



IMPROVING TECHNOLOGY PERFORMANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS ACHIEVED THROUGH IT PARTNERSHIP

When Denise McNeil arrived on the St. Clair County Community College (SC4) campus in 2000 to teach computer science, she had to purchase her own laptop to use in her office. This was just one example of how the college's investment in technology was woefully underfunded and lacked the leadership necessary to keep up with the changing trends in higher education.

"Nothing against the person who headed up our IT at the time, but our technology was not keeping up with IT in general," said McNeil, who now serves at SC4's vice president of academic services. "I was teaching in computer labs where you never knew from one day to the next whether the computers were going to be functional or whether the software on them was going to be what you expected. The emphasis was not on students using computers for teaching and learning. It was more on batch processes and administrative functions. The college was not making the kinds of investments in IT that were needed."

Located in Port Huron, Michigan, SC4 annually serves more than 7,500 students on its main campus as well as at four extended learning centers and online. The 2-year public college offers more than 50 associate degrees and certificate programs as well as a workforce training program that annually trains thousands of workers in a variety of skills to improve their careers.



PROFILE:

- Port Huron, Michigan
- Enrollment: 4,590
- sc4.edu

CHALLENGE:

- Lacked leadership and sufficient funding of IT resources to align college's technology with strategic institutional objectives

SOLUTIONS:

- Ellucian™ Technology Management Services
- Colleague® by Ellucian
- Ellucian Flexible Support Services

RESULTS:

- Improved management of IT and resources with always available technical support for students, faculty, and staff
- Delivery of wireless connectivity, launch of student mobile application
- 24/7 help desk support available for students
- Improved IT governance with an IT technical plan that aligns with SC4's strategic objectives
- Implemented business intelligence tools for making data-driven decisions

“ Ellucian staff are not just people who wait for you to contact them if there’s something wrong. They serve on our committees, they are out there trying to come up with ideas for us. It’s not a matter of them trying to sell us products, but a matter of them trying to really figure out what can be done to move us forward.”

Kevin Pollock
President
St. Clair County Community College

SC4 administrators engaged Ellucian in 2006 to conduct an assessment of the college’s technology resources and needs and to make recommendations. Based on the findings, the college contracted with Ellucian to assume management of its IT and also to provide students with 24/7 help desk support.

Pete Lacey, SC4’s vice president for student services, said there were many initial concerns about the relationship, including the fate of the IT staff and whether the experiment would succeed. “Expectations were clearly high from the beginning. Not only did they have to deliver technology, they also had to ‘fit in’ with the campus culture.

