



## INCREASING PERFORMANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

Meeting growing IT expectations at today's colleges and universities is challenging, particularly when resources are constrained, when skilled talent is scarce, and when institutions have reached the limits of their capacity to house and support their technology assets. Ellucian provides remote and cloud-based services that can help institutions improve their IT performance while enabling employees to focus their attention and resources on more mission-critical projects.

## CATAWBA COLLEGE

When Catawba College, a private, liberal arts institution located in Salisbury, North Carolina, began implementing the Banner by Ellucian enterprise software system, administrators realized they would be challenged by the extra workload in addition to meeting the school's ongoing operational needs.

"We have a small IT staff and we're really encouraged not to add headcount," said Joanna Jasper, Catawba's CIO. "Yet, we had all of this additional work that needed to be done, which was really beyond what my staff had time to do. They were already busy with the implementation itself and supporting the users. There are special skills required to be an Oracle database administrator. And then there is all the work associated with supporting the patches and upgrades for Banner and its related products. It's pretty much a full-time job."

# CATAWBA COLLEGE

Expected outcomes from Ellucian Application Management Services:

- Relieve staff from daily management headaches
- Redirect resources to more strategic priorities
- Reduce total cost of ownership



# OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY

Expected outcomes from Ellucian Application Hosting Services:

- Improved system availability, performance, and productivity
- Refocused IT staff on strategic priorities
- Reduced overall cost of system ownership
- A more secure environment created for institutional data

Jasper said they were faced with pursuing one of two options: either to hire a technician with the requisite skills or outsource the service. One problem with hiring, she said, is that work can grind to a halt when that employee is on vacation or unavailable.

Catawba elected to contract with Ellucian Application Management Services (AMS) in July 2010 to manage its Oracle database administration as well as its software administration services. Ellucian's AMS technicians are now responsible for administering all software patches and upgrades in addition to constantly monitoring the infrastructure.

"What we really liked about outsourcing this to Ellucian is that their service is available 24/7 and you're really not hiring just one person, you are hiring a whole team," said Jasper. "There are different team members working on different areas. There's one person, for example, that does the database stuff, another who works on the portal side. They have all different skill sets, and if one of them is out, they have others available who can work on our site."

Despite the fact that the services are provided remotely, Jasper said she and her staff have weekly meetings with the engagement manager and two team members assigned to the account in order to review the status of projects and any outstanding issues. She said her staff also relies on a Service Now ticketing system to report and track what's being done.

"One of the initial concerns we had about this service was what level of control would we have over the system?" she added. "Would we have control over when upgrades and patches are installed? Would we be consulted when issues arose? Happily, the answer to all those questions is yes. A lot of our initial concerns about maintaining control have been answered to our satisfaction."

Jasper said she feels a greater level of confidence partnering with Ellucian and doubts they could have performed the same level of service any cheaper in-house. "When you're hiring for this sort of skill set, it is difficult to find all the needed skills in one person, and you don't know if it's going to work out. Giving this work to Ellucian, who are experts with this software, I don't feel that I have to worry about updates being done incorrectly. The software updates, patches, and releases are going in more expeditiously and more reliably than we could have done if we'd tried to do it on our own."

There was initial concern about who was accessing the college's system, Jasper said, but using Ellucian's firewall VPN has provided a confident layer of security, and IT staff receive a monthly log of who accesses the system and when.

Catawba is now in the process of updating all faculty and staff PCs, upgrading the campus network, and implementing Banner Relationship Management and a prospective student portal. Administrators also are at work on a new strategic plan for the college which Jasper said will likely shift the role of IT to becoming even more of a service and support provider and change-enabler. It will be less about the "nuts and bolts of just making stuff work. I think the trend toward outsourcing back-office functions is going to continue. Ellucian Application Hosting Services, for example, is something we're going to look at pretty seriously once the hardware we're using is facing end of life."

Working with Ellucian and freeing up her staff to focus on more strategic, mission-centric projects has improved the effectiveness and efficiency of Jasper's IT staff. As an example, Catawba was recognized by University Business magazine as a Spring 2012 "Model of Efficiency" for an

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Joanna Jasper  
Chief Information Officer  
Catawba College

“While the word nimble has been used to death, hosting makes us more nimble, because we’ve been able to accomplish a lot more, a lot faster, than if we’d been doing it on our own.”

Jon McClintock  
Director of Administrative Computing  
Otterbein University

improved online registration and advising system as well as an online system for managing the hours of work-study students.

“I see Ellucian as a partner with us,” she added, “helping us get the technology needs of the college met. They have served us very well. This service has lived up to our expectations.”

## OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY

By all accounts, IT administrators at Otterbein University were facing a perfect storm. Hardware for their system was reaching its end of life, the university was experiencing a lot of turnover among DBAs, and the relatively new president wanted staff to start making more data-driven decisions.

“When we were examining our situation, we looked at our equipment, our staffing, at the direction we wanted to go, and basically came up with three options,” said Jon McClintock, Otterbein’s director of administrative computing. “We could support everything onsite (equipment, DBA, OS administrators and all those pieces and parts). We looked at a mixture of that, including some hosting, as another option. Finally, we looked at the hosted option, which we eventually chose (equipment, remote site, system administration, DBA support).

