CASE STUDY:

Leveraging IT to drive returns

A holistic approach to optimizing performance

LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY MARYLAND

In 2016, Loyola University Maryland took a holistic look at the organizational structure and operations of its IT department. Randall D. Gentzler, Loyola's vice president for finance and administration, had a suspicion that the IT organization wasn't performing as optimally as it should. He shared his thoughts with Loyola's president. "'Something doesn't feel right,' I told him. We were finding it difficult to complete a large number of active projects and initiatives, with no established way to prioritize them based on their value," he says.

There were also increasing complaints about underperforming technology and IT processes across the campus—not just from staff and administrators, but students as well. "We also started examining the evolving student experience and what they were looking for. Student demand was increasing and I didn't feel as if we were keeping pace."

Loyola hired a consultant to conduct a 360-degree audit and efficiency analysis of the institution's IT organization and processes to determine whether resources were producing the right results. "We needed to take a look at our technology from a holistic perspective," says Gentzler.

Enrollment: 6,000
Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Challenge
Find ways to operate more efficiently and save money through technology

Solution
Ellucian Managed Cloud

Results
Operational and capital expense savings

Efficient use of IT resources

Increased focus on institutional goals

Making the move

The consultants' assessment came back with a number of clear suggestions and pointed analysis—including ways to reorganize operations and better focus the IT team on critical operations. But perhaps the most important of those recommendations was that Loyola move its IT infrastructure to the cloud.

Migrating to the cloud would yield tremendous efficiencies, including outsourcing upgrades and patches, transitioning the responsibility of hiring and retaining skilled staff to a vendor, freeing-up resources to support the lines of business, and realizing operational and capital expense savings.

Knowing that a move to the cloud is a major undertaking, Loyola took this recommendation under serious consideration. "As we began to think about the cloud, we knew that there were levels of risk," says Gentzler. "But we did our due diligence, we did a lot of research, and we had a lot of conversations—and we ultimately got to the point where we felt very comfortable with the cloud."

Gentzler and Loyola's administration knew that cloud migration would change the way the IT department—and the entire university—operated, but that change would offer unparalleled opportunities for efficiency and cost savings. They were, in effect, thinking "big." "We had an eye toward transformation," says Gentzler. Loyola recognized that migrating to the cloud would allow them to better serve its constituents, offer a superior educational experience, and, ultimately, save money. "We found that in order to gain savings, in some cases we had to invest first," says Gentzler.

Once Loyola committed to the cloud migration project in September 2016, they began to communicate to the campus community that changes were coming. "We said that there was going to be some restructuring and re-organization—and one of the initiatives was to move to the cloud," says Gentzler. "I can't say enough about how important communication is—with the leadership, with the user community—to the success of a project like this. We went into this knowing that it was important for everyone to understand what the timeline was, what the risks were, and what was going to take place."

As part of those communication efforts, Loyola informed the campus community that moving to the cloud wasn't as simple as "throwing a switch" and walking away. Cloud migration just doesn't work like that. "We had to set the expectations, and prepare the campus community," he says. "Until you go through a full business cycle while running in the cloud, things will pop up. The key to migration is test, test, test."

Loyola completed its move to Ellucian Managed Cloud in July 2017. Concurrently, it restructured its IT department from a fully centralized organization structure to a shared services model with clear accountability lines and implemented a project rationalization process that

"The direction Ellucian is going in and their commitment to cloud strategy—and higher education in general—is pretty spectacular."

RANDALL D. GENTZLER, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Loyola University Maryland

focuses on the total cost of projects (hard and soft expenses), alignment with goals, funding status, and available resources.

The results? "This restructuring and moving to the cloud has had very positive financial outcomes and benefits," says Gentzler. Following the reorganization recommendations provided by the consulting firm, Loyola saved an estimated $678,000 net—capturing a savings of just over 6 percent (the original project goal called for a savings of at least 5 percent). And moving on-premise systems to the cloud for increased reliability, scalability, and new availability of physical space was an integral part of capturing those savings.

"Our staff can now focus on supporting our end users, rather than the care and feeding of the servers and software," says Gentzler. "We've freed up staff and capital—and that has had a profound impact on what we are doing. For example, we're no longer having to gauge the robustness of the system around times when we'd have a heavier volume of users, such as registration— we are no longer managing that. And we're no longer maintaining and replacing all of those servers in the equipment room, we identified an additional $500,000 in savings from that, and I think that number is going to continue to go up."

