

Banner® Document Management Suite Helps Regent University Provide Better Service to Students, and Improved Information Access to Faculty and Staff

The widespread use of the Banner Document Management Suite (BDMS) is helping Regent University provide better service to students, freeing up office space, and making it easier for faculty and staff to access student documents.

Regent University is using the document management and imaging solution to serve its more than 4,000 students in all nine of its academic schools. BDMS integrates with the Banner administrative system to deliver the benefits of paperless document processing. With this unified solution, university staff can securely access electronic documents, such as admissions materials, from within their familiar Banner environment, eliminating the costs of paper management and external imaging system maintenance. All documents are in a password-protected database so that only authorized users have access.

“We scan everything that we want stored as part of a student’s permanent record,” explained Corren McCoy, senior software engineer at Regent University. “These documents include applications, email correspondence, transcripts, letters of reference, financial aid records, and more. The solution makes all the documents accessible and secure.”

Initially, the University began imaging admissions records in Central Enrollment, then progressed to Registration, Academic Records, Financial Aid, the Business Office, and the School of Psychology and Counseling. The Law School, which has a separate admissions office, was the last school to implement imaging. “Some people were reluctant to give up their paper files but now they really like it. It’s great to be able to look up a student and, with just a click, see all the related files,” said McCoy.



Regent University
Virginia Beach, Va
Enrollment: 4,427
www.regent.edu

Results with Banner Document Management Suite:

- Authorized faculty and staff have on-demand access to complete student documentation
- Convenient access to documents increases productivity and facilitates faster decision-making
- Staff can focus more time and attention on other important work
- Valuable space used for document storage is reclaimed for office use





The Law School presented a unique requirement established by the American Bar Association (ABA), which required secure separation of the law students from the general population. The Law School applications include potentially sensitive and subjective data which could impact a candidate's admittance to the Bar. Only select members of the Law School and registrar have access to these students' records. "The document level security features of BDMS were vitally important for this group, and they met the ABA requirement," said Althea Bishard, executive director of Enrollment and Academic Services.

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Because Regent is primarily a graduate school, a committee scrutinizes most applications. By having the documents stored online, multiple committee members can review files concurrently, and at their own convenience, rather than waiting for paper files to be passed around. Also, the electronic images eliminate the risk of misplaced paper documents.

"People love the application," said Tracy Stewart, vice president of information technology at Regent University. "Faculty members can review the documents at their convenience, from their desk or home or wherever it is convenient for them. And everyone has the same consistent information. Before, documents were sometimes missing from files."

The ease of access also is improving interactions among faculty and learners. "When a student is having difficulty in class, professors can go back to their offices and call up the student's transcripts. If they see that the student has had difficulty with that topic before, they might reach out to the student and suggest some help," said Stewart. "Before, it was too difficult and cumbersome for a professor to access this information."

In the Registrar's office, microfiched images were stored in two large fireproof cabinets. Whenever there was a question about a grade change or admissions document, someone from the Registrar's staff would flip through the trays of imaged documents and then print out the appropriate pages. The process was repeated several times each day.

The process of preparing the documents for microfiching was even more tedious. "It took days, even weeks, for our receptionist to prepare the documents," recalled Bishard. "And then we didn't have access to those boxes of documents for weeks after we sent them out to be imaged."

Now that the office is imaging documents electronically, the information is accessible to everyone who has the proper authority. "Before, no one else on campus had access to these documents. We spent a lot of time doing clerical work to get information out to the people who requested it. Now university staff have instant access from their desktops. They have the information they need to make decisions about admissions or other issues, without waiting for days for us to find, print, and mail the information to them. And our staff





is freed up to focus on more important processes that deliver greater value,” said Bishard. “We are saving time, manpower, and space, and are providing better security of records and more convenience. The Banner Document Management Suite helps improve our processes and allows us to provide better customer service, which contributes to the university’s mission.”

The ability to instantly access data also is improving productivity and freeing up space in the Financial Aid office, which uses the solution for all the supporting documents associated with electronic and manual submission of Financial Aid applications.

“The Banner Document Management Suite, integrated with our Banner administrative system, has definitely increased our efficiency,” said Joe Dobrota, director, Central Financial Aid, Regent University. “We no longer have to search for misplaced files; and authorized users all have instant access to information. Financial representatives throughout our schools can review information from their offices, rather than waiting for information to be sent to them. Using imaging, we’ve been able to create a unified, digital storage area that is accessible and secure.”

Having easier access to information ultimately helps the University serve its students better, said Dobrota. “We can immediately review an entire file and give students accurate answers.” The access is especially helpful in meeting the needs of online learning students. “We don’t get a lot of face time with these learners so it is important to give them good service when they call us. We don’t want to put them on hold or ask them to call back. With imaging, we can answer their questions the first time they call. The product has enabled our office to shift from doing routine paperwork to meeting the needs of students in a more timely fashion.”



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— Teresa Foley, manager, Accounts Payable

The Accounts Payable portion of the Business Office began using the Banner Document Management System in late 2007. For this office, scanning has significantly reduced the need to produce multiple hard copies of invoices which were needed for approval for payment.

The instant retrieval of documents also enables office staff to provide historical data faster to outside vendors as well as the campus community of faculty, staff and students. “In the ‘old days’, my staff spent a lot of time manually pulling paperwork to answer phone and e-mail questions as well as pulling check copies for special projects,” recalled Teresa Foley, accounts payable manager. “These tasks took a considerable amount of staff’s time. With the SunGard solution, they have instant retrieval of data and can send quick e-mail replies to the many questions we receive every day. And it helps customers to actually see the answers to their questions rather than hear it over the phone.”



The University plans to expand the imaging capabilities to other segments of the Business Office in the upcoming year, said Foley. "Regent expects its employees to provide excellence and innovation in all that we do. I believe this product aids us in that mission. It provides us with the tools to provide good and efficient customer service."

The most recent department to go live with BDMS is the School of Psychology and Counseling. This office needs to maintain a history of internal student records beyond the capabilities currently provided by the Registrar. The easy availability of data in a centralized location will assist the school when its degree programs are reviewed by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP).

The School has another unique requirement: the need to maintain clinical data for non-Regent clients who utilize the provided health services and programs. Now, staff has the ability to review patient files without fear of data loss or compromise since they will no longer need to route file folders throughout the department. The use of imaging also allows conformity with HIPAA requirements, said Sharon Piper, Associate Dean for Administration, School of Psychology and Counseling.

The Banner Document Management Suite also is freeing up precious office and desk space. "Our offices are extremely cramped and we have little room to store files. Before, we had stacks of manila files on our desks and we had a large room used only for storage. The imaging solution has freed up all this space," recalled Dobrota.

As of July 2008, approximately 180,000 megabytes of data had been imaged. This translates to about 70 standard filing cabinets full of documents. "The number demonstrates the widespread use of the application," said McCoy.

All the imaged documents are backed up on a regular basis and copies are stored offsite. "It is helpful to know that the documents are secure and recoverable," said McCoy. "It provides us with a disaster recovery plan that is not overly expensive in terms of time, storage, and staff."

Overall, the Banner Document Management Suite is increasing productivity and security while providing cost savings at Regent University.

"User acceptance of the solution has been tremendous," said Stewart. "People quickly saw the benefits of imaging to their work processes, and to the students. The solution is very helpful in supporting the University's commitment to use technology to promote quality in every aspect of the university administration."