

Texas Southmost College:

Gaining Independence, Earning Accreditation



Challenges

Texas Southmost College (TSC) in Brownsville, Texas, currently offers a broad array of post-secondary education options for more than 4,000 students in the Rio Grande Valley.

Originally established in 1926, TSC emerged from a partnership with University of Texas at Brownsville (UTB) to become an independent, fully comprehensive public institution in 2011. Following its separation from the University of Texas at Brownsville, TSC faced several key challenges, both from an institutional and an IT perspective:

- 1 Independence.** The institution's goal was to become operationally independent and open its doors in fall of 2013.
- 2 Accreditation.** The new institution needed to be prepared to achieve accreditation by fall 2015.
- 3 Infrastructure.** The physical infrastructure and technology had previously been managed by UTB, and the assets and properties needed to be reallocated. This also had an impact on accreditation, because TSC was required to have separate technology solutions.
- 4 Growth.** Solutions were needed to accommodate rapidly increasing student enrollment, expanding staff, and working with the local community. Staff were being hired and trained on new applications while the school was beginning its operations.
- 5 Costs.** In addition to managing limited staff budgets, TSC sought to minimize tuition and fees for students.

Highlights

- Operationally independent in August 2013
- Accreditation achieved December 2015
- ERP implementation in just five months
- 100% digital campus

Faced with limited funding and an aggressive timeline, the school's new president, Dr. Lily F. Tercero, and her executive leadership team engaged with Dynamic Campus to ensure that TSC could achieve its future goals by successfully integrating advanced technologies, skilled human resources and efficient processes.



Solutions

Critical resources were focused on the development of the new educational structure, incorporating institutional as well as IT initiatives. Key solutions in the process included:

Technology and infrastructure

Rather than launching with a mix of analog and digital and transitioning at a later date, the decision was made to become an all-digital institution from the beginning.

Web, telephone and email services were fully migrated to an independent cloud-based environment that best suited TSC's needs. Dynamic Campus also performed re-routing, data wiring, purchasing, and other tasks in the data center and all the TSC buildings on campus formerly shared with UTB, in preparation for the needs of an all-digital campus.

Hiring personnel

Dynamic Campus staffed the IT team with subject matter experts that had both highly-specific technical expertise as well as a broader background in higher education.

Integration and implementation

Dynamic Campus provided integration and single-sign on capabilities, allowing students to seamlessly access their online resources located on the Pearson learning management system (LMS) and Ellucian Colleague, the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

For the institutional applications, Dynamic Campus integrated several solutions, including Compliance Assist software for the accreditation initiative as well as People Admin and Workplace Answers for HR functions.

Dynamic Campus also provided direct end user support to ensure that students and staff were able to see classes and access materials.



Results

Based on the across-the-board institutional and IT improvements, TSC was successfully able to register students, provide all required services and achieve full operational independence on day one. The most notable results include:

Prompt accreditation

TSC earned accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges in December 2015, an extraordinarily short timeline—particularly for a school that had only existed independently for three years.

Fast implementation

Colleague Student was implemented in just five months, which included migrating the data from UTB, validating the system, and installing the required information security access and controls for the admissions, registration, records, curriculum and financial aid functionality needed to open TSC's doors in fall 2013.

Dynamic Campus also worked directly with TSC leadership to successfully negotiate with Ellucian on the ERP software licensing that had previously come under the UTB-TSC partnership.

Achieved "all-digital campus" goal

Digital instructional materials and all course content are provided to students exclusively online through e-learning or e-textbooks. There is no need for a campus bookstore.

Student cost savings

Instead of spending \$500 on a single book, as is the case at many colleges, TSC students often spend just \$80 or \$90 for their entire class, including books and educational materials.

Leveraged federal grant money

Dynamic Campus was instrumental in helping TSC successfully secure a federal grant to acquire high-speed internet access for the Rio Grande Valley, setting the stage for additional technology initiatives at TSC and across the region over the next 20-25 years.

By enlisting Dynamic Campus's expertise, TSC has positioned itself for growth with scalable, robust cloud-based technology solutions—and put the focus back on building academic programs and helping students succeed.

Recently selected as a "Bright Spot" by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, TSC continues to rely on Dynamic Campus to ensure that the college's systems and processes stay one step ahead of the needs of its students, staff and surrounding communities it serves.



Dynamic Campus

Find out more at:



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