



Oakland
Community
College

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Joe Burdzinski
Program Manager for Continuing Education
Oakland Community College

Datatel Continuing Education Solution Increases Oakland Community College’s Enrollment and Reporting Capabilities

|| SITUATION ||

Oakland Community College’s Professional Education Department wanted to offer online registration and instant enrollment for continuing education and workforce development students. Ideally, students would be able to view available classes 24/7, register, receive instant enrollment status, and pay for their classes online. This type of functionality would be highly convenient to students, and would eliminate the paper trail staff members had to process.

With the College’s legacy system, processing student registrations was very tedious. For professional education courses, all registrations were entered into two separate systems: the College’s administrative system and a Microsoft® Access database for reporting purposes.

The College offers several comprehensive workforce development training programs by hiring several outside training companies. Given the use of the two databases, accurate reporting was extremely difficult. In addition, many students continued to apply with the paper application, so data entry mistakes and lost paperwork were common. One comprehensive system was needed to electronically track invoices. The right system would also eliminate the tedious paper process, and be equally accessible to all staff.

Another challenge was that Oakland Community College’s legacy system was unable to house both non-credit and for-credit transcripts. For example, if a non-credit student wanted to take for-credit classes, the system could not combine both transcripts. One general transcript was needed not only for students to prove to employers that they had successfully completed workforce development training courses, but also to document that they had taken for-credit courses.

Yet another challenge was that workforce development instructors were not authorized to enter grades into the legacy system because they were not full-time employees. Most instructors are consultants with training firms or are employed by local businesses. These instructors had to give the final grades to the professional education office to enter into the system, which took time to process, and subsequently delayed students from accessing their grades.

|| SOLUTION & RESULTS ||

Oakland Community College licensed Datatel® Colleague®, an enterprise resources planning (ERP) solution designed exclusively for higher education, as well as Datatel Continuing Education Solution. Datatel Continuing Education Solution provides instant enrollment capabilities and online registration and payment functionality. It also enables users to perform in-depth marketing analyses to track enrollment trends.

Datatel’s Professional Services team worked closely with Oakland Community College’s professional education staff throughout the implementation, helping the College’s staff thoroughly understand their customized needs, and tailoring the product accordingly. The results have met and exceeded the College’s expectations, and yielded a high return on investment.

Application and Instant Enrollment

“One of the most significant improvements is that enrollment has increased now that students can apply online and receive instant enrollment status,” said Joe Burdzinski, program manager for Continuing Education at Oakland Community College. “Before using Colleague, the staff had to process each student’s forms either in person or over the phone, and then enter the registrations in both the administrative system and Microsoft Access, which prolonged the application and registration processes. The online application has dramatically decreased the time staff spends processing registrations, and as a result, they are able to spend more time assisting students.”

Giving students the ability to pay for courses online has led to an increase in actual payments received. It has also eliminated credit processing fees by avoiding the charges involved when a credit card transaction occurs.

“With our department’s improved efficiencies, we have also been able to add new professional education programs, increasing our offerings by 70 percent,” said Burdzinski.

Reporting

With Colleague’s reporting capabilities, the professional education staff can run the necessary reports from one central system. They can also view reports spanning several years for reviewing purposes. In addition, the staff can use Colleague to invoice the workforce development training companies directly, eliminating the cumbersome paper trails previously involved.

Colleague maintains all the data associated with a student in one record, instead of two separate systems. The system also produces a transcript that lists non-credit courses along with the credit courses completed. By using one ERP system, both credit and non-credit students can easily switch back and forth between academic standings. Workforce development students receive a grade even when a course is classified as non-credit, and are provided a transcript as documentation of the completed training.

Course instructors are now able to enter grades for their training classes into the system from any location, whether or not they are employed full-time. Students have immediate online access to their final grades, and staff is not burdened with data entry.

Since the implementation of the Datatel solution, Oakland Community College’s Professional Education department offers instant enrollment, online registration, and payment capabilities, which have resulted in increased enrollment numbers, and in turn, enabled the department to increase their program offerings by 70 percent.

The ability for outside instructors to enter grades into the system themselves has also enabled the institution to offer more programs. Combining students’ transcripts to include both non-credit and for-credit courses increases ease-of-use for both students and staff, and proves to employers that supporting their employees’ continued education is worthwhile.

In summary, Datatel Continuing Education Solution has helped the Professional Education department at Oakland Community College achieve its goal – to offer more to its students by streamlining processes and increasing efficiencies with an advanced ERP system.

ABOUT OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Oakland Community College is located in Bloomfield Hills, MI, just 25 miles from Detroit. The institution has five campuses and is the 13th largest community college in the nation. With more than 70,000 students, the College offers 30 associate degrees and 45 certificate programs, while its workforce development office offers several training opportunities, including essential skills training, job training assistance, professional education, and ACT testing. For more information, visit www.oaklandcc.edu.



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