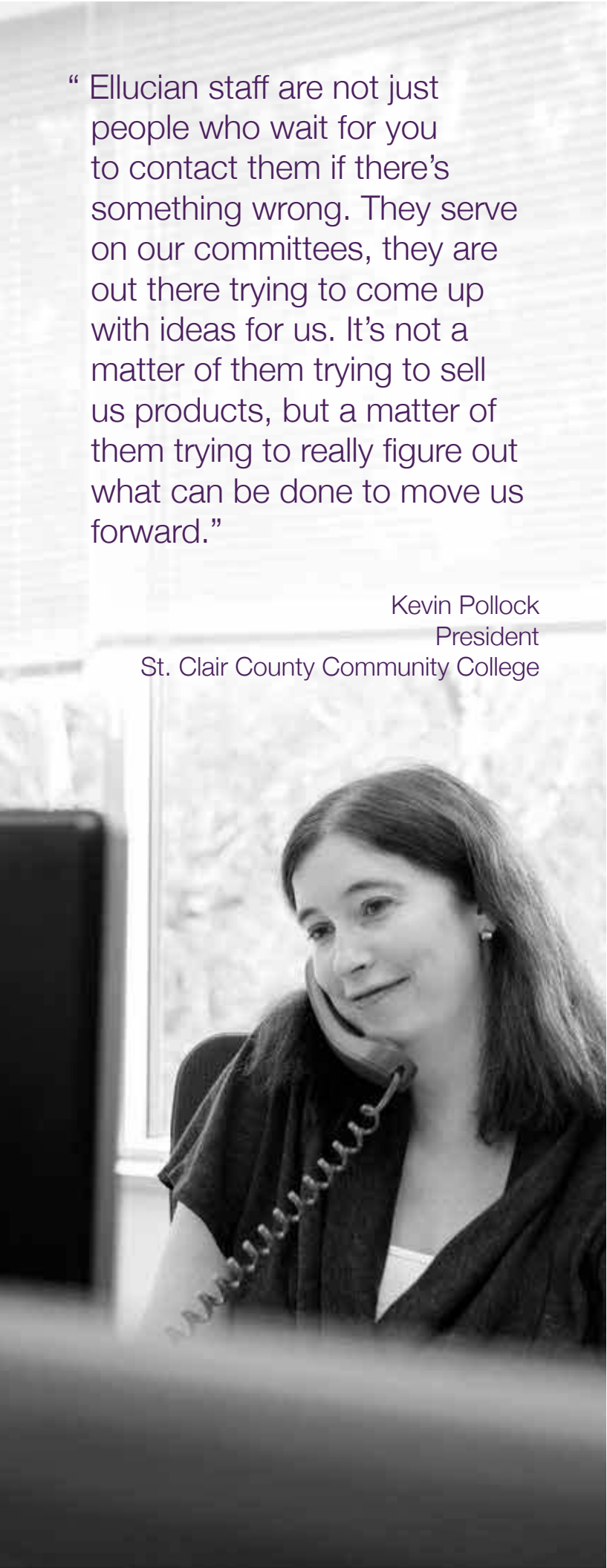
McNeil said she was initially impressed with Ellucian’s commitment to providing an onsite CIO who would fit in with the institution’s culture and needs. Ellucian onsite and remote staff assumed management of the college’s Colleague® by Ellucian administrative system and myriad software applications.

Detailed network security scans were conducted on a monthly basis and wireless connectivity was provided throughout the campus. Ellucian staff saved the college more than \$50,000 managing the acquisition and implementation of a VoIP system. Staff oversaw the upgrading and expansion of computer labs, improved technology in the classroom and more student services available online. A mobile application was launched and a website redesign project started. Ellucian staff assisted the college with institutional research and provided training when SC4 hired a research specialist. And a data warehouse/reporting process was created, enabling administrators the ability to make more data-driven decisions.

“What Ellucian brought to the table was a better governance structure,” added McNeil. “And along with that, planning. Ellucian helped create an IT plan that aligned with the college’s strategic plan. During this time period, one thing that really became apparent was that technology became more like a utility, something dependable and integral to the way we do business.”

Ellucian’s 24/7 help desk support continues to enhance SC4’s retention rates by providing needed technical support for students, faculty, and staff. In 2011, for example, nearly 2,400 students were provided assistance with an average speed to answer of 60 seconds. Ninety-one percent of those requests were resolved on the initial call, and users ranked their satisfaction with the service an average 4.4 on a 5-point scale.

“For those IT staff members who did transition to Ellucian, I would say it has been a very positive experience for them,” said McNeil. “Several of them were very skilled anyway, but becoming Ellucian employees has given them additional opportunities.



“ I’ve really been very impressed with the customer service we’ve received from Ellucian. Technically, they are very competent. And planning: the need, the importance, and the benefits of developing a plan that’s more strategic in nature or a project that we need to get done.”

Denise McNeil
Vice President for Academic Services
St. Clair County Community College

Also, my faculty colleagues here recognize that this has been a positive experience for them. These opportunities would not have happened if these transitions had not taken place.”

Lacey said one key technology objective going forward is the electronic imaging of documents that will help the college contain costs and improve the efficiency and overall effectiveness of campus operations. IT is also implementing student success strategies in support of SC4’s participation in Achieving the Dream.

