

Custom Application Development: “Free Market” Preregistration Enhancement to Banner

Client **Georgetown University**

Founded in 1789, Georgetown University is the nation's oldest Catholic and Jesuit university. It comprises four undergraduate schools, three graduate and professional schools, professional development programs and certificates, medical residencies and other programs predicated on the liberal arts tradition at the heart of the institution.



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Challenge Customize a self-service preregistration system to duplicate the business functionality of the legacy system while integrating with the new Student Information System (SIS).

Georgetown University selected Banner Student® from SunGard® to consolidate its student data processes and keep pace with changing demands. As part of this comprehensive undertaking, a new preregistration system was needed to both replicate business functionality in the legacy preregistration system, such as supporting different processes for the main campus and law school. “It was critical to have a single solution that would support both campuses to minimize upfront and maintenance costs and ensure redundancy of expertise across the registrars,” says John Pierce, University Registrar and Assistant Provost. Achieving these objectives required significant customizations to the Banner SIS.

Discovery

“Because we needed to work as a combined unit but had different processes and policies to support, out-of-the-box solutions just didn’t work for us,” notes Denise Sangster, Law School Registrar. “We also had to avoid any major policy changes to be ready for April registrations. There was no time to buy and integrate something new. We had to customize what we had,” adds. “Fortunately, that’s when we met IData.”

Pierce and Sangster were introduced to IData by the University’s overall SIS Project Director Carrie Gillotte. Right from the first meeting, it became clear that IData truly understood the University’s needs and even suggested improvements such as integrating supplemental materials. Additionally, IData was committed to delivering the functionality needed by the deadline and at significantly lower cost than other alternatives.

Solution

IData worked closely with Pierce and Sangster’s teams to customize Banner to meet stakeholder preregistration needs. The solution was designed, built and implemented in less than six months to deliver:

- Full integration with the Banner SIS
- “Free-market” bidding system for preregistration, providing a fair and equitable course selection and award system
- High configurability, allowing the main campus and Law School to both use the same system
- Online workflow for students, faculty and registrars, including access to reports for individuals with permission
- Reports giving Registrars much-needed details, including which students need to be reminded to complete preregistration and which approvers have yet to complete approval tasks.

In addition to supporting the initial configuration and implementation, IData also produced end-user video tutorials which were helpful to staff, faculty and students alike. The IData team met with students and administrators to address questions and accept feedback, and made improvements along the way. When the main campus released its new system, IData was onsite to address any bugs. The law school roll-out followed on schedule and virtually bug free.

From the University's perspective, IData's key attributes in achieving a successful implementation were:

- Deep knowledge of higher education professional tools
- Innovative thinking about the University's future needs
- Avoiding unnecessary costs by working with the Banner baseline as much as possible
- Availability to answer any question, regardless of how many times it was asked
- Keeping on schedule
- Providing regular updates on project status, issues and alternatives
- Providing thorough documentation
- Facilitating collaboration between the main campus and the law school campus

According to Pierce, IData and University staff functioned as a single, cohesive team. "We worked together to define outcomes and monitor the success of deliverables. IData always resolved issues with our deadlines in mind to ensure our constituents would not be affected." Sangster adds that IData staff were available to address stakeholder issues at any time of day or night, and always with a positive attitude. "They did whatever they had to do," Sangster recalls. "We can't say enough good things about IData."

Having worked with many different vendors during the course of transitioning to the new SIS (which is comprised of numerous third-party products and bolt-ons), Pierce's assessment of the IData performance is: "excellent." University staff were particularly appreciative of being kept informed, having confidence in IData's commitments, and the "Yes, we can." attitude. "I am very grateful for the services that we received from IData," Pierce comments. "It would have been a huge problem for the University if they had not delivered – and they were working under a very tight timeframe. I cannot think of any way they could have performed better."

Results

The most significant benefit for the University of the IData engagement was being able to make a seamless transition to the new preregistration system on schedule and without issues. According to Pierce, because this application replaced a system that people had been using for a number of years, success can be measured by a lack of notice. "When you deliver what people are expecting, you usually don't hear much about it," Pierce concludes. "So this was a huge success because it was a non-event for the end user."

IData Incorporated

IData is a higher education technology consulting and software solutions firm. For information on innovative services from IData, visit www.idatainc.com. If you would like to talk with IData about Banner upgrade services, contact:

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