



جامعة زايد
ZAYED UNIVERSITY

About Zayed University

Enrolment: 9,500

Objective

Implement a degree auditing system to improve efficiency and enhance student success

Solutions

- Banner® by Ellucian
- Banner Finance
- Ellucian Degree Works™

Business benefits

- Cost savings across campus
- Improved efficiency for faculty and staff
- Better student experience



Better by degrees

Zayed University implements Ellucian Degree Works™ to increase efficiency and improve the student experience

A new way to handle degree audits

Zayed University has long established itself as one of the leading higher education institutes in the United Arab Emirates. But the university recently faced the challenge of finding a reliable tool that would eliminate paper audits.

The paper audit process was very inefficient. It started a semester ahead of graduation and involved faculty, administrative assistants, assistant deans, the registrar, and the approval of the dean. Nor was it always reliable.

When exceptions were made, there was no electronic system to track historical information.

“The paper system was cumbersome and not user-friendly for students,” says Roslyn Trezevant Haley, associate professor and director of undergraduate student academic success. “We also couldn’t use it for what we call ‘student success advising’—tracking student progress and monitoring their plans towards graduation.”

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Zayed University had been using Banner® by Ellucian since 1998, first implementing Banner® Student before adding Banner® Finance and Banner® Accounts Receivable. Once Zayed University began to encounter problems within its student auditing process, it turned to Ellucian Degree Works for a solution.

In order to address the challenges presented by its auditing process, Zayed University defined a few specific priorities. The university determined that students should be able to see how they met the criteria for all completed courses over an eight-semester (four-year) plan, and how these satisfied degree requirements in alignment with their career goals. In addition, the university wanted to be able to track students' progress to ensure they graduate within that specified time. Finally, the university believed that students should be able to plan for registration in future semesters by identifying courses offered along with the specific requisites needed.

The university also insisted on a user-friendly solution with which students could easily view their grades, academic standing, grade-point average, and transfer credit hours earned. Ideally, students would also be able to estimate how many semesters it would take to graduate check their advisor notes.

Improving the university experience

To meet these goals, Zayed University implemented Ellucian Degree Works, and created an internal, cross-functional team comprised of all relevant departments—including registrar and academic affairs, as well as curriculum coordinators—to set the parameters for successful implementation. It also recruited a team of academic advisors who would be trained in the use of the new software.

The team drafted a set of recommendations, including: implementing a soft roll-out; developing a realistic project plan; identifying technical and functional limitations; developing a record validation and testing plan; and creating a timeline with a training plan. Additionally, the team developed an aggressive marketing effort and committed to working collaboratively with the technical team, registrar's office, and colleges within the university.

Degree Works is now fully implemented, and combines Zayed University's degree requirements with an individual student's completed coursework into an easy-to-read worksheet. "The worksheet helps both students and advisors see which completed and in-progress courses count toward degrees, and

“For the first time, students can see what courses are required and completed for their degree programmes on one easy-to-read worksheet. Advising for at-risk students has been greatly improved and student academic dismissals have decreased due to better planning and course selections.”

MOHAMED ABDEL-MOHSEN

Associate Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Zayed University



is now used by all university programmes to conduct the official graduation analysis when students petition to graduate,” says Mohamed Abdel-Mohsen, associate provost and chief academic officer. “It facilitates course planning, projections, exceptions, substitutions, exemptions, and scheduling. It also enables accurate reporting and compliance with Zayed University academic policies and procedures.”

Eight-semester plan templates—used by academic advisors to assist students—are now combined in one place with catalogue course information, transfer credits, and courses-in-progress. These are displayed on an easy-to-read audit report that is readily accessible, reliable, and linked to the Banner transcript.

The university can also run “what if” degree audits for students to explore other majors, and “look ahead” audits to incorporate those courses

students plan to register for. Students can now calculate current and goal grade-point averages, view academic history, petitions and exceptions, as well as academic advisor notes.

The university had originally planned for a 12-month implementation, but reached its goal within eight months. It completed a soft roll-out and went fully live to the entire campus in month nine. “The biggest challenge was securing buy-in from all constituents and potential stakeholders,” says Haley. “But once everyone saw a demonstration of the product, Degree Works sold itself and we now have full campus commitment.”

A powerful and flexible solution

Since implementation, Degree Works has provided integration with the university’s current portal

application from which all applications can be accessed, and a single sign-on to those applications, as well as ancillary third-party solutions such as Blackboard. Multiple levels of data security ensure the integrity of the data being entered in accordance with UAE law.

Degree Works also provides various levels of reporting capabilities, enabling the university to easily access data for daily transaction reporting, and complex multi-level reporting to support executive decision-making and institutional research. And with tighter, seamless, real-time integration of data between the enterprise Degree Audit System solution and third-party or in-house developed applications, the university now has a high degree of flexibility to promote student success.

“In terms of time-efficiencies, we update Degree Works nightly with all approved changes submitted the day before, and are live during periods of registration,” says Abdel-Mohsen. “Cost-wise, we’ve saved hundreds of manpower hours. We now have an efficient recordkeeping system for approvals, exceptions, programme management, reporting key performance indicators, and programme/curriculum changes to eight semester plans.”

Yet the most important measure of success is how Degree Works has helped students. “Previously students only had a list of courses that outlined

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ROSLYN TREZEVANT HALEY

Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Student Academic Success, Yayed University

their eight-semester plan,” says says Abdel-Mohsen. “They had to make appointments with someone to get help understanding what to take, how it applied, and where it fit on their programme of study. For the first time, they can see what courses are required and completed for their degree programmes on one easy-to-read worksheet. Advising for at-risk students has been greatly improved and student academic dismissals have decreased due to better planning and course selections.”

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