College of Western Idaho:

From Startup to Standout

Dynamic Campus

Challenges

The College of Western Idaho (CWI) began enrolling students for the first time in 2009, expanding to nearly 20,000 students in 2016. It is the largest community college in Idaho, and at one point ranked as one of the fastest-growing community colleges in the U.S.

CWI's missions include providing basic skills education, professional technical education aligned with professional standards and local community outreach, while preparing students to continue their educations at the baccalaureate level.

Highlights

- Increased student retention and on-time graduation rates
- 5-year technology savings: **$378,333**
- Annual print services savings: **$250,000**
- Increased bandwidth and 100% network uptime

During the startup phase, CWI faced a number of critical challenges:

1 Rapid student enrollment required prompt, responsive expansion of faculty, staff and facilities in various locations.

2 Poor integration of the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and learning management system (LMS) created an unsatisfactory user experience for students and campus leaders.

3 Data center and operational inefficiencies resulted in frequent network outages and absorbed significant IT resources.

4 Manual reporting to federal and state government entities was jeopardizing compliance.

5 Operational costs needed to be balanced with student technology needs.

6 Existing vendors were unable to span across their respective software products.

The CWI executive team engaged Dynamic Campus to create a strategic plan—not only to resolve the technology issues, but to realize the school's long-term vision as a vibrant, sustainable institution of higher education.

Solutions

Dynamic Campus's higher education, business process and project management experts created an annual IT work plan and tracked progress toward on-schedule delivery of projects. Specific initiatives included:

Process improvements
- Custom-built forms for the One-Stop Student Services Center.
- Automated registration and waitlist processes.
- Re-engineered business office processes for sponsorships and student refunds.
- Implemented Executive Dashboards on historical trends/key performance indicators.

Transfer workstations
- Collaborated with Student Services to design interactive workstations to facilitate student transfers to four-year institutions.

LMS
- Created multiple front ends for different users.
- Implemented load balancing, patch management, and change control.

ERP system
- Conducted institution-wide business process assessments to understand CWI's unique business needs while identifying opportunities for process improvement, effectiveness, efficiency to improve student satisfaction and experience.
- Collaborated with client to transition the institution from a legacy turnkey Workforce Solution to fully leverage their existing ERP system. Prior to Dynamic Campus, this project was attempted several times in the past but by working closely with the client experts the project was finished in just over 12 months.
- Incorporated structured and reliable patch management and change control process supported by strong client-facing communications to keep all stakeholders aligned.

Data centers
- Cross-functional site and client teams worked together to successfully implement a new data center, giving CWI and its stakeholders better service and increased peace of mind.
- Delivered greater redundancy and reliability by implementing a dark fiber ring between the data center and the institution's key buildings and adding a secondary internet provider.

Reporting
- Automated reporting provides accurate, on-time reports on financial aid, student services, Affordable Care Act, and gainful employment data to the federal government and the Idaho state retirement system.

Security
- Collaborated with client to implement data security and improve upon institutional information security practices.
- By providing a holistic set of security planning and services has resulted in providing all CWI stakeholders more peace of mind and a sense of safety on and around the immediate campus.

Results

Within two years of engaging Dynamic Campus, CWI has experienced across-the-board improvement in practically every aspect of its operations.

Improved student metrics
- Increased student satisfaction.
- Increased retention and on-time graduation rates.

Increased data visibility
- More informed and quicker decisions.
- Improved sponsor relationships and communications.

Cost savings
- Infrastructure cost savings of $378,333 over 60 months.
- Negotiated fixed costs for one vendor's services (no annual increases for 10 years).
- New copy and print services contract saves approximately $250,000 annually.

Infrastructure improvements
- Increased bandwidth and improved network stability.
- Redundant power and connectivity to the internet and other external providers, effectively resulting in 100% uptime.
- More flexibility to expand facilities and add technological capacity.
- Less network equipment to purchase/maintain allows IT resources to be dedicated to other priorities.

Compliance adherence
Automated reporting provides accurate, on-time reports on financial aid, student services, Affordable Care Act, and gainful employment data to the federal government and the Idaho state retirement system.

Organizational alignment
IT governance structure keeps executive, academic and enterprise teams informed and in alignment on technology needs/projects.

By resolving complex IT challenges and creating a strategic plan for future growth, Dynamic Campus has enabled the CWI's president and executive team to focus on other priorities. By using technology more effectively, CWI has improved every aspect of campus operations, from student enrollment and instructional delivery to administrative processes and facilities management.

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