



CASE STUDY

Automated business processes save time and eliminate waste

How Becker College coordinated information and workflows across campus

Becker College serves approximately 2,000 students, with campuses located in Worcester and Leicester, Massachusetts. As the institution has grown over the last few years, so has the quantity of paperwork, forms, documents, and procedures. In 2017, the institution began looking for a better way to automate tasks and increase efficiencies across its two campuses.

"We were using PDFs and Word documents to create forms for the students, staff, faculty, and adjuncts," says Michael Kiernan, networking manager at Becker College. "The process was pretty slow and painful for everyone involved because of how broken apart that system was."

Becker's processes were cumbersome—but another problem was the lack of a single, campus-wide source for forms. "Our previous forms took a lot of time because different departments would have their own ways of creating a form," says Kiernan. "They would need to upload these forms to our website so the intended person could use them. Having a form constantly uploaded every single time became cumbersome very fast, so to receive these forms they would either fax to the correct office, they would email to the correct person with a picture attachment of the form, or they had to be walked to the office to be handed in in person."



Enrollment
2,000

Primary Challenge

Streamline workflows and create a single source for campus forms

Solution

Ellucian Workflow
Ellucian Colleague

Results

Increased efficiencies and coordinated workflows
Centralized source for campus-wide forms
User-friendly forms, securely stored in the cloud

Perhaps more concerning, this type of process was prone to error, and increased the possibility that something might fall between the cracks. And with multiple departments creating their own forms at the same time, inconsistencies and problems were bound to arise. “One of the big things for me was that there was absolutely no management for these forms,” says Kiernan. “Most of the time staff would get complaints that a form was outdated before they even decided to update it, because a student would come in saying, ‘I tried to fill out a housing application for 2017 but the documentation says 2015.’”

The institution decided to implement Ellucian Workflow to boost efficiency and coordinate the flow of information across each campus. Additionally, Becker College was eager to implement the system because of its integration with Ellucian Colleague, the institution’s ERP.

Ditching the paperwork and needless bureaucracy

After implementing the new system, the institution found that its once cumbersome processes have become more streamlined and efficient. “Once we started fully getting rid of our PDFs and Word documents, the process became faster and less painful for all involved,” says Kiernan. “Now updating the forms is an on-the-fly process due to how the forms are set up under one system with a drag and drop feature. Those with little to no programming experience can update these with ease.”

Kiernan notes that the new solution has revolutionized how Becker College has handled its processes. Not only are the forms automated and stored in the cloud, but they’re also integrated with the college’s other systems through Ellucian Ethos, a platform that connects an institution’s information across systems and makes it readily available to users. “So there really is no printing out of paper, faxing it, taking a picture, or walking to the office,” says Kiernan. “With Workflow all the processes are handled online. And by using Ethos we’re able to pull the data we need down from Colleague.”

The ability to pull data from various sources is critical to the smooth and efficient operation of any institution. The integrated solution has allowed Becker College to access information from various systems, and that means end users—whether students, faculty, or staff—can save time as well. “It’s extremely useful when you automate the process of pulling data into a form so that the users do not need to fill the data in, when we already have it stored,” says Kiernan. “I’ve utilized that on almost every form that I’ve created so far, especially when it comes to a person’s name, their ID at the school, or their email. If we already have it, there’s no reason for have to fill it out once again.”

Becker College can now easily help counselors assist students with changing majors as well. “There is no paperwork that can fall off the table,” says Kiernan. “Staff just sends off a form with who the person is, and what major they’re changing to. The form gets sent to the VP of admissions, VP needs to sign off, and then it goes to their new counselor informing them that they have received this student.”

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MICHAEL KIERNAN,
Networking Manager at Becker College

The new solution also allows Becker College to better monitor and control access to forms—and reduce errors. “We can set up a manager to a form or several forms, which they can review,” says Kiernan. “Auditing and reporting functions are probably, so far, the most important feature with the departments that I work with, because everybody wants to know who opened the case, who dealt with the case, who closed the case, especially for certain financial forms. This way there are no errors, or if there are going to be errors, we can correctly train the person on how it’s supposed to be done.”

