The right fit

Ellucian helps institutions adopt ERP solutions to build a modern campus

An institution may outgrow its existing ERP system for multiple reasons. Examples include an increase in the number of enrolled students, international expansion, the introduction of online programs of study, newly developed continuing education and workforce development programs.

As an institution expands, it may examine the capabilities of its ERP solution, and look to transition to a system that is better optimised to support these changes. Both Belhaven University and the West Valley-Mission Community College District found themselves in this situation. These two institutions had experienced sustained growth, and began examining approaches to ensure that their ERP systems would help them keep pace. Both institutions worked with Ellucian, their existing ERP provider and partner, to identify the solution that best fit their evolving needs.

Belhaven University

Belhaven University leverages the power and flexibility of Ellucian Colleague to increase efficiency, save money, and improve the student experience.

Wrestling with complication

Over the past decade, Belhaven University—a private, faith-based liberal arts institution in Jackson, Mississippi has been undergoing a significant transformation. The institution not only experienced a

BELHAVEN
UNIVERSITY

Enrollment

4,200

Challenge

Implement a new ERP that more closely aligns with the institution's needs with the flexibility to grow and expand for the future while leveraging their investment in an Ellucian partnership

Solution

Ellucian Colleague®

Results

Simplified and integrated business processes

Cost savings through efficiency and optimised staffing

Less time spent on system maintenance

West Valley – Mission
Community College District

Enrollment

West Valley College: 12,200
Mission College: 10,200

Challenge

Adopt an ERP that better
suits the changing needs
of the Community College
District's two campuses

Solution

Ellucian Banner®

Results

Improved ability to track and
analyse data

Improved business processes

Reduced burden on IT

large uptick in enrollment, but also changed their name from Belhaven College to Belhaven University during this time. The university prides itself on offering an education based on a Christian worldview and is committed to providing a superior student experience. To that end, Belhaven began looking at the best approach to managing growth and change, while at the same time maintaining its core strengths and values.

Weighing options

Part of the problem for Belhaven was scattered data spread across multiple systems, as well as antiquated business processes. Years of institutional growth and ad hoc processes had fostered a complicated, labor-intensive system. "The manpower required for us to go through 20 systems to make things happen was expensive," says Debbi Braswell, director of financial aid at Belhaven University. "And integration was the undercurrent for making the change—we simply had to meet federal compliance issues."

The university chose Ellucian Colleague for three main reasons. First, the institution was intrigued by the flexibility of the solution—especially the ability to configure it to the institution's needs and those of its students. Second, the solutions offered by Ellucian's competitors would take longer to implement than the university was comfortable with. Third, the solution would save the university money in the long run by bringing efficiencies across campus. "As we were deciding whether to go with Colleague, we had each area across campus go through potential efficiencies to see how it could reduce costs," says Braswell. "Up to that point, most of our departments had been asking

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"Colleague was just better for us.
It can grow to fit our needs."

BO MILLER
Director of Institutional Technology, Belhaven University

for more staff to keep up with the manual workload of the previous system. Now, with Colleague, a staff of 11 people could get down to 9, for example. That was a big selling point for the university's CFO, because those numbers can add up really quickly."

Saving time and money

Belhaven made the switch to Colleague. "Colleague was just better for us," says Bo Miller, director of information technology. "It's built on a more sustainable technology stack—which was a big seller for us—and it can grow to fit our needs."

That kind of flexibility is exactly what Belhaven was looking for. The university also implemented self-service capabilities and Ellucian Portal, simplifying the exchange of information for students, faculty, and staff by giving them a single, virtual doorway. "There have been a lot of gains by going to a portal," says Braswell. "We've been able to simplify our financial aid processes and documentation. We can integrate email notifications into the portal."

System maintenance has been greatly simplified as well. With Colleague, updates are accomplished much more quickly, with little to no downtime required. "Until we saw that, we didn't believe it," says Stephanie Steelman, manager of computer and information systems.

Colleague has proven to be an ideal ERP solution for Belhaven. It easily integrates the university's data and processes, while remaining user-friendly for administrative staff and students.

A smooth transition

According to Steelman, Ellucian's commitment to its clients—and the close partnership between Belhaven and Ellucian—is the primary reason the transition went so smoothly. "Ellucian consultants were on site every week—and they are amazing," she says. "Ellucian is sticking with us."

Belhaven's rapid evolution may have strained the capacity of its former ERP system, but after closely working with Ellucian, the institution now has a system in place to enable institutional growth. With Colleague, Belhaven can best serve the needs of its students, faculty, and staff today—and meet the challenges of the future as well.