Improving the experience for IT professionals—and everyone else

Since migrating to the cloud, Loyola has accomplished more than cost savings. Its IT staff is now able to operate more efficiently, and that translates into a better
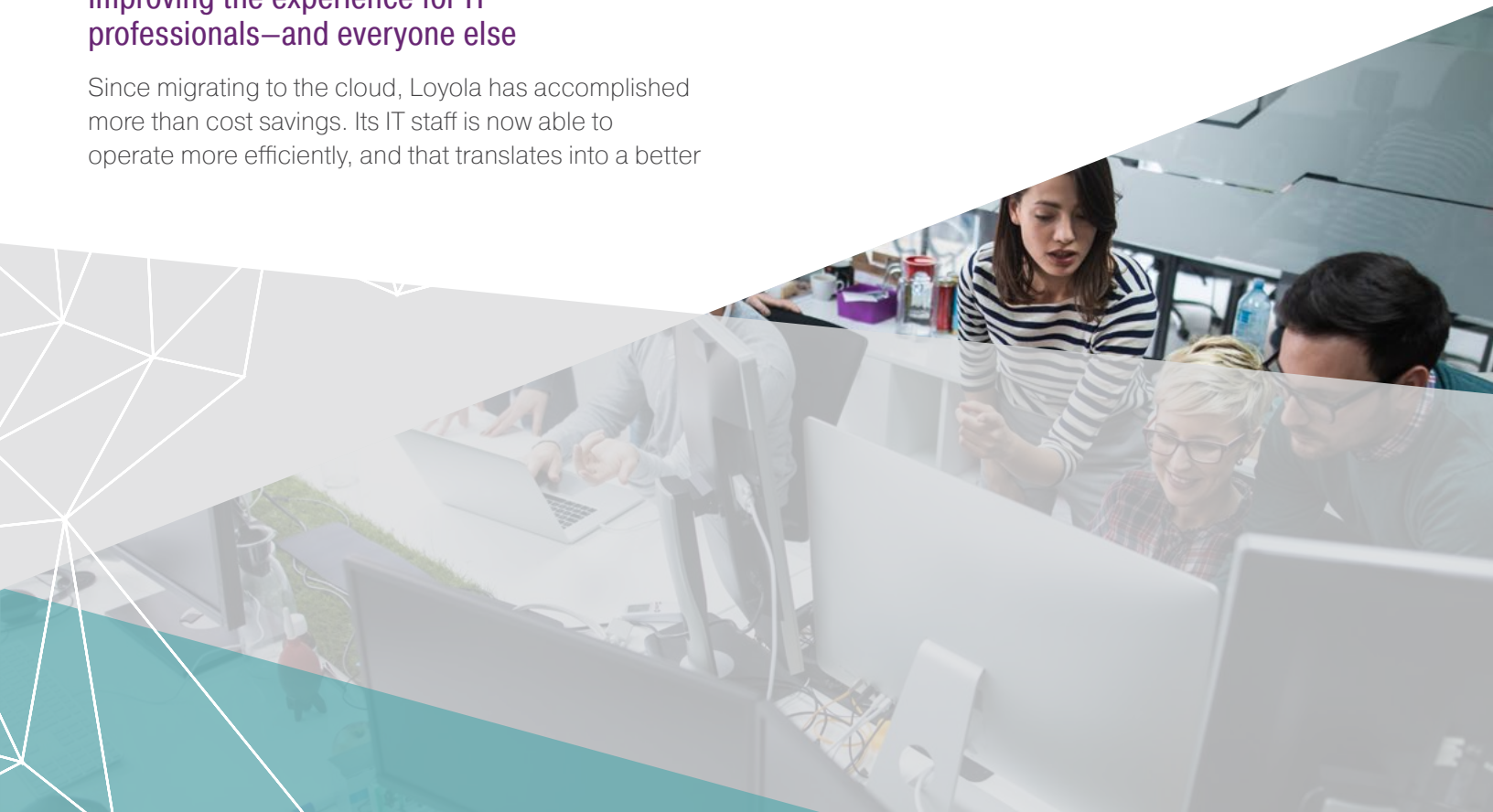
Financial Impact

