

## Data Migration Services

**Client**      **Laureate Education, Inc.**  
Laureate provides a superior university experience for traditional and working-adult students worldwide through its leading international network of accredited campus-based and online universities.



**Challenge**      Accurately and efficiently migrate data from legacy enterprise systems to the organization's SunGard Banner standard

Laureate Education is a private, for-profit company that owns a large number of universities and educational institutions in the U.S. and worldwide. Its flagship U.S. institution is Walden University, a purely online school focused on masters and doctoral programs serving 40,000 students. Also in the U.S., Laureate operates the New School of Architecture & Design (NSAD) based in San Diego, California, serving more than 440 students with both bachelors and masters degree programs in architecture.

Laureate is in the midst of an aggressive expansion program. Currently, many schools in its network are operating different administrative, reporting and financial systems and databases. Striving to make its cost structures as efficient as possible, Laureate decided to standardize the information technology applications used throughout its network to reduce support costs and facilitate system-wide reporting and analysis, providing critical data for estimating revenue streams.

Both Walden and NSAD had existing enterprise resource planning systems with legacy data going back a number of years. Laureate needed to maintain the historical data because former students still require access to transcripts or may return for follow on courses. A number of stakeholders also require access to Laureate's institutional data such as academic history and account balances. Maintaining dual systems would be extremely inefficient and also problematic for students who are "in flight" during a cutover.

### Objectives

Tim Cheater, senior director of Laureate's Student Information System Integration Group, is responsible for implementing systems for Laureate entities in accordance with corporate standards. He was responsible for both the Walden and NSAD implementations of SunGard Banner, from configuration and hardware, to schedules, training, data migration and more. For data migration, Cheater had two primary objectives for IData:

- 1) Manage the data migration project as a sub project within the overall implementation
- 2) Provide specific programming functions such as data mappings, crosswalks and data extracts (writing the functions to extract the data from legacy systems).

### Discovery

For Walden, while Cheater had hoped his internal team could perform the data migration, he soon realized they did not have the bandwidth to do it all. Initially, he asked IData to provide just technical resource support. Later, he asked them to step into more senior roles because of their level of expertise. While Cheater did consider other consultants, he felt IData was the most technically qualified for the job.

## Solution

IData worked with Walden to migrate their data from Datatel Colleague into SunGard Banner ERP. It was a massive effort that included tens of thousands of existing and active students as well as data going back 10 years. While IData started out as Datatel Colleague and SunGard Banner experts, near the end of the project (when Laureate's Program Manager left the company), Cheater asked IData President Brian Parish to take over for the final two months to bring the project to completion.

A core IData competency is their deep understanding of institutional data at colleges and universities. They knew the data structure for all three systems involved in the two Laureate migrations and were able to anticipate and solve problems before they become major issues. The new Walden Banner system went live in July 2008. When the NSAD CampusView to SunGard data migration project came along in 2009, Cheater immediately asked Parish to serve as PM using mainly Laureate technical resources. NSAD went live in October 2009, with data migration fully completed by January 2010.

## Implementation

According to Cheater, both migrations went very well, with IData demonstrating strong project management skills. In particular, they were adept at bridging the gap between Laureate's functional and technical teams and IData's technical team. Because data migration starts in the functional areas to determine the kind of data to bring over, it is imperative to understand the functional nomenclature to accurately map data from the old system into the new. IData's keen ability to speak in both business terms as well as very technical terms was extremely beneficial for Laureate.

During the live conversion for Walden, Laureate realized there were some internal misunderstandings about certain data elements. "Brian Parish went way beyond the call of duty and spent 30 hours straight working with our team to resolve those issues," says Cheater. "And that was on top of a very extreme workload in the previous couple of months." Cheater cites this as an example of IData's commitment which is a key reason Laureate continues their relationship. "They've proven themselves in the most difficult circumstances," Cheater adds.

## Results

IData met all of Laureate's deadlines, which were extremely aggressive in both projects. The biggest benefit to Laureate was having the surety that comes with extremely competent project and technical management for one of the most difficult areas of these kinds of enterprise IT projects. Data migration is always a very difficult task because data never really maps perfectly. Following conversion, IData worked continuously with the Laureate team to identify and resolve the kinds of data mapping issues you generally expect.

## Future Plans

"We realize that data migration is just a small part of what IData offers," Cheater observes, "and one day we may well call upon those other capabilities. But right now we need their help with data migration because it is our most difficult task."

## IData Incorporated

IData is a higher education technology consulting and software solutions firm. For information on other innovative services from IData, visit [www.idatainc.com](http://www.idatainc.com). If you would like to talk with IData about custom application development, please contact us at:

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