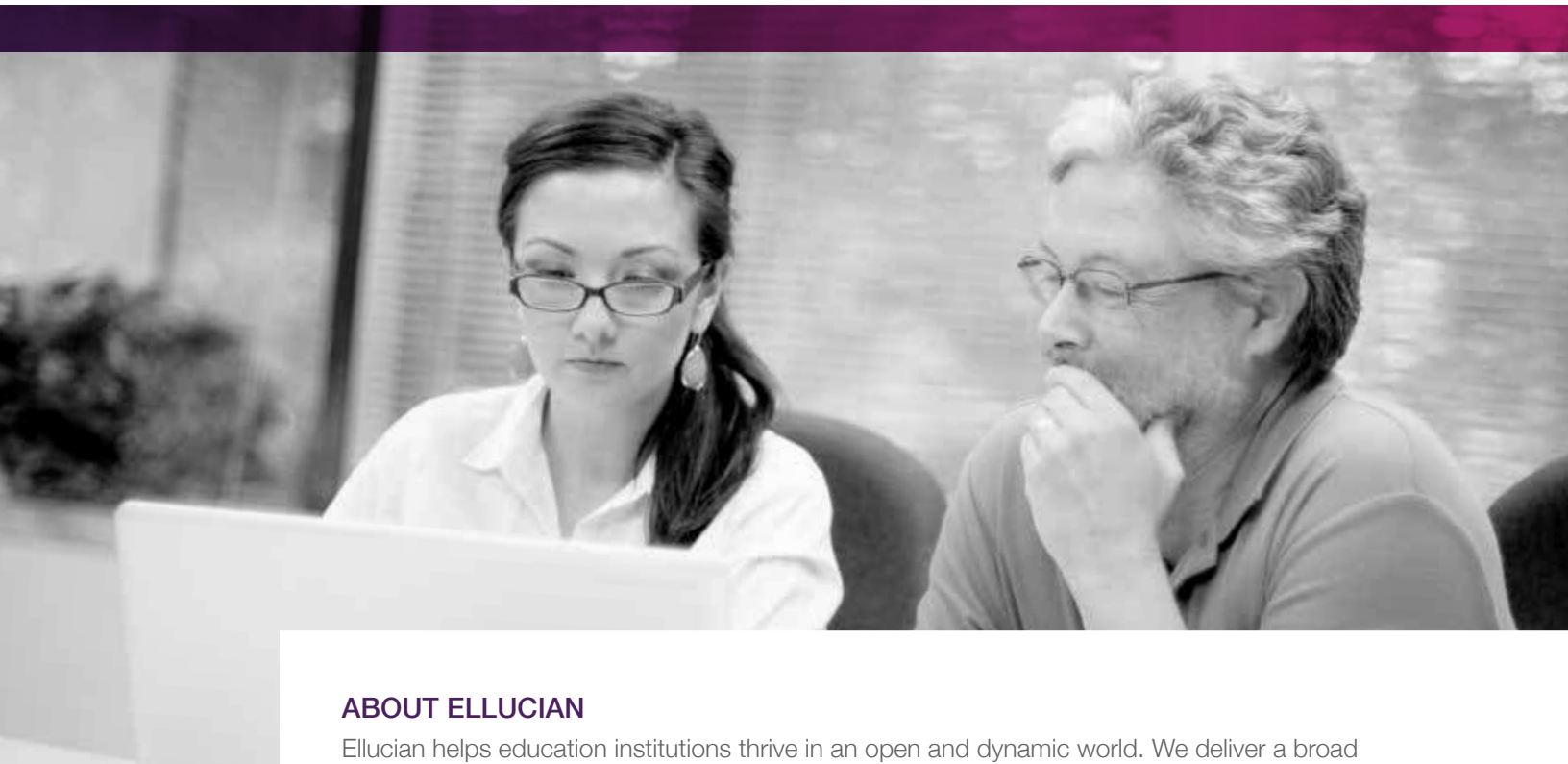
IT staff will support the technology needs of a planned STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) Institute that will serve these burgeoning areas of study. A planned Innovation Center will provide a place where faculty and staff can go to upgrade their technology skills, create ideas and new concepts as well as to work together on projects and have at their disposal the necessary tools to get the job done.

“Our vision is to create an academic and cultural environment that empowers the students to succeed,” said SC4 President Kevin Pollock. “We want to eliminate the barriers that are there, whether they are artificial or are something we put in front of them over the years. And technology is a huge part of accomplishing that.”



“ Ellucian works for us and provides assistance as needed to help the college move forward. I find it refreshing that the staff is committed to the campus goals and are constantly looking for what is best for SC4, not just what is best for Ellucian.”

Pete Lacey
Vice President of Student Services
St. Clair County Community College



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 2,300 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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