ellucian

CASE STUDY:

A better way to manage faculty workload and compensation

Integrating systems boosts efficiency and saves money

In order to provide comprehensive, multi-disciplinary education to 18,000 students across multiple campuses, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador employs around 1,300 full- and part-time faculty. In addition to regular teaching loads (four to five courses per year), each academic unit has teaching equivalency frameworks, prescribed by the faculty collective agreement, that determine recognition and compensation for all non-standard teaching (such as graduate supervision, field placement supervision, and so on). These teaching equivalencies vary substantially—even across departments within the same faculty—and have a large impact on faculty workloads.

Memorial had an existing home-grown, customized system in place for approving sessional instructors (non-tenure track instructors with a maximum of two courses per semester) and overload (regular tenure and tenure track faculty teaching in excess of standard teaching loads) assignments. However, it required substantial manual intervention, with data being maintained in multiple systems. With an updated release of Ellucian Banner®, this presented a challenge as Memorial University was striving to reduce the number of custom forms in advance of the transition.

MEMORIAL
UNIVERSITY

Primary Challenge
Eliminate redundant data and streamline the faculty workload and compensation process

Solution
Ellucian Banner®

Results
Streamlined approval processes and improved data quality

Increased efficiencies for staff, saving an estimated 230 hours per semester

Improved collaboration among campus departments

To address this challenge, Memorial instituted a plan to create efficiencies in processes used to compensate per-course instructors and extra teaching assignments, and to also integrate data and streamline operations in this area.

Eliminating redundancies, streamlining processes

To implement this plan, Memorial turned to the Banner Faculty Load and Compensation (FLAC) module, which would create a bridge between the university's existing systems and better enable it to track workload and compensate faculty and sessionals accordingly.

"Moving from independent processes and disconnected systems to a single system with one point of input presented some challenges," says Cheryl Whitten, associate director of financial and administrative services at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

One of these challenges with the FLAC implementation was to design an approach that was transferable across all academic units and across all campus locations. Yet another challenge was that multiple campuses used the same subject code in the institution's SIS, while approvals at various levels throughout the institution were needed to vary based upon the campus location. In addition, course section data had to be modified to represent actual workload levels, course compensation rules had to be defined based on collective agreements and union contracts, and schedule type usage needed to be standardized across academic units. And finally, a

change management program was needed to ensure buy-in across all academic and administrative units.

The initiative revolved around three main goals:

- Eliminate redundant sources of data entry across the campus, which had developed through a long and cumbersome manual process.

- Use technology to streamline the appointment process across all academic units and minimize potential for errors.

- Eliminate customizations and the home-grown solution where per-course instructor appointments were previously handled, thus saving the university substantial costs in maintenance and potential issue with future upgrades.

Building a foundation for efficiency

Once the new system was established, a pilot was completed in two academic areas for spring registration. Following that, the new system was rolled out to a select number of academic departments the following fall. Only eight months later, the system was in use campus-wide.

Memorial University has historically had a multi-tiered approval process in place for per-course instructors and extra teaching appointments. The institution combined Banner® Workflow functionality with FLAC to create a multi-level, tiered approval process. An automated solution was designed and developed which pulled instructional assignment details from Ellucian Banner as well as

"Our initiative has had tremendous success with students, faculty, and staff."

CHERYL WHITTEN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

compensation package details using FLAC rules to summarize and initiate a multi-step review and approval process.

Using this new method, the institution was able to streamline and automate most processes, and was also able to eliminate the use of paper. Each approval level is automatically notified by email that action is required. Once approvals are in place, the system automatically generates and sends to the sessional instructor an appointment email. That email is also copied to the hiring unit, HR (for the personnel file), and the bargaining unit.

"This project had to address several challenges—data quality, user training, change management, and a multi-tiered approval process," says Whitten. "It was very innovative, as it took several, unconnected, manual processes being performed across four independent functional units across the university community and implemented a unique technological solution with a single point of entry."

The project not only enabled and supported a multi-tiered approval process, but also significantly improved the efficiency of the approval process and ensured that approvals were being completed by the appropriate authority. It also automated the creation of hundreds of appointment letters each semester, which eliminated manual effort, reduced paper costs, and improved efficiency.

As these improvements continue, Memorial plans to integrate reporting for full-time faculty in the next phase of the project.

Fostering collaboration across campus

"Our initiative has had tremendous success with students, faculty, and staff," says Whitten. "Instructional assignments are now entered consistently into the SIS which provides accurate information to students earlier when making course schedule selections during registration periods. Faculty are engaged earlier in the process to finalize instructional assignments so that per-course instructor needs can be identified earlier. And instructors receive electronic notification of appointments as soon as they are approved."

And as with any project of this nature, the new system required staff to learn new roles and responsibilities. Individual training sessions were provided to each academic unit and an in-depth guidance document was prepared. However, the transition was smooth, resulting in greater efficiencies across the university. "Our academic unit administrators are now able to have a single point of entry into the system," says Whitten. "The instructional assignment is the only data input required. This eliminates the manual update process and checking to ensure changes were made appropriately. Our Registrar's Office resources are no longer entering instructional assignments, allowing them to focus on the accuracy of course section data, and Faculty Relations is no longer creating manual appointment letters and pushing paper all over campus."