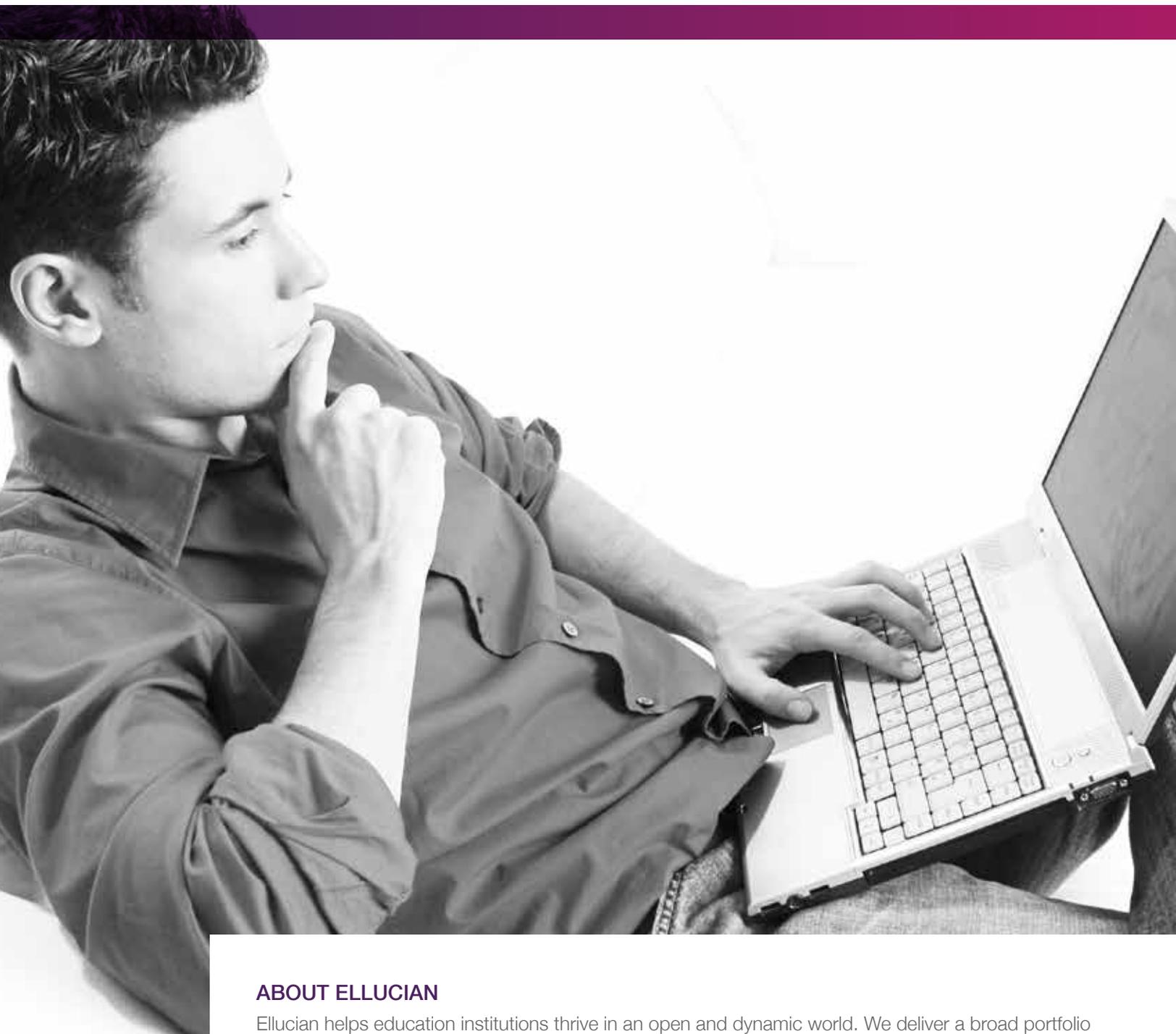
“We priced those three options out and the hosting model, not only did it compare favorably with what we thought we could do here, but even with some of the mixed case scenarios. On top of that, we identified two additional options that I considered to be important: disaster recovery and security. Throw on top of that, we believed that AMS/

Hosting would make us more nimble when someone would come in and say: ‘Hey, I need a report to do, can you help me out?’ We found that we were delaying those sorts of responses so that we could throw our staff at putting in patches or doing maintenance on a machine. Having hosting there to do the back office stuff frees up our staff to focus more on the core things we need to do.”

Otterbein contracted in March 2011 with Ellucian to manage and host its applications at the company’s datacenter in Florida. McClintock said the university was behind in upgrading much of its software and that AMS/ Hosting staff were not only helpful in migrating to the hosted environment, but also upgraded the applications.

“We felt the operational relationship was going to become great, which it has become,” added Jeff Kasson, interim executive director of Otterbein’s IT. “I was concerned with the contract that we’d be counting pennies and that sort of thing. It hasn’t been that, and I think that each side has worked in good faith to make sure that this relationship is successful.”

Ellucian currently hosts applications for more than two dozen customers at its datacenter. Recognizing the scalability of the offering, the company invested last year in additional staff, equipment, and tools. Most notable was the purchase and installation of a Vblock cloud-based platform, providing a pre-engineered, pre-configured, and pre-tested entity rather than a disparate group of components. All customer applications except one were migrated to the new platform at the beginning of 2012.



## 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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