Taking the next step

Stark State College empowers and strengthens its workforce development programs with Ellucian Elevate™.

"Before we had Elevate, we didn't know what our total enrollment was on a year-by-year basis and now our goal is to offer more classes, and with Elevate we can. I know we've already seen a significant uptick in enrollment because it's so easy for students to enroll and pay."

GEOFF STARNES, assistant director of IT, Stark State College

Ramping up a workforce development program

Stark State College is located in North Canton, Ohio, serving approximately 15,600 students through a variety of majors and courses, including one-year certificates and career enhancement programs. The institution has been recognized as one of the nation's fastest growing colleges. Stark State is also known for its comprehensive adult-learning program.

Beginning in 2015, Stark State's president, Dr. Para Jones, instituted a new initiative that included expanding and deepening the

STARK STATE COLLEGE

About Stark State College

Enrollment
15,600

Objective
Increase enrollment in the college's workforce development programs

Solution
Ellucian Elevate™

Business benefit
Increased revenues, less burden on registrar and bursar, increased efficiency, better analytics to drive decision-making

college's workforce development program. With this new emphasis, it quickly became obvious that the college would need to implement technology to help the existing program prosper. "Up until the president's initiative, our workforce development program was lacking its own registration and catalog publishing systems, which made it difficult for them to quickly advertise courses and register non-credit students," says Geoff Starnes, Stark State College's assistant director for IT. "With the president's initiative, we knew it was time to change things. The department had some shortcomings with efficiently interacting with customers—everything was done through a paper process, with registration, cash and check payments going via the cashier's process. There was no automated way to handle payments. With the initiative to grow more customers, we knew we

couldn't keep up and service the customers very well with that system."

In addition, Stark State's workforce development program lacked the ability to track and analyze data related to students, employers, classes, and so on. The college clearly needed a tool to not only handle the business of a workforce development program and its students, but also provide some kind of analytics to help drive decision-making.

Stark State was already a Banner® by Ellucian client, and was well aware of the flexibility and benefits of Ellucian's portfolio of solutions. The college explored its options, and soon settled on Ellucian Elevate™ as the best system to address its needs.

Simplifying, streamlining, modernizing

Ellucian Elevate helps institutions meet market demands for non-traditional education, and that's exactly what Stark State College was seeking. Stark State is currently in the process of implementing portions of Ellucian Elevate, but the system officially went "live" in May 2016.

Ellucian Elevate is intuitive and user-friendly, and Stark State helped its staff get up to speed on the new software through short bursts of focused training for the workforce development team. For an hour a week, the staff was introduced to the functionality and features of Ellucian Elevate. "They're tackling the software pretty well," says Starnes.

Stark State's workforce development office functions more like a sales team, fostering relationships with corporate partners and developing courses. Ellucian Elevate will allow the team to concentrate on this role and ease the administrative burden of registering students and handling payments. "The entire online offering of registration and payment is particularly attractive for us," says Starnes. "So is the dynamic curriculum of classes we can have on a website, where previously we just had the classes listed in PDF form."

With Ellucian Elevate, Stark State will be able to streamline functions and increase efficiency. Students will be able to get registered and pay online, and Stark State will be able to more effectively generate invoices and handle other back office functions.

Additionally, Ellucian Elevate makes it easier to provide self-registration links for

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> **GEOFF STARNES** assistant director for IT, Stark State College

employers, and will help local businesses and Stark State collaborate to create the kinds of programs and courses that corporate partners are looking for.

Why analytics matter

For Stark State, one of the primary reasons for implementing Elevate was to more accurately track enrollments—and increase them—while figuring out exactly what employers are seeking in workforce development programs. "Before we had Elevate, we didn't know what our total enrollment was on a year-by-year basis," says Starnes. "We did see an increase in revenue, but we didn't have a number on it. And now our goal is to offer more classes, and with Elevate we can. I know we've already seen a significant uptick in enrollment because it's so easy for students to enroll and pay."

Although it's still too soon to completely aggregate and analyze the enrollment data, Stark State is already beginning to see some valuable analytics with regard to those classes that see consistent enrollments, versus those that do not. "We want to be able to see the top performers and the bottom performers," says Starnes.

"We're starting to see that a little bit, and the reports tell us a lot more about employers than we expected to see."

Stark State can now examine the types of courses companies are requesting for their employees. "We can now track which employers are signing up for which classes—it's important to have visibility into that, because we didn't have it before," says Starnes. And that means that the workforce development team can now target its efforts more effectively. "They can say, 'oh I see this electrical engineering company is in the market for managerial classes as well. Is there anything else we can offer them in that space?'" says Starnes.

A close working relationship

Starnes notes that Stark State's close working relationship with Ellucian has been a key driver to help with the implementation of Elevate. "The Ellucian staff is very responsive, and they've been there for us. We feel engaged," he says.

And what advice would Starnes offer for other institutions considering Ellucian Elevate? "A phased rollout is appropriate," he says. "Elevate is much larger and greater than one would initially think. People think it is smaller than it actually is and think they can roll it out all out at once—but that's difficult. There are so many different modules that we haven't even examined yet. Pick the things that are most important for you, and go from there."

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ABOUT ELLUCIAN

Ellucian is the worldwide leader of software and services designed for higher education. More than 2,400 institutions in 40 countries rely on Ellucian to help enable the mission of higher education for over 18 million students. Ellucian provides student information systems (SIS), finance and HR, recruiting, retention, analytics and advancement software solutions. With more than 1,400 unique deployments of Ellucian's cloud and SaaS offerings, the company is one of the largest providers of cloud-based solutions. Ellucian also supports the higher education community with a range of professional services, such as application software implementation, training, education, and management consulting. **Visit Ellucian at www.ellucian.com.**