



Advance technology to match growing enrollments

Ocean County College (OCC) in New Jersey takes pride in delivering a student-centered educational experience. With the support of Ellucian Academic Services, they launched a campus-wide initiative of learning outcomes assessment and developed new curricula to respond to the needs of their more than 9,000 students and the coastal community Ocean County College serves.

At nearly 50 years old, enrollment in the two-year community college peaked in 2010 and the college realized it needed to change to appeal to a new generation of learners. As this change took shape, it was clear that they needed to expand their online learning curriculum, update buildings on campus, and update their technology to meet constituent's expectations.

But this growth couldn't happen with their existing resources. They knew that a chief information officer (CIO) could help the college set priorities and create a plan to utilize the technology they had to its potential. And, they recognized that they had to expand their IT footprint on campus in the same time frame as the physical growth on campus and gain efficiency by maximizing the use of technology and updating their administrative systems.

IT was not their core competency. They wanted to focus on what they were good at and outsource certain functions to a vendor with higher education expertise. Because they had partnered with Ellucian since 1998, it was a natural decision



PROFILE:

New Jersey

Enrollment: 9,477

www.ocean.edu

CHALLENGE:

- Expand IT footprint without adding IT staff
- Lack of strategic plans for growth and IT development
- Need to optimize use of existing administrative systems and resources

SOLUTION:

- Colleague® by Ellucian
- Ellucian Academic Services
- Ellucian Grants Services
- Ellucian Technology Management Services

RESULTS:

- Awarded \$15 million in grants
- Implemented best practices to improve operational efficiencies, lower costs
- Developed strategic plan and provided support for IT leadership and governance
- Virtualized 30 physical servers on campus, resulting in an estimated cost savings of \$135,000, and \$36,000 annual savings in vendor support contracts

“Everybody recognizes the value in continuing the service
Ellucian helps us employ best practices so we avoid costly
mistakes and make the right decisions in a timely fashion.”

HATEM AKL
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE

to extend the long-term partnership, so they renewed the contract in 2004. The collaboration supports many departments and integrated solutions provide effective results.

“Ellucian is not just our service provider. We view Ellucian as our partner in many important endeavors of Ocean County College,” says Dr. Jianping Wang, vice president of academic affairs at Ocean County College. “Ocean County College provides Ellucian opportunities to better understand the challenge of providing accessible and affordable quality higher education to all students. Those opportunities help Ellucian improve its products and services. Ellucian brings to Ocean County College its rich experience and broad research capabilities to improve our services to our students. It is a model partnership.”

Deepening the partnership to meet college needs

When Ocean County College renewed their contract with Ellucian Technology Management Services in 2013, they were functioning without a CIO, which left huge gaps in the organization. As the engagement progressed, it was clear that this was a top priority, so the executive director from Ellucian, Hatem Akl, was hired as CIO for Ocean County College.

“Ocean County College needed an experienced CIO to help shape the strategic future of the institution,” says Sara Winchester, executive vice president of finance and administration at Ocean County College. “We conducted several national searches which failed to produce a successful hire. We turned to Ellucian and they recommended considering Hatem Akl who had been working on the OCC account for several years and was well known on the campus. Hatem’s deep understanding of Ocean’s operations, combined with his desire to function at a more strategic level, made him a perfect fit for the position. We are grateful to Ellucian for seeing past the problem of replacing Hatem on their team and allowing both Hatem and OCC to benefit from our partnership.”

Today, Ellucian Technology Management Services supports Ocean County College by providing an executive director, 15 on-site employees, and remote employees and consultants. “We rely on the synergies between the integrated departments that work collaboratively to improve overall operations at the college,” says Hatem Akl, chief information officer at Ocean County College. “The interaction and coordination between the departments and the collaboration between Ellucian and college employees is what makes this a successful partnership. To the college community, we are one team—there is no distinction between Ellucian and college employees.”

Ellucian conducted a gap analysis to assess technology network infrastructure and prioritize goals. Once the strategy was in place, Ellucian worked with the college to implement new technology such as Ellucian Recruiter™, Colleague® DataOrchestrator, and additional components of Colleague® by Ellucian to improve recruitment efforts, expand reporting capabilities, and streamline processes with integrated data.

Ocean County College implemented Ellucian Recruiter to simplify admissions and enhance recruiting efforts. Then, to advance student services, Ellucian Technology Management Services helped the college develop an online student withdrawal system that lets students notify the instructor if they are considering withdrawing from classes. Now, instructors can reach out to the student before they withdraw to discuss concerns, which helps retain students and support student success.

Ellucian Technology Management Services helped the college convert from Blackboard WebCT Course Tools to Pearson Learning Solutions’ Learning Management System. To help instructors focus their efforts in class instead of administration, Ellucian implemented a final class roster which lets instructors withdraw students who have never attended the class, Lexmark Testing & Grading solutions which revamped and decentralized test scoring from a central IT processing to departmental processing, and CampusCruiser EVAL™, which collects course evaluations electronically, for an average savings of \$13,000 to \$25,000 annually.