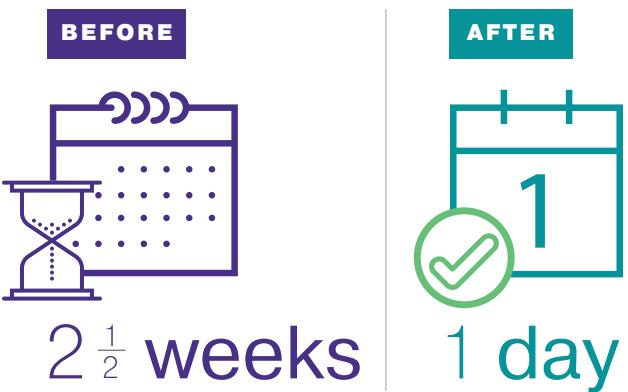
The new solution has also streamlined how Becker College handles new hires through human resources, making it easier for potential employees and HR to communicate and share forms. “Before we changed to this solution, it would take about two and a half weeks to get this entire hiring process done, because of how many different departments it had to pass between with paperwork,” says Kiernan. “The people at HR have thanked us countless times after we created this for them, because now this process takes a day, with just a simple form. And the form wasn’t even that hard to set up.”

Security and peace of mind

For Becker College, the solution brought peace of mind, since the forms and data are also securely backed up to the cloud, and can be accessed anytime, from anywhere. “With paper forms there’s always the possibility of data loss—and of course, there’s the possibility of data loss no matter what,” says Kiernan. “But because the solution is in the cloud with backups, I will always have a form and a way to access how the forms were done, and so will the people who use them. There’s always peace of mind that we’ll always be able to get the documentation back, because human error can occur at any step.”

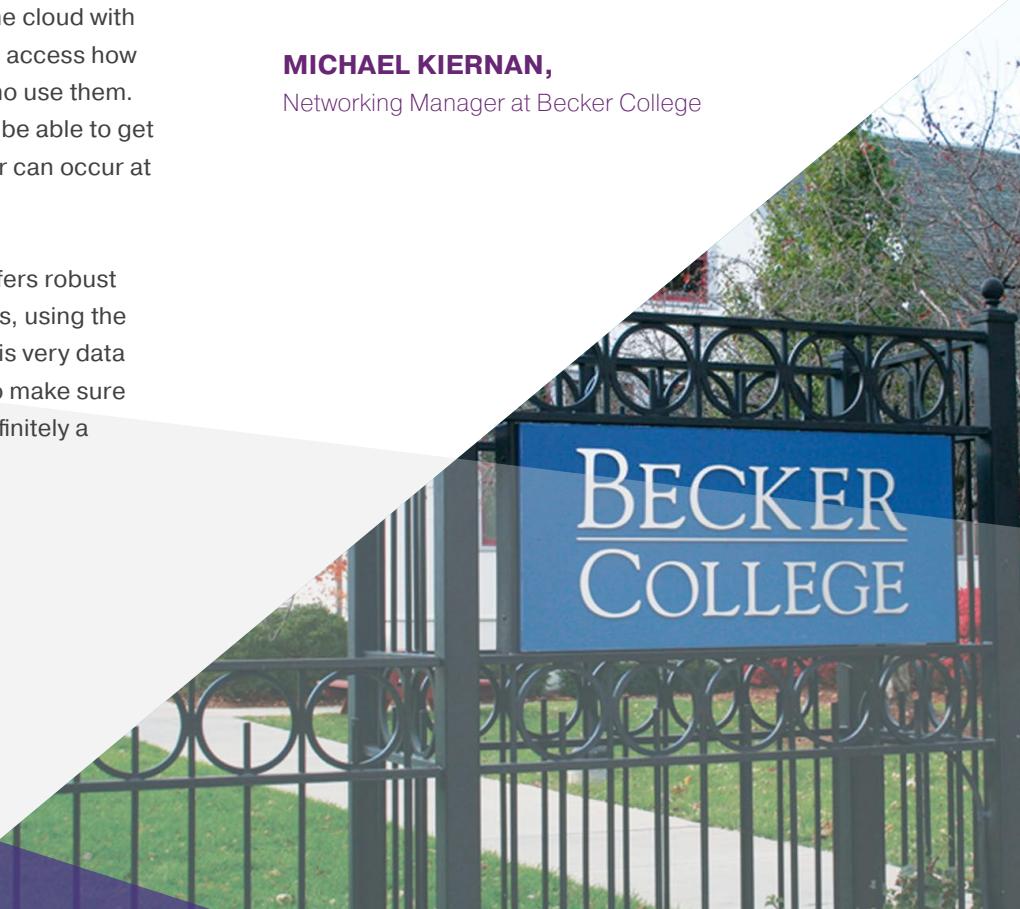
Kiernan notes that the new solution not only offers robust capabilities but is also user friendly. “With e-fills, using the database, and how the programming works, it is very data forward,” he says. “If you like data, if you like to make sure everything is simple for the end user, this is definitely a product that I would suggest.”

Time required to process a new hire



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