



SunGard Higher Education Helps Colleges and Universities Optimize the Performance and Effectiveness of Their Datatel ERP and Software Systems

Extensive Knowledge and Experience Results in Successful Implementation

After two failed attempts at implementing a new technology administrative system, administrators at Carlow University realized they needed to consider assistance from outside the institution.

“Looking at our IT resources, we had not done a good job of preparing our team to successfully implement an administrative solution,” said Tyler Kelsch, Carlow’s vice president for finance and operations. “The university was working with its third CIO assigned to this project when it became clear that Carlow had under-resourced and underestimated the needs.”

When Kelsch arrived on campus in summer 2008 the IT staff had a handful of experts well versed on the university’s legacy system, but who lacked the necessary skills to transition to the institution’s new Datatel Colleague system. At the university’s request, consultants from Datatel and SunGard Higher Education met with administrators to come up with a realistic timetable for completing the project. Both companies provided needed expertise and SunGard put in place a project manager to oversee the implementation.

“Both SunGard and Datatel stepped to the plate and functioned very well together,” said Kelsch. “From the university’s perspective, all the expectations regarding the implementation were met. We went live with the admissions module as scheduled, and the rest of the student system (registrar, financial aid, student accounts, and financials) came up shortly thereafter.”

Results of working with SunGard Higher Education:

- Experienced Datatel Services staff can help maximize an ERP investment by aligning administrative systems with institutional goals
- Consultants efficiently provide solutions by leveraging knowledgebase across more than 19 Datatel institutions
- Datatel Services staff provide the scalability necessary to address large projects while minimizing costs





The implementation at Carlow was the fourth Kelsch managed and the third time he had worked with SunGard in completing the process. Working with companies such as SunGard, he believes, is worth the cost. "In terms of having a partner to go through the system implementation, regardless of the software package you choose, it helps to have guidance and direction. IT people always love to say 'we can handle this on our own.' But to face the unknown without someone who has been to the dark side to help you get through it only delays the process in many ways. It can cause you more downtime, and more angst and frustration within the campus community. It's worth the cost of having it done right the first time."

In March 2009, Carlow chose to amend its original contract with SunGard Higher Education to assume overall responsibility for managing the university's technology as well as providing 24/7 help desk services for students, faculty, and staff.

Kelsch said any concerns the campus community may have initially had over the decision to outsource the university's technology were soon allayed once it began to experience improvements. In addition to implementing the Datatel administrative system in a short period of time, IT has outsourced and hosted the latest version of Blackboard's course management system and has transitioned the university's e-mail from Lotus to Microsoft Exchange. The university went live with the Datatel portal platform in spring 2010. Work is also under way to refresh the university's network infrastructure.

SunGard Offers Datatel Customers Scalability and Flexibility

The largest provider of technology management services to higher education institutions, SunGard Higher Education currently assists more than 19 colleges and universities manage their Datatel products. In addition to on-site personnel who implement and maintain the software, more than a dozen dedicated SunGard technicians and consultants with the knowledge and expertise to support Datatel products are available to assist with projects and the ongoing optimization of institutions' IT operations.

Craig McKeough, SunGard's director of Datatel Services, said he and his team provide institutions with technical, functional, and strategic support. "We provide the technical support relating to system administration, customization, implementations, whether it's a module or the complete product, and third party application integration. We also provide ongoing operational support and optimization of the Datatel environment."

Through their functional support, the SunGard's Datatel technicians and consultants help institutions effectively use their current implementations more effectively while assisting them in determining exactly what they want their applications to accomplish. And from the strategic perspective, they help customers determine what customizations they want to make and, more importantly, which ones they want to avoid.

McKeough said a major advantage of SunGard's support services is its ability to leverage the company's vast knowledge and experiences with Datatel products across its customer



base in order to identify best practices and optimize efficiency. “We host regular calls with the entire Datatel Services team, where we share knowledge and offer suggestions. The delivery of our services is based on industry standards to drive consistencies and disciplined practices to ensure quality and optimization. Our team utilizes not only our knowledge and experience, but ITSM tools to help us effectively manage our day-to-day tasks.”

Another advantage to SunGard’s approach, McKeough said, is its flexibility. Additional staff can help with short-term projects, avoiding the need to hire and lay off workers. “And one of the unique things about our team is that we wear many hats. Many of our functional consultants, for example, can program. And many of our programmers do functional consulting. That way, if we visit a site for a week, and there are a few smaller projects to be completed, that same consultant often can assist with those projects. They are cross-functional.”

Seamless Implementation Helps San Juan College Effectively Serve its Diverse Community

Located in the Four Corners of New Mexico, this two-year college serves a unique and diverse community. Energy is the primary industry in the region, representing about a quarter of the local workforce. And at least a quarter of the 18,000 students attending SJC each year are Native American, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college.

When the decision was made to migrate the college’s legacy system to Datatel, administrators took advantage of the opportunity to streamline many of its administrative services. Staff from admissions, financial aid and other departments collaborated to review business processes and seek better ways of serving the students.

SunGard staff worked with college administrators to make the implementation as seamless as possible. Training materials for employees were provided and a campaign was even created for the project, including a fictitious character named Daisy, an acronym for Datatel Information System. The college even hosted an open house when the system switched over, causing SunGard’s CIO at the college to remark that it was the first time he’d ever attended a party for a software implementation.

“SunGard Higher Education has helped us develop a very extensive planning system that enables us to think about where to best invest our limited resources,” said SJC President Carol Spencer. “The people who come to us from SunGard are folks who are committed to our mission, and who work hard to understand who we are and become part of our team. That’s absolutely critical in making that technology strong and vibrant and healthy in order to help our students.”



SunGard Higher Education Serves Antioch University as a Trusted Adviser

When Antioch University decided to centralize the technology among its five geographically diverse campuses, it invited SunGard to conduct an assessment of what was needed. "Each campus at the time was responsible for its own IT," said Chancellor Toni Murdock. "And the only thing they had in common was Datatel. They were using all different kinds of software products, and none of them communicated well with Datatel."

Because of financial constraints at the time, the university elected to manage its technology in-house instead of partnering with SunGard. By the second year, however, administrators came to the conclusion they were not making the kind of progress that was needed.

"We needed stronger management, a strategic plan, training, and we needed agreement on what software to use with Datatel," said Murdock. "Because we already had had interaction with SunGard and were pleased with the assessment they had done for us, we asked them to come back and give us their recommendations. In order to accomplish what needed to be done, SunGard recommended they assume management of our IT."

Since the partnership took effect early in 2010, Murdock said a great deal of progress has been made in providing consistency among the five campuses. A governance structure is in place, with representation from all sectors of the university, to help align IT with its evolving role as an adult-focused institution. And SunGard is assisting Antioch in developing a strategic five-year plan for the overall university.

Developing consistency among the campuses has enabled the university to avoid an extreme amount of duplication and redundancy, already allowing Antioch to enjoy cost savings. Murdock said plans also are in the works to create a virtual library and a Web-based "Commons" platform that will ensure the same level of quality resources across all campuses.

"In this day and age, for a small institution such as ours, it's difficult for a small IT staff to really be current and up to date on all the new innovations and systems that are being implemented on a daily basis," said Murdock. "I think an advantage of SunGard is they are truly a company that is on top of their game. They have the resources and expertise to work with their institutions and stay abreast of the rapid changes that are taking place in IT. I think that is a very big advantage for us."