNtegrate project, including issues brought to the committee by the iNtegrate Project Director. The committee consists of the iNtegrate Project Director, the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, two institution chief financial officers (CFOs), two institution chief information officers (CIOs), two institution academic affairs officers and two institution student service officers (CSOs). To maximize institutions' participation on this committee, the CFOs, CIOs and CSOs all have rotating terms. It is chaired by the NSHE iNtegrate Project Director.

Sierra-Cedar's previous success with a fast-track implementation was a key element in their selection as our Oracle PeopleSoft Campus Solutions integrator. Sierra-Cedar's consultants brought a high level of higher education business process experience to the project and helped transfer knowledge to our project team to ensure success not only during implementation but also after project completion. Sierra-Cedar always went the extra mile to listen to our concerns and provide the necessary resources and support to complete critical tasks. Their professionalism, breadth of knowledge in project management and higher education business processes, as well as their technical expertise, allowed us to complete the project on-time and within budget.

Christopher Winslow
Executive Director, Information Technology Operations
Truckee Meadows Community College

NSHE's iNtegrate Project sponsors file sharing for all documents. Project meeting minutes, status reports, project plans, issue logs and other project management resources are maintained in this repository. Additionally, the HyperOffice calendar contains all relevant information for participants of Interactive Design and Prototyping sessions, regularly scheduled project meetings as well as special meetings and events. Many project meetings and presentations use webinar resources to share live and recorded presentations.

RESULTS

Working with Sierra-Cedar, NHSE's first module to go live was the Admissions module, launched on September 14, 2009 at UNLV and on October 12, 2009 at TMCC. The admissions module was used by students applying for admissions for fall 2010 at both schools. These two pilot institutions completed implementing the remaining student modules—Student Records, Financial Aid, Student Financials, and Academic Advising. Despite going live with the system during the dynamic start of fall semester, both UNLV and TMCC project leaders reported a smooth transition with a high rate of student and faculty satisfaction. TMCC was able to disburse more financial aid during this time compared to the previous fall semester, despite having less staff. TMCC was also able to deposit financial awards faster than ever before. In many cases, funds were deposited the same day as the financial awards were accepted by the student.

The remaining campuses of CSN, GBC, NSC, UNR and WNC began implementing these same modules in the fall of 2010. All seven institutions will have a full suite of new student modules in place by the fall of 2011 and will have the ability to share information with each other. Not only will these new capabilities be of great service to students, but the new system will also be an excellent managerial tool for monitoring enrollment patterns and reporting to the Board of Regents and the State. NSHE is the only higher education system in the country that has been able to implement such a system with so many institutions that are each different in nature.

A unique feature of the iNtegrate Project has been the development of a permanent student identification number, called the "NSHE ID," which provides the student with an ID that is known to all NSHE institutions and will be used as the primary key to track the student's attendance at any NSHE institution. Ultimately, all students will have one NSHE identification number that they will keep throughout their education, making it a more seamless process to co-enroll, transfer, register for continuing education, extended studies or distance education among NSHE institutions.

BENEFITS

The Student Services Module Task Force selected the following four performance measures as key indicators of success at each institution. These measures are written with the goal of 100% achievement at the end of the project, with continuous improvement during implementation. The adoption of these measures did not limit individual institutions from naming their own appropriate, additional performance measures:

- Students will have access to all Internet self service features and communications in the iNtegrate student services module at any time convenient for them.
- Students will be able to conduct all standard student services transactions online if they so desire.
- Students will be able to conduct all Internet self service transactions using one common ID, regardless of NSHE institution.
- Students using Internet self service for online course selection transactions will receive confirmation of enrollment or waitlisted status online. Follow-up notification will occur via internet for students who are waitlisted to confirm that they are either now enrolled in class or still waitlisted up to the last day of registration.