



CASE STUDY:

A cool (or warm) approach to integrating data

Bridging IT and facilities management through technology saves money and time

Like most public community colleges, Kirkwood Community College, with 10 campus locations across Eastern Iowa, faces funding challenges every year. In order to meet its budget while providing a top-notch education to its students, the institution must stretch every dollar.

Part of an institution's operating budget includes heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) costs. In an effort to trim expenses, Kirkwood Community College examined its HVAC usage to determine whether it might be possible to save money.

Tying data and mechanical systems together

Kirkwood's goal was to improve the accuracy of the information used by the HVAC management system. To accomplish this, the institution utilized data within Ellucian Colleague®, its enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, to determine which rooms on campus were in use at which times, and to adjust the HVAC system as needed to lower costs.

Kirkwood
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Primary Challenge

Integrate data to save on HVAC and labor costs

Solution

Ellucian Colleague®

Results

Increased efficiency for staff

Decreased electricity costs by 4 percent and saved \$260,000 in personnel time

Improved comfort for faculty and students

By integrating the ERP with the HVAC system, the institution was able to automate its upload to the HVAC system and saved \$260,000 in personnel time and shaved \$20,000 off of its nearly \$500,000 annual electricity bill at the main campus.

Prior to integrating the HVAC system with the ERP, department offices had to manually input section schedules into the HVAC management system—a labor-intensive and tedious process. “The interface from the HVAC management company was very poor, it couldn’t upload, drag and drop, or copy large sections,” says Jon Neff, vice president of IT at Kirkwood Community College. “We had an opportunity to eliminate this drudgery and improve accuracy, so we worked with Facilities and Academic Affairs teams to better integrate the HVAC with Colleague.”

With the integration, the institution pulled existing information from Colleague and fed it directly into the HVAC system, saving thousands of hours per semester in re-keying data, and also improved accuracy so that the rooms remained at the right temperature for faculty and students.

Efficiency, comfort, and money saved

The institution has seen considerable cost savings, not only in lowered electricity bills, but also by saving time for staff. “There has been tremendous improvement on efficiency, with no more duplicated manual entry,” says Neff. “This allows the departmental personnel to spend more time focused on students and less time on an arduous, inefficient task.”

Neff also notes that a more comfortable learning environment is a key piece of the educational puzzle. “The rooms are heated and cooled more efficiently,” he says, “and being comfortable adds to student success.”

The institution is now looking for other ways it might apply technology to save costs. “Because of the success of this project, we are looking at many new ways to use the wealth of information we already possess in Colleague to help drive other improvements,” says Neff.

Savings by the numbers

32,422	course sections
x 48	course days/semester
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1,556,256	course sections/semester
x .5	minutes to add HVAC info manually
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12,969	hours to add HVAC info manually
x \$20	per hour for manual input
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\$260,000	personnel time savings
+ \$20,000	electricity savings
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\$280,000	TOTAL ANNUAL SAVINGS



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