



Adding valuable functionality while protecting a tight budget

In 2011, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania replaced its homegrown student information system with Banner® by Ellucian. Like many state schools, Shippensburg must carefully manage its limited state funding and can't always accommodate staff requests for new functionality.

So when faculty members said they missed a feature of the legacy system—student photos within their class rosters—university leaders worked with Ellucian and found a solution: Banner's Faculty Grade Entry application.

The application not only incorporated student photos, it simplified actual grade entry. It allows faculty to import their existing grade spreadsheets—the data maps directly to the correct fields within Faculty Grade Entry—and eliminate time-consuming, manual entries.

Faculty found the solution so intuitive that no one needed to attend the instructional workshops offered by the university upon implementation.

"Our faculty loved Banner Faculty Grade Entry," said Amy Diehl, director of systems and applications. "They can see the feedback on the number of grades they've submitted and the number of grades they have left to go. Just something so small has made a huge difference in getting those grades in on time. Our registrar doesn't have to go back and follow up with nearly as many people after the grade deadline."

Efficient, cost-effective deployment

Implementation went just as smoothly.

Banner Faculty Grade Entry is built with Ellucian Extensible Ecosystem (XE) principles. It's configurable, scalable, and built with an open architecture, enabling Shippensburg to deploy it quickly, easily, and cost-effectively within the institution's existing Banner environment. In a pre-XE world, adding new functionality meant installing patches to the entire system over an entire weekend.

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About Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania

Shippensburg is one of 14 state schools, with 300 full-time faculty, 100 undergraduate programs, and 57 graduate programs.

Enrollment: 7,548

Business challenges:

- Extend the university's existing technology
- Improve functionality for faculty grade entry
- Carefully manage reduced state funding

Solutions:

- Banner® by Ellucian
- Banner Faculty Grade Entry application

Business outcomes:

- Reduced IT maintenance time and resources
- Increased functionality for faculty
- Saved faculty time by simplifying faculty grade entry
- Reduced missing or incomplete grade entries, thus reducing the need for registrar intervention

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AMY DIEHL, Director of Systems and Applications

“It really reduces the overhead for maintenance,” Diehl said. “The upgrade process for those modules is very standardized, so it’s a very easy process for our database and systems administrators to install and upgrade those modules. Instead of taking down the whole system to install a huge patch that takes care of lots of issues, we’re just focused on a single module.”

A true partnership

Shippensburg leaders view their institution as more than an Ellucian customer that simply awaits and installs new technology. They’ve seen how their feedback gets applied to Ellucian solutions.

“A partnership works both ways,” Diehl said. “We buy the software, we install it into our systems, we use it, and we provide feedback to Ellucian on what is working and what isn’t working. And the great thing about the partnership is Ellucian hears that.”

For example, Shippensburg staff said they want to complete their administrative tasks without having to toggle between multiple screens.

Based on the institution’s Faculty Grade Entry experience—and peeks at the Banner Registration application—Diehl fully expects to see that usability in future releases.

“Usability and intuitive interfaces seem to be a priority for Ellucian,” she said. “So we’re looking forward to that also carrying over to the administrative interfaces as well.”



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ABOUT ELLUCIAN

Ellucian helps education institutions thrive in an open and dynamic world. We deliver a broad portfolio of technology solutions, developed in collaboration with a global education community, and provide strategic guidance to help education institutions of all kinds navigate change, achieve greater transparency, and drive efficiencies. More than 2,400 institutions in 40 countries around the world look to Ellucian for the ideas and insights that will move education forward, helping people everywhere discover their futures through learning.

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