Montgomery County Community College

Admissions
Financial Aid
Registrar

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Celeste Schwartz
Vice President of Information Technology
Montgomery County Community College

When Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) received a grant to help strengthen the institution, it knew that to achieve its goal of helping students succeed, it needed to streamline the time-consuming administrative processes that prevented staff from providing the best student service. Realizing a document management system would create significant process improvements, MCCC decided to implement Perceptive Software process and content management solutions, including Perceptive Content, to fuel greater operational efficiencies on campus.

MCCC selected Perceptive after seeing the system at several conferences and hearing the testimonials of other institutions using the technology. Perceptive Software's partner status with Ellucian was another important consideration for MCCC.

"We have a lot invested in Colleague by Ellucian, so the ability of Perceptive to integrate with Colleague by Ellucian was a big factor in our decision to choose Perceptive Content," says Steve Kephart, Director of Security and Systems Administration.

Perceptive technology integrates with MCCC's existing Colleague by Ellucian system in registration, financial aid and admissions to provide instant access to needed documents directly from a student's record. Using Perceptive Software's patented LearnMode™ technology, MCCC achieved integration quickly and seamlessly, without programming. Now documents are scanned into the system as they are received, linked to the corresponding student Colleague by Ellucian record and routed electronically to staff members using automated workflow.

"I've been in this business a long time, and this was one of the easiest technical implementations I've ever seen," says Celeste Schwartz, Vice President of Information Technology. "Perceptive Software provided wonderful methodology on the project planning, excellent training, very quick implementation, and from the moment we turned it on, it just worked. We saw immediate benefits."

Enhancing Student Service

Administrators knew the time required to find paperwork caused student service to suffer, but Yasmin Williams, Records Management Coordinator for MCCC, explains that the institution was looking to accomplish more than just time savings. "It's not just about getting documents from point A to point B faster," Williams says. "It's about providing more efficient and effective student service, and Perceptive products help us do that."

For example, when a student walked in to the student records and registration office with a question, staff members had to go to a storage room and look through large rolling file cabinets for folders loaded with paperwork. Often students came into the office only to find out it could take another day or two for someone to find their documents and answer their questions.

"It used to take 24 to 48 hours to locate a piece of paper in a file, but now we can pull up everything for that student while he or she is sitting there, so the student leaves our office much more satisfied," Williams says.

In addition, whereas paper documents were inaccessible when sitting on someone else's desk, Perceptive Content gives advisors immediate access to student records, making advising appointments more efficient and effective. "We use technology to advance our strategic direction, the core of which is to serve students. Realizing time gained by the efficiencies of Perceptive products allows us to serve students better," explains Dr. Steady Moono, Dean of Student Success.

Relieving Paperwork Headaches

It's not just students that benefit from MCCC's use of Perceptive Content. Employees and managers are thrilled at the solution's ease of use and the easy access to documents. "Even during our busiest times, documents are scanned into the system within a day or two of when they are received," Williams says. "It's wonderful to be able to pull up a document no matter where it is on campus."

Rather than waiting for paper documents to arrive via campus mail, MCCC professionals route documents electronically via automated workflow. Workflow and reporting tools provide visibility to managers, who can monitor employee workloads and instantly determine where any document is in the process. Managers like Moono receive an email at certain intervals displaying how many documents are in queues and how long they have been waiting. "A wonderful benefit of Perceptive Content is that I can respond very quickly to changes in the flow of documents and deploy personnel as necessary," says Moono.

Protecting Student Data

Perceptive Content also helps MCCC keep student information secure and confidential in support of the institution's FERPA compliance initiatives. Prior to deploying the solution, documents sat on top of desks. Now all documents are securely stored in a central repository, and are available only to authorized users. This allows managers to minimize the number of people who see confidential student information, such as social security numbers.

"Perceptive Content has been a tremendous help in securing student information. It's made FERPA compliance easier for us because we can block access to certain information without interfering with people's workflows," explains Kephart.

Multiplying the Benefits

Though the focus has been on using Perceptive solutions to improve student service and gain efficiency, MCCC has also realized cost savings associated with time and supplies involved with filing or copying documents. In addition, easy access to documents has improved accuracy in areas such as financial aid, where information can be verified at the click of a button. The reduction in errors results in both time and cost savings.

The success of MCCC's implementation has encouraged the college to expand its use of the solution to other areas, including accounts payable, purchasing and grants management. Ease of integration allows MCCC to roll out the software with minimal assistance, giving the institution greater control over its technology plans. By expanding the use of solution to more departments, MCCC will equip more staff members with resources that help them achieve MCCC's goal of helping students become successful.

"The heightened level of efficiency Perceptive Content provides, sends a message to our students that we care about them, and those things are intangibles that communicate the quality of an institution," says Moono.

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Quick Stats

- Main Campus: Blue Bell, Pa.
- Year Founded: 1964
- Number of Students: 11,200
- Integration: Colleague by Ellucian

The Challenges

- Student service suffering from time needed to complete paper-based processes
- Finding a document management solution that integrates easily with Colleague by Ellucian
- Expanding a solution gradually across different areas of the institution
- Securing confidential student information

The Results

- Instant access to documents facilitates faster, more effective student service
- Seamless integration with Colleague by Ellucian maximizes previous technology investments
- Flexibility and easy deployment ensure ability to roll out the solution as needed
- Perceptive security limits document access and supports FERPA compliance

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