By utilizing a single source of data, which eliminates the cumbersome process of comparison across multiple data systems, the university is able to ensure the data is accurate
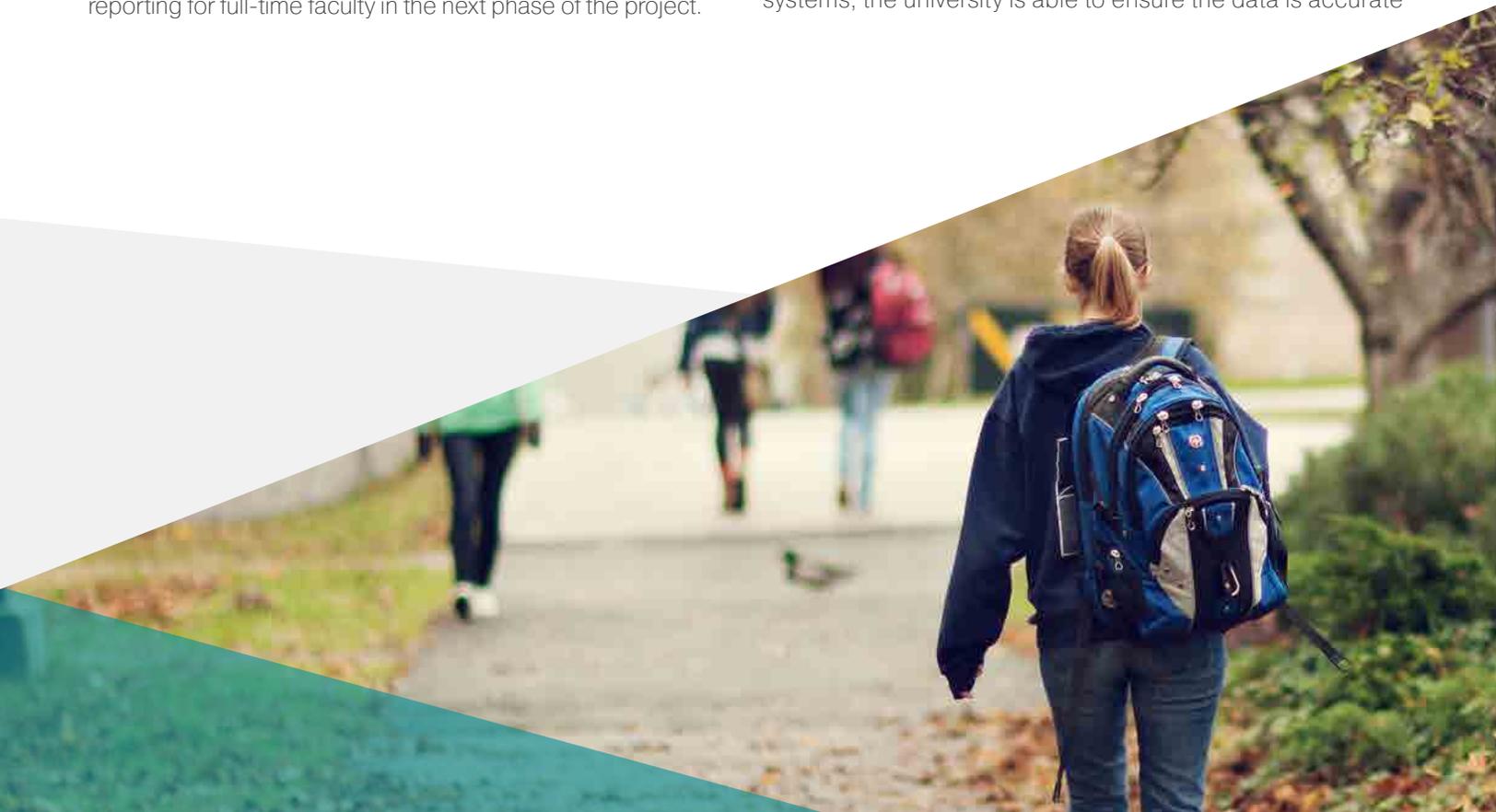
and reflective of actual workloads and responsibilities. Prior to the new system, course workloads and schedule types were unreliable, especially for teaching equivalencies, and instructor responsibilities were not tracked. As a result, it was impossible to compare compensation packages to course data to determine what an instructor should have been paid. However, the new system corrected and streamlined this issue.

Implementing the project also laid the groundwork for successful collaboration among different departments across campus—including Office of the Provost, Academic Units, Registrar, Faculty Relations, Human Resources, and Information Technology Services. These departments were able to forge new relationships and eliminate many of the silos that had existed prior to the implementation. "The project was truly a cross-disciplinary initiative that effectively bridged the gap between the administrative and academic sides of the house," says Whitten.

230*
HOURS SAVED

100 HOURS SAVED
Keying information into the employee jobs form

100 HOURS SAVED
Creating appointment letters

30 HOURS SAVED
Distributing appointment letters

*Estimated hourly savings per year. Based on an average of 400 instructional assignments each semester.

⊘ ellucian.

Ellucian is the world's leading provider of software and services that power the essential work of colleges and universities. More than 2,500 institutions in 50+ countries rely on Ellucian to enhance operations and enrich the student experience for over 20 million students.

Visit Ellucian at www.ellucian.com