Banner XtenderSolutions Improves Student Service and Decreases Cost and Cycle Time at Georgia Southern University

By implementing Banner XtenderSolutions throughout Georgia Southern University, the institution is improving customer service and reducing costs. Like many institutions, Georgia Southern University uses Banner as its comprehensive student administrative system, serving all departments throughout the University. In addition, the University is leveraging the power of Banner by integrating it to Banner XtenderSolutions, an imaging and document management solution suite that launches documents and content directly from Banner.

"Our administration recognizes that applications like this really have an impact in times of budget cuts. Imaging has saved us money by reallocating staff, and by making it unnecessary to hire new staff. Plus, we gain savings by no longer purchasing file folders, cabinets, labels, and reams of paper," said Ted Williams, director of technical support services, Georgia Southern University.

But the biggest benefit by far is the instant access to information which results in improved student service. Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie doctoral-research

Georgia Southern University
Statesboro, GA
Enrollment: 17,000
www.georgiasouthern.edu

Results With Banner XtenderSolutions:

- **Efficient, more rapid review and evaluation of student applications**

- **Significant cost reduction in staff time**

- **Release of document storage space**

- **Faster, more accurate data entry and document filing**

- **Maximum ROI by integrating with current IT environment**

university, is using the document imaging solution throughout the University: in Financial Aid, Graduate and Undergraduate Admissions, the Registrar's office, Vice President's office, the College of Graduate Studies, office of Legal Affairs, Housing, Judicial Affairs, Alumni Relations, and Health Services.

Initially, the application was implemented in the Financial Aid office. "We started with financial aid because of the magnitude of documents that they process. The solution is

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essential to helping us track documents that are critical for the awarding process and compliance issues," explained Mr. Williams.

Since implementing Banner XtenderSolutions, the University has been able to convert a 20' x 30' room from a storage area for financial aid documents to a useful computing room. The University also has been able to reallocate one full-time clerical person and reduce the number of student workers.

The Admissions Office soon followed suit. As a result, both departments can provide faster responses to requests at reduced costs. Customer questions now take moments rather than days to answer. University staff can easily route student documents within and across campus offices. When new applicant files arrive, they are scanned and automatically routed to specific counselors, speeding the admission decision process. Office personnel can also e-mail or fax documents directly from their desks – saving additional money by not generating paper for correspondence.

"The solution allows us to provide immediate customer service. When a student calls or comes in with a question, we can find the information and give him or her an immediate answer. And we can do this throughout the university, across departments, and across buildings. The impact is huge," said Mr. Williams. "We learn more with each application. It's a very flexible tool. We have been able to accomplish every new initiative we've undertaken."

The most recent department to go live is the College of Graduate Studies, where the solution is used for the graduate assistantship programs. All departments are able to view all students who are eligible for the program. Banner XtenderSolutions also is being used in the admissions program for graduate college. The University placed its application for admissions to graduate college online, using CollegeNET Applyweb services. When a prospective student submits an application, the Axiom application from SSD creates an image of the document and files it into Banner XtenderSolutions for retrieval within or outside of Banner. Axiom offers the ability to fully integrate data from various forms directly to Banner and Banner XtenderSolutions. SSD and CollegeNET are members of the SunGard Higher Education Collaborative.

The student application is then available for review electronically by the 40 program directors of the seven academic colleges. Program directors can review and share the applications, then post their decision online. Previously, staff had to copy all the paperwork and mail it to the program directors. After reviewing the applications, the program directors would mail back the paperwork along with their decision.

"We've taken a manual process and automated it. As a result, we have taken considerable time and effort out of the graduate admissions process," said Marty Orvin, senior analyst at the University. The University also is using the combination of Axiom and Banner XtenderSolutions for its undergraduate scholarship program. Students fill out the scholarship application online and an electronic document image is formatted and stored in imaging for future reference.

"The capability to automatically import an image into the imaging solution and index it is a huge time savings for us," said Mr. Williams.

Ideally, the University would like to implement the Banner imaging solution into more areas of Georgia Southern University.

"The benefits of imaging are tremendous, and we still have more opportunities to extend its use," emphasized Mr. Williams. "Sometimes, people think new technology will be difficult. But once we sit down with people and explain the process to them, they see that it is very simple. And once they start using it, they love it."