West Valley-Mission Community College District

The West Valley-Mission Community College District transitions to Ellucian Banner on its two campuses to meet the changing needs of higher ed in Silicon Valley

Growing pains

The West Valley-Mission Community College District (WVMCCD) operates two institutions: West Valley College in Saratoga, California and Mission College in Santa Clara, California. Both colleges provide strong academic programs for students in the Silicon Valley, through traditional as well as online courses and programs.
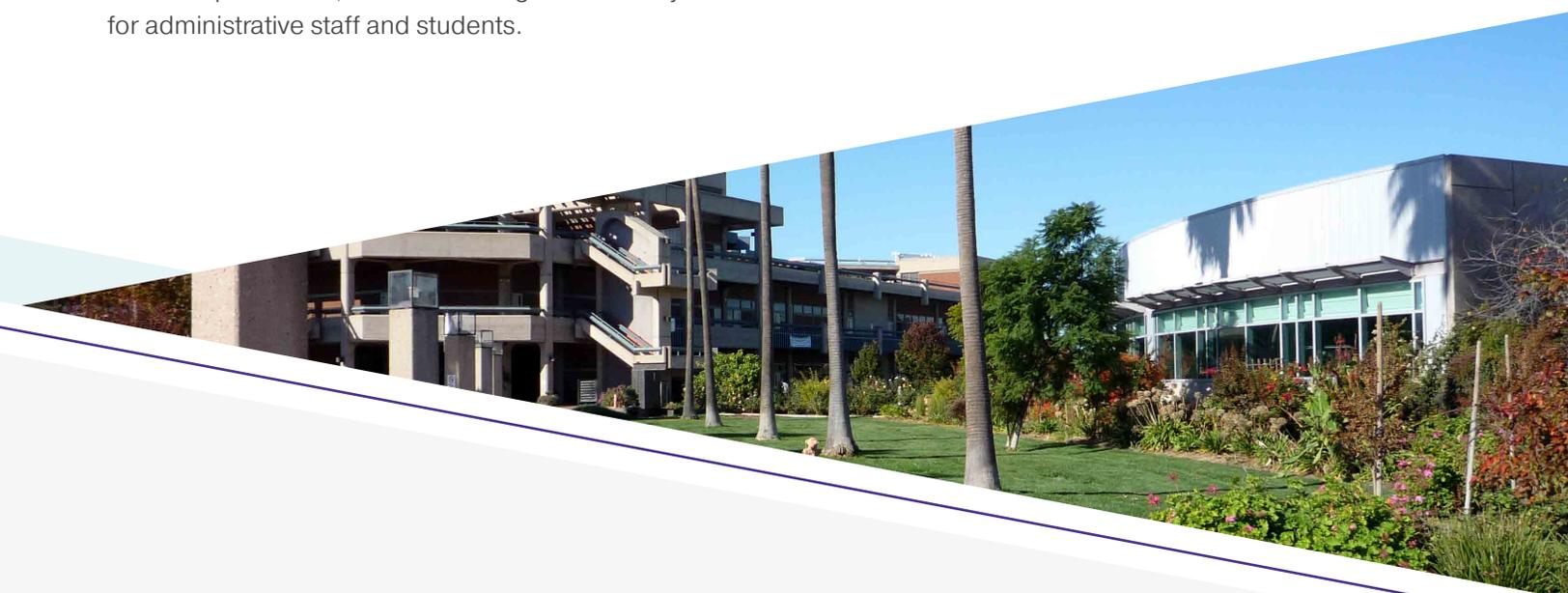
In recent years, both campuses have undergone sustained growth, both in numbers of students and types of programs offered. To handle this growth, WVMCCD required an ERP that would quickly and efficiently process the increasing load of data—while offering the ability to examine and parse that information in order to help drive decisions.

A clear choice

As WVMCCD began looking at its options, it became clear that other solutions in the market would not be a good fit for the two campuses—either because they did not scale appropriately to the size of WVMCCD's campuses, or they lacked the robust student-focused features that the district was looking for. Because WVMCCD was already an Ellucian client, the district was comfortable with Ellucian's expertise and solutions.

With Banner, WVMCCD is getting a higher education-focused solution, flexible enough to meet their needs now and evolve with them as both campuses experience tremendous growth. Banner will allow WVMCCD to set its sights on understanding its data—with the capacity to grow as the district continues to do so.

A better way of doing things

WVMCCD began its Banner implementation. For now, it's opting for a "plain vanilla" implementation, which will allow it to expand Banner as the district grows. At the implementation kickoff, the team stated, "We're hoping to get a fully modern system—upgradeable, robust—with a cloud-hosting option in the future."

Portions of its implementation will go live by July 1, 2016, and the district's student module is just beginning to be ramped up. WVMCCD has enlisted the help of Ellucian's project management services to assist with the implementation. Implementing Banner also grants WVMCCD the opportunity to examine its business practices, and to streamline

how they operate. "We're looking to redo all of our business processes," says the former chancellor of WVMCCD. "This implementation is driving us to look at every business process and shadow system, with the ability to get to real data-driven decisions, and to empower the user to get the data he or she needs."

Eliminating uncertainty

The transition to Banner has been virtually seamless, according to the team, and the implementation is progressing smoothly.

The team credits Ellucian's support when it comes to making sure the district's staff will be confident in using Banner efficiently and effectively. "The training that is available with Ellucian is huge," said the former chancellor. "We have new employees coming in all of the time; the information and videos that Ellucian has available to get our people up to speed on Banner is important to us." And as most any higher education institution will attest, data is everything. Now that WVMCCD will be able to more accurately track, parse, and analyse its data, the district is looking forward to the ability to make better decisions—based on fact, not conjecture—and to continue to expand. "We're excited to eliminate the uncertainty principle," he said. Now, with Banner and Ellucian, WVMCCD can proceed with confidence, knowing that growth may not only be effectively managed, but also used as a foundation for future success.

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