

case study



Tompkins Cortland Community College Improving Student Services

Named number one in the nation for deploying technology to streamline operations and better serve students, this college digitized student information providing every department and extension center with the information needed to quickly resolve student questions. Student enrollment grew by 40% over the past few years and the college was able to meet the added volume without adding personnel. Electronic information also helps the college easily comply with state record retention regulations and FERPA requirements.

Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) is located in a culturally diverse community in the Finger Lakes Region of upstate New York. The college is part of the State University of New York (SUNY) education system, offering 38 associate degree programs that prepare its students for transfer to a four-year college or university. The college serves 3,000 students through its main campus, two extension centers and online classes.

Documents

The college's two most important student documents are the student folder and permanent record card. The student folder is a set of paper documents that includes: registration forms, a certificate of residency, high school tran-

scripts, financial aid information, letters of admission and grades. The folder is frequently accessed by the staff to assist current students. The permanent student record card is a document that lists courses, grades and awarded degrees for each student that attended TC3 prior to 1997.

Work Process

TC3 needed a better way to store and access the information contained in each student folder. Even though all folders for the entire college are kept on the main campus, many different student service offices needed to access them, especially for new students who may need to visit several offices in one day.

Using a paper system meant that the folder could only physically be in one place at a time. To view a student folder, a staff member from the Admissions, Financial Aid, Registration or the Counseling office had to leave their desk to retrieve the folder from the file room or the last office that viewed it.

The college had previously digitized all 40,000 of their permanent record cards, but the system used was outdated and no longer met the needs of this growing college.

Solution Requirements

TC3 wanted to implement a non-proprietary, flexible system able to store scanned and electronic documents. They needed a system with a low total cost of ownership that could automate indexing and provide document retrieval access over the Web, as well as have the ability to migrate permanent student record card information from their out-dated system.

Solution

Photo Micrographics Corporation, an Authorized DocuWare Partner, implemented DocuWare at the college. Today, TC3 has four scanning stations and over 100 staff members using the solution. In the Registrar's office, all existing student folders were scanned and indexed. Now, information is digitized as it is received using the student number as a matchcode to automatically fill in the remaining index fields. Permanent record card images were migrated into the new solution, eliminating the college's dependency on a fading system.

The DocuWare solution has since expanded throughout the campus. Now the Admissions office electronically stores a copy of all correspondence coming and going through their office. The Dean's office, Board of Trustees, Library and Learning Resource Centers are each using the solution to meet their varying needs. Future expansions are being planned for the Human Resources department, Business Office, as well as the President's and Security Offices.

The Benefits in Detail

Individual Benefits

On an individual level, staff members now have immediate access to the information they need to quickly and efficiently help students. Retrieval time has been reduced from 10-15 minutes to just seconds. Being able to reply to student inquiries quickly has contributed to higher job satisfaction and lower workplace stress for everyone.



The Task

- Create a secure, centralized, easy-to-access information repository
- Provide students and staff with Web-based information access
- Improve workflow and efficiency

Appointed Modules

- DocuWare
- AUTOINDEX
- INTERNET-SERVER
- ISIS PRO

The Benefits

- Web-based digital information allows better student services
- Able to manage a sizable growth rate while controlling costs
- Online student information allows extension centers to provide counseling onsite
- Legal liability is reduced as record retention regulations are easily met



Judith Longo, TC3's Registrar said, "DocuWare changed the way we work. My staff used to constantly be in and out of the file room – now that is a non-issue for us. We no longer have to find a folder and sign it out. Today we can look up information and answer questions while we are on the phone or if the student is in front of us. The ease of access is the biggest change DocuWare has brought my staff."

Departmental Benefits

For the Registrar's and Admission's offices, digitizing student information as it is received has resulted in better workflow processes, and allowed the offices to provide up-to-the-minute information that, if needed, can be shared by other departments at the college. The Registrar is assured that permanent records are securely stored in a dependable system.

The Library and Learning Resource Centers are both utilizing DocuWare's robust scanning features to create high quality images and better serve their students. The Library posts PDF or TIFF versions of important articles to the school's website as part of the their electronic reserves, while the Learning Resource Center, with the help of another program, transforms their images into an audio file to assist visually impaired students.

The improved and automated processes have allowed the various departments to manage the 40% growth rate in student enrollment without adding additional administrative personnel.

Organizational Benefits

On an organizational level, digitizing student folders has brought huge time savings for every office and most importantly, TC3's students. Offices can work together and share information in a way never previously possible. These new efficiencies have allowed the college to better serve their students.

The solution helps TC3 easily meet the privacy standards established in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, commonly known as FERPA, and the New York State Archive and Record Retention regulations, limiting their legal liability. Even purging electronic records has been simplified with the use of a self-generating RETENTION DATE index field used to alert the staff when certain records can be purged from the

system. Physical storage space has been significantly reduced now that 73 file cabinets are no longer needed.

DocuWare's modular design, open architecture, and Web-enabled access fit with the college's master plan to continue to provide more student information online. Web access to information has been extremely helpful for staff and students at the college's two extension centers by eliminating the need to visit the main campus for access to student folders.

"Before we were lucky enough to find DocuWare, we were almost ready to build our own system. DocuWare was the only affordable solution we looked at that fit with our long range plans of integrating an electronic document management system with our current Web offerings of grades and course lists. Its flexibility and functionality has allowed us to meet the needs of a growing student body without adding additional staff," said Marty Christofferson, IT Director at TC3.

After implementing DocuWare, TC3 was named number one in the nation, by the Center for Digital Education and the American Association of Community Colleges for how they are deploying technology to streamline operations and better serve their students, faculty and staff; in the Small/Rural Digital Community Colleges category. With DocuWare's help, TC3 can better focus on their goal of helping students to identify and achieve their educational goals.

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Marty Christofferson,
IT Director,
Tompkins Cortland Community College



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