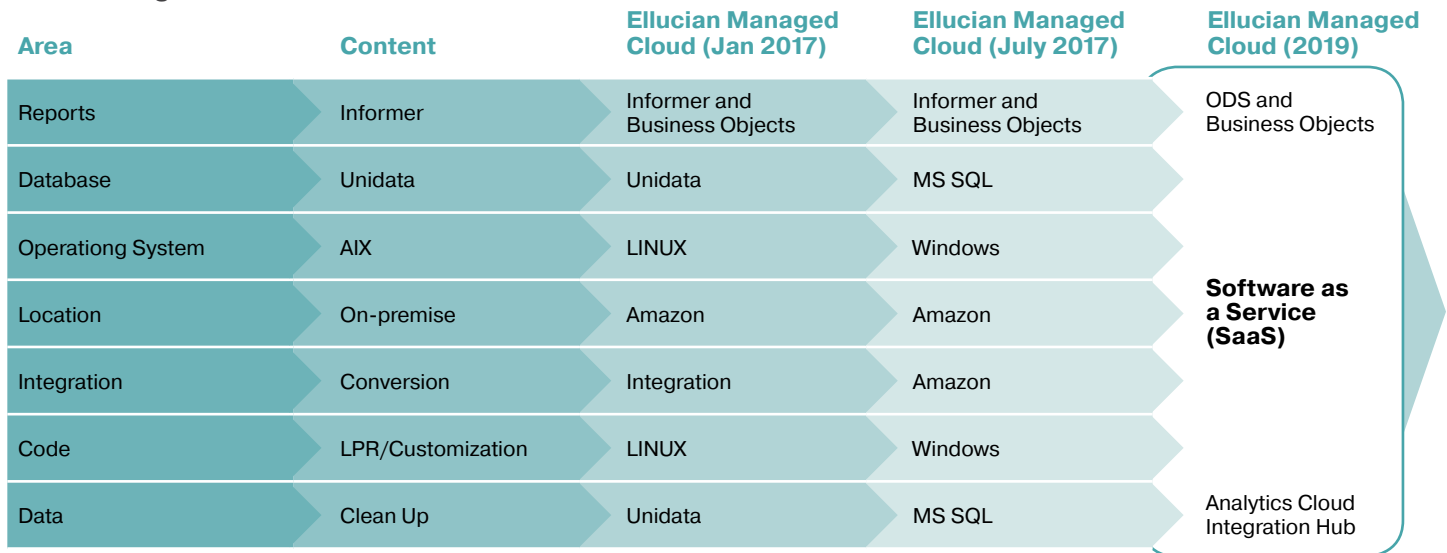| Operating expenses ($000)	
17 Vacant, transferred or released positions	$(1,256)
Software/system support/operational savings	$(244)
7 New restructured positions	$833
Cloud hosting and related services	$489
Capital expense ($000)	
Annual capital expense	$(500)
Total net savings	**$678k**

experience for staff and students. "Our staff is now focused on business goals, rather than patching or updating," says Gentzler. "On top of that, since moving to the cloud our disaster recoverability has been enhanced as well." And that means more dependability and security throughout campus.

Next on the roadmap, Loyola plans to take steps toward SaaS cloud deployment. "As early as 2019 we are planning to re-implement systems with no customizations, and we will then be utilizing software as a service," he says.

For Loyola University Maryland, "moving to the cloud" was about much more than just transferring data to servers

Phased Migration

Area	Content	Ellucian Managed Cloud (Jan 2017)	Ellucian Managed Cloud (July 2017)	Ellucian Managed Cloud (2019)
Reports	Informer	Informer and Business Objects	Informer and Business Objects	ODS and Business Objects
Database	Unidata	Unidata	MS SQL	
Operationg System	AIX	LINUX	Windows	**Software as a Service (SaaS)**
Location	On-premise	Amazon	Amazon	
Integration	Conversion	Integration	Amazon	
Code	LPR/Customization	LINUX	Windows	
Data	Clean Up	Unidata	MS SQL	Analytics Cloud Integration Hub

off-site. It was an opportunity to examine how they did business, what technology was required to do it, and—most importantly—how to craft an IT department that could operate more efficiently and effectively. "For us, it was much broader than just 'moving to the cloud,'" says Gentzler. "We did tackle a number of other transformational changes at the same time that put us in a position of strength with respect to our technology."

And Gentzler believes that Loyola's cloud migration will not only save money in the long run, but will also set a new standard for conducting business across the institution. "We're setting the path for continued efficiency," he says. "Going through this process allowed us to re-balance the culture."

Building a partnership means success

What advice does Gentzler have for other institutions considering a move to the cloud? First, he emphasizes building a firm foundation with the service provider. "This project required a strong relationship with our business partner," he says. "There will be times when things won't go the way you want them to go, and you need to have that solid relationship to ensure success."

Gentzler is quick to point out that projects like this are a partnership—and it's crucial to remain open and communicative. "You can't engage in finger pointing," he says. "We're in this together."

Gentzler believes Ellucian's higher education and cloud expertise were key to the successful implementation of this project. "Their senior leadership was very much involved with this project," he says. "I had the opportunity to speak with Ellucian's president and CEO, and she shared her goals and vision for the company's cloud strategy, and I came away that day thinking, 'Wow, we made the right choice.' The direction they're going in and their commitment to cloud strategy—and higher education in general—is pretty spectacular."

⊘ 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 nearly 50 countries rely on Ellucian to enhance operations and enrich the student experience for over 18 million students.

Visit Ellucian at www.ellucian.com.