



NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

STREAMLINING ADMISSIONS WITH STUDENT LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT

QUICK FACTS

Industry

Higher education and research

Budget

US\$175 million

Student Enrollment

More than 15,000

Location

Highland Heights, Kentucky

Web Site

www.nku.edu

SAP® Solutions and Services

SAP® Student Lifecycle Management application, SAP Business Suite software

To keep pace with rapid growth and meet its vision for the future, Northern Kentucky University (NKU) needed to replace an aging student information system that no longer made the grade. Using the SAP® Student Lifecycle Management application, NKU modernized its online application process, enhanced students' ability to calculate transfer credit equivalencies, and learned the value of a scalable, enterprise-wide technology foundation.

Key Challenges

- Replace aging student information system
- Manage student population growth
- Enhance transparency of admissions process for students
- Increase efficiency of student lifecycle management through self-service
- Replace point solutions with enterprise technology infrastructure

Implementation Best Practices

- Deployed multilayered governance programs
- Assigned experienced project managers and functional users to project
- Hired SAP Consulting to manage project and provide valuable support after going live
- Integrated NKU technical personnel with SAP training team for complete knowledge transfer
- Strongly supported by business users and executive advisory committee members

Financial and Strategic Benefits

- Gained IT support for university growth
- Enabled more student services without increasing personnel budget
- Enhanced student experience with NKU through intuitive portal interface
- Streamlined workflows for various admissions prospects
- Increased visibility into admissions trends through enhanced reporting
- Handled 30% increase in freshmen applications with same number of personnel
- Supported "green" paperless initiatives

Why SAP Was Selected

- Scalable, upgradable solutions that can grow and adapt to changing requirements
- Rich, intuitive portal functionality
- Integration with the SAP® ERP Human Capital Management and SAP ERP Financials solutions at Northern Kentucky University (NKU)
- Long-standing partnership with SAP
- Expertise of SAP Consulting
- Mature SAP applications that support growth

Low Total Cost of Ownership

- Deployed software rapidly, within planned budget
- Invested in enterprise technology platform to cost-effectively support university growth
- Enabled more efficient deployment of limited personnel resources
- Supported student self-service features, enabling NKU to expand available services

Operational Benefits

Key Performance Indicator	Impact
Average time to process application	-50%
Applications processed per staff member	Increased
Paper costs	Reduced
Data entry effort to create/update student records	Decreased
Student application processing time	5 minutes



“Given the strength of the SAP student lifecycle management software, we expect to reap benefits more rapidly than we could with other products that are not as mature.”

Tim Ferguson, CIO, Northern Kentucky University

Graduating to Enterprise-Scale Technology

Meeting the needs of a rapidly growing student population helped Northern Kentucky University (NKU) learn a welcome lesson about investing for long-term value. Facing an increased volume of student applications and transfer queries, the university wanted to uphold its commitment to excellent service. Yet an antiquated student information system compromised NKU's ability to streamline admissions processing and automate routine communications with prospects and students. Tight budgets prevented NKU from hiring additional staff to handle the expanded workload. What's more, the university's reliance on paper-based reports was hindering its ability to spot and analyze critical admissions trends.

“To support our growth and position us to move forward, we needed a new technology foundation,” says Michelle Hall, director of admissions processing and transfer services at NKU, which is located near Cincinnati. “NKU wanted a forward-thinking solution that would help us increase student control over the application process, as well as service our students and prospects more efficiently.”

Deploying a Better Class of Software

After comparing the SAP® Student Lifecycle Management application with products from SunGard Higher Education, the NKU team quickly realized that the SAP software offered an intuitive portal interface, powerful search features, and

most important, the ability to scale to meet the university's changing needs. Rich, higher education-specific functionality and integration with NKU's existing SAP Business Suite applications moved SAP to the head of the class.

To streamline the implementation, the deployment team worked with the university advisory committee, a project-specific executive advisory committee, and a joint project management organization comprising experts from NKU and SAP. Business users contributed their process expertise, and NKU hired SAP Consulting to help with the installation. “The SAP consultants were fantastic,” says Hall. “When we had an issue, our SAP consultant was able to take it to the development team and get it fixed right away.”

Earning an Advanced Degree in Value

With no increase in personnel, NKU's new student processing system has handled a 30% increase in freshmen applications while improving the admissions process for students. A transfer equivalency application that recently went live helps students determine the value of their transfer credits, saving time for staff while enhancing the students' experience with the university. And the shift away from paper-based forms and processes is helping the university meet its environmental sustainability goals.

NKU expects to realize significant benefits from its investment in an enterprise-class solution. “The SAP Student Lifecycle Management application is allowing us to

be more efficient with the resources we are investing,” says Tim Ferguson, CIO at NKU. “As our requirements, our mission, and the economy change, our new system will provide the flexibility to let us work productively for years to come, without needing to upgrade the technology again.”

Looking forward, the university plans to continue using its SAP software to increase visibility into its own operations, improve efficiencies, and enhance its value to students. NKU recently acquired analytics software from the SAP BusinessObjects™ portfolio that will help analysts mine student data for insight on admission processes and learn to use resources more effectively.

“We're very excited not just about the tremendous work we've already done but also about the opportunities that our integrated SAP Business Suite will deliver, which will pay even more dividends as we move ahead,” says Ferguson.

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