Sierra-Cedar and National University Integrate PeopleSoft Enterprise Systems

BACKGROUND

Based in La Jolla, National University® is the second-largest, private, non-profit institution of higher learning in California. Founded in 1971, National focuses on serving non-traditional students at its 28 campuses in California and Nevada. In its five schools and one college, the University offers courses in a one-course-per-month format which allows students to balance competing work and life priorities.

National University is the flagship institution of the larger National University System, which was established in 2001 to meet the emerging demands for education in the 21st century. The National University System includes National Polytechnic College of Engineering and Oceaneering, Spectrum Pacific Learning Company LLC, National University Virtual High School, California Medical Institute, and National University International.

CHALLENGES

In 2004, National University selected the PeopleSoft Enterprise Systems to replace its growing labyrinth of data processes running on aging mainframe technology. Its major challenge was adapting these systems to its non-traditional academic calendar, structure, and business processes, and then enabling over 800 staff members in 31 locations to make a successful transition to the new system. Another critical challenge was improving the effectiveness of its recruitment efforts. Prior to this project, the University did not have an effective system for planning and tracking recruiting campaigns or measuring the accountability of its recruiters. The University also faced a challenge attracting and retaining technical staff with the necessary PeopleSoft experience and expertise. This contributed to system performance and end-user service issues that negatively impacted faculty, students and staff.

Industry	Higher Education
Services	**PeopleSoft Implementation, Hosting and Upgrades** • Project Mgmt • Functional Consulting • Technical Consulting
Application & Modules	**Campus Solutions 8.0** • Admissions • Student Records • Academic Advisement • Financial Aid • Student Financials • Campus Community • Campus Self Service **CRM 8.8** Sales and Marketing **Financials 8.9** • General Ledger • Purchasing • Payables • Asset Management • Business Planning and Budgeting **HCM 8.0** • Human Resources • Payroll Interface • Base Benefits • Benefits Admin **Enterprise Portal 8.8**
Client Since	2003

SOLUTION

Adapting PeopleSoft ERP software to the University's academic structure and calendar required some significant bolt-on modifications, particularly in the Financial Aid-Loans area, to enable the PeopleSoft system to calculate aid eligibility and process student loans using Borrower Based Aid Years. National went live with all modules of Campus Solutions in March 2005, on time and within budget. This included the conversion of existing degree audit rules and the completion of numerous additional degrees in approximately 6 months.

In support of its enrollment management programs, National University was among the first universities in the country to implement and use CRM Sales and Marketing to coordinate and track recruiting.

When National University System's Information Technology Group explored options for our upcoming upgrade projects, we again turned to the expertise of the Sierra-Cedar team. Our decision to utilize Sierra-Cedar Managed Services to host our PeopleSoft environment was a natural outgrowth of our excellent relationship. Our institution will accrue many benefits from this decision, including improved disaster recovery and business continuity, improved response time in dealing with database issues that arise from time to time, and improved overall performance.

Eileen D. Heveron, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President, IT

To address system performance and end-user support issues, the University contracted for Sierra-Cedar's remote hosting services. This hosted model streamlined the upgrade process to CRM 9.0 and is expediting the upgrade of Campus Solutions, including HCM 8.0 to 9.0.

RESULTS/BENEFITS

- Most components of the admission, matriculation, financial aid, transfer, and degree audit processes have been automated, greatly reducing its dependence on hard-copy files and manual processes.
- A standardized system is in place to plan and manage recruitment campaigns and track the effectiveness of recruiters.
- All affiliates of the National University System now use PeopleSoft Financials, and several use Human Resources and/or Campus Solutions as well.
- Using a hosted model, National staff are able to align their responsibilities with mission-centric work.

The expertise of the Sierra-Cedar technical consultants was a critical factor in the success of our project. Sierra-Cedar worked closely with our functional teams to design and implement extensive system customizations. The culture of teamwork and knowledge sharing created an environment that allowed our technical staff to benefit from working with the experienced Sierra-Cedar consultants.

Cindi Lang
Associate Director, IT

When we began our implementation project, our cycle time for evaluation of our undergraduate applicants was 120 days or more. Our Sierra-Cedar consultants guided us through the decisions we needed to make in terms of business process changes that would take advantage of our new software, and evaluations now take less than 20 days, representing a decrease in cycle time of over 83%!

James Garrison
Registrar

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