

DUHS transitions to PeopleSoft: A Case Study



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Project Background

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) was established by the Government of Pakistan in 2002. Since then, the HEC has undertaken a five-year reform process to turn Pakistan's universities into world-class centers of education and research and development. Today, the HEC is investing in the development of 100+ private and public institutions across Pakistan.

A key part of this reform process was the deployment of computers and high-speed networks across all these universities. However, despite the introduction of new technology, managing student information was a manual and time-consuming process. Everything related to student administration, including enrollments, fee records, and exam results, was handled by different departments at each university.

In June 2007, the University of Engineering & Technology in Peshawar and the Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) in Karachi were selected to participate in a pilot project to automate their Student administration and management processes using Oracle's PeopleSoft Enterprise Campus Solutions.

The key benefits envisioned were

- ◆ Improved efficiency by automating student administration process with Web-based system
- ◆ Enabled students to view exam results, course and grade history, evaluate transfer credit, and pay fees online
- ◆ Enabled staff to track fee payments, create class assignments, calculate grades, and assess student progress online
- ◆ Provided platform to speed up the distribution of general information to students
- ◆ Enable students to receive their degrees within days rather than months.

The following relates the experience of DUHS in implementing PeopleSoft Campus Solutions.

Active Management Support at DUHS

From the beginning, the senior management of Dow University, including the Vice Chancellor, had a strong desire to see PeopleSoft Campus Solutions implementation succeed at their university. This desire led to their active involvement at key points that eased change management at the University.

Centralization of data for constituent Colleges

Dow University of Health Sciences has multiple constituent colleges that are spread out geographically. There was no single point of reference, no central data repository that could be used by the University to streamline its functioning. As expected from any major Information Systems implementation, the implementation of PeopleSoft Campus Solutions at Dow has brought centralization, uniformity and compliance to policies and better monitoring.

Support for diverse educational systems

Historically, like most medical universities of Pakistan, Dow University of Health Sciences ran an annual teaching system. In the annual system of study, students study for the duration of one year and sit for an exam at the end of the year to be promoted to the subsequent year. The grading scheme for annual system is percentage based. A certain percentage is required to pass the exam.

Well into the campus solutions implementation, Dow University was still running an annual system. However, in order to align themselves with international best practices, a decision was taken to switch to the semester system. PeopleSoft Campus Solutions is flexible enough to cater for both the annual system and the semester system along with their grading schemes and other academic rules.

Support for hybrid approaches

Dow University's switch from the annual system to semester system meant that grading schemes had to be converted from a percentage based system to the grade point based system. Similarly, rules related to student probations, promotions, student performance etc all had to be modified. However, Dow University decided to continue with the practice of having internal and external examiners, generally a practice prevalent in the annual system. PeopleSoft Campus Solutions allowed Dow University to continue with a hybrid approach in which some practices were continued as-is while others were redesigned.

Conclusion

For a successful large scale information system roll out, a lot of things have to go right. During our implementation at Dow University, we found Oracle's PeopleSoft Campus Solutions to be adaptable enough to be effective for diverse educational systems. Techlogix's Campus Solutions Implementation Methodology was successful in absorbing the impact of abrupt mid-project policy changes, such as change from annual to semester system, without greatly affecting the timelines. Finally, the University's administration's drive to have the system implemented in their organization was instrumental in the project's success.

About Techlogix

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