



Goodbye to Paper-based Purchasing

Learn how McDaniel College modernized purchasing processes with digital automation.



McDaniel College's motto is "E Tenebris in Lucem Voco," which means "I call you out of darkness into light." While McDaniel College is focused on moving into the light, their purchasing processes were stuck in the dark, relying on paper-based forms and manual approvals.

During the pandemic, out-of-date processes slowed considerably, with the volume of paper increasing and the time lag between purchase request and approval growing longer every day. The college knew their current approach was no longer sustainable.

McDaniel College selected Ellucian Purchase to complement their Ellucian Colleague ERP system, enabling them to transform antiquated processes, eliminate paper-based forms, and reduce the time to purchasing approvals.

An Urgent Push to Digitize

Prior to 2020, McDaniel College managed purchasing via paper-based forms shuffled from one approver to the next. While slow and frustrating, the process was baked into workflows and tolerated by staff. Then the pandemic started.

With most of the purchasing staff working remotely, management of purchasing approvals fell to a handful of individuals who were in the office. Printing email requests and matching them to invoices created delays and often led to duplicate orders. And the already lengthy gap between purchase request and approval was constantly expanding.

MCDANIEL COLLEGE

Case Study

Main Challenge

Paper-based processes were inefficient and ineffective

Solutions

Ellucian Colleague
Ellucian Purchase

Results

- Reduced all paper-based forms and manual processes
- Shortened time to approval through automation
- Increased data accuracy
- Refocused staff time on high-value strategic goals

That's where Ellucian Purchase came in. Ellucian Purchase provided an affordable way to digitize and automate the purchasing process, reducing the need for paper, streamlining tasks, and shortening time to approval. More efficient workflows freed staff to refocus their attention from tracking purchases to supporting the strategic goals of the college. And because Ellucian Purchase provides process transparency, internal and external stakeholders can have confidence knowing available funding is being spent as effectively as possible.

“Everyone brings something to the table, and has their area of expertise. And we have to do our best to [help them] focus on doing what they are best at,” said Julie Fisher, controller, financial services department at McDaniel College. “The last thing you want is for your biology professor to waste hours of time trying to order supplies for his experiment, when he could be focusing on the lesson itself.”

Driving Adoption Across Campus

Once a solution had been adopted, McDaniel College leadership knew they needed to roll out their new system and processes in a way that met the needs of their user community without disrupting ongoing business. Fisher took on the role of project manager for the implementation, ensuring all necessary tasks stayed on schedule.

Working department by department, and often individual by individual, Fisher and team are training the userbase for success. This thoughtful, iterative rollout has eased hesitation in staff members who may not consider themselves “tech savvy” enough to pick up new tools quickly. “The good news is that the learning curve to use Ellucian Purchase is small for most departments,” says Fisher. “Because people are familiar with online shopping, the new experience is familiar and easy to learn.”

And for teams that work closely with students—who expect an intuitive, consumer-like experience—the benefits add up quickly. Students identify what they need for an event or activity, and using Ellucian Purchase, the program sponsor can easily place an order and receive approval quickly, eliminating the need to track down a code or receipt and submit an expense report later. As a result, the team has greater visibility into purchases and can more effectively deliver on student expectations.



Shifting Focus to What Matters Most

Because McDaniel College is dedicated to supporting the needs of its diverse student community, a tool like Ellucian Purchase is more than a procurement solution. It's a critical lever for their larger mission, helping staff spend less time managing processes and more time giving students the individualized support they need.

“[With Ellucian Purchase], your workflows are more efficient,” says Fisher. “And when your workflows are more efficient, you can focus more on the larger, strategic goals of the college. It’s best not to put it off until another day because it really makes such an impactful transformation for the institution.”



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