

**Fostering Institutional Change and Collaboration through the
Implementation of a Knowledge Management Infrastructure**
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Abstract

Tallahassee Community College is using portal technology to engage students, faculty, staff, administration, and the District Board of Trustees. Through the use of this technology, institutional knowledge is more widely accessible and more easily managed and shared which enforces TCC's culture of evidence and engagement.

Introduction of the Organization

Tallahassee Community College (TCC) offers high-quality education at low cost to students in Florida. TCC established in 1966, has the lowest tuition of all community colleges in the state of Florida. TCC has approximately 15,000 students and about 800 faculty and staff. TCC is also ranked 14th in associate degrees awarded and 8th in awarding degrees to African American's in the nation. TCC has continued to enjoy growth in enrollment however even with this growth TCC faces budget challenges as the rest of the state of Florida. The challenge has become providing quality service to students while managing the budget effectively.

The college wanted to provide better IT services and information management solutions to faculty, staff, and students to improve the learning environment. To that end, TCC deployed an integrated solution of Business Intelligence, Portal and desktop technologies that make it easier for students, faculty, and staff to find, share, and use information efficiently. Using the Microsoft SharePoint, Microsoft Office