To help administrative departments, Ellucian improved document imaging services and implemented a secured fax solution that can pick up faxes via email, saving time

and paper. Ocean County College used to make board packets that included course evaluations—they were all paper, bar coded, and handled with a complex manual process, costing the college \$25,000 per semester. Ellucian helped the college implement auxiliary websites which provided central document storage and automated distribution of board packets, saving in printing, paper, and postage. In addition, Ellucian used Colleague® WebAdvisor to streamline the electronic distribution of employee contracts, improving the process and saving Ocean County College time and money.

With additional resources from Ellucian, the college was able to add technology and conduct the upgrades necessary to match their administrative needs as well as meet student expectations.

Comprehensive support services

Ellucian Technology Management Services provides a full range of support to help improve constituent services and operational efficiency:

Network

The Ellucian network team provides support for the network infrastructure and streamlines all operational processes. Data is housed at a managed data center that oversees security issues, evaluates gaps, and mitigates damage due to a security breach. The Ellucian Technical Services staff virtualized 30 physical servers on campus, resulting in an estimated cost savings of \$135,000, and \$36,000 annual savings in vendor support contracts.

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) system

Ocean County College uses Colleague by Ellucian, Colleague® Finance, Colleague® Advancement, and Colleague® HR, as well as the Payroll and Student modules. Ellucian provides on-site programmers and analysts that work with Ocean County College's administrative offices to run and process the operations, from admission and grades to payroll, and manage administrative-wide applications for day-to-day functions.

Portal support

Ellucian provides on-site management of Ocean County College's student portal which includes an email student system, the learning management system, a dedicated location for sharing documents, information on student clubs, and more across multiple departments.

24x7 help desk

The student help desk provides student support for the portal. Students can ask reset passwords, gain access to grades, and more which reduces phone calls and increases student satisfaction by providing better student services. In a recent survey, students gave their experience with the help desk a score of 4.8 out of 5. On average, 85 percent of the requests can be resolved through the help desk. Because fewer questions have to be escalated to the on-site team, the college needs fewer technicians which helps reduce overall costs.

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DR. JIAPING WANG
VICE PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE

Ellucian Grant Services

Remote services provide grant support and helps identify grant opportunities, write grant applications, and ensure compliance of successful grants. Ocean County College has been awarded over \$15 million in grant funding since Ellucian Grants Services began supporting its grants effort, including a TRIO Student Support Services award. Leveraging Ellucian grants resources allows Ocean County College to expand their scope in identifying and pursuing grant funding that aligns to their priorities. "We utilize the team quite heavily," says Aki. "In 2013 they helped us identify a fruitful opportunity that we applied for and won and that resulted in a \$12 million grant award." With the money received, Ocean County College revamped 35 campus classrooms.

Strategic services

Ocean County College's designated remote strategic consultant engages with key administrative and academic stakeholders along with information technology professionals to ensure that the institution's technical investments are aligned with its strategic objectives through analyzing processes, establishing strategic plans and business continuity/disaster recovery plans, and evaluating resources. Additionally, Ocean County College's consultant collaborates with college leaders in promoting educational best practices employed at the institution through co-presenting at national conferences and co-sponsoring events, such as the recent Higher Education Forum on Student Success.

Ellucian Academic Services

Delivering comprehensive online programs is Ocean County College's strength. They have a mature online delivery program and Ellucian's remote instructional design team works with the eLearning side of the house and faculty to develop compelling content for online courses.

Return on investment

"Ocean County College's partnership with Ellucian has been a successful one. Ellucian's Technology Management Services' on-site team has helped Ocean County College on many initiatives including document imaging and converting from Blackboard Web Course Tools to Pearson Learning Solutions' Learning Management System. We look forward to continuing the partnership," says Ed Tafaro, on-site executive director, Ellucian.

With future plans for an online student advising solution that can be utilized for virtual office hours, and the implementation of Colleague® Student Planning, a web-based, self-service solution that helps students and institutions map and track course offerings to help them graduate in a timely fashion, Ocean County College is poised to embrace even more enrollment growth.

"Ocean County College has had long and successful relationship with Ellucian Managed Services. The services provided have changed over the years, but the close working relationship has not. Ocean County College benefits from Ellucian's intimate knowledge of not just our college, but of best practices across higher education. We appreciate the flexibility Ellucian offers and they continue to be there for us as our needs change and grow."

SARA WINCHESTER
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION
OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE



About Ellucian

Ellucian is the world's leading provider of software and services higher education institutions need to help students succeed. More than 2,400 institutions in 40 countries rely on Ellucian to help enable the mission of higher education for over 18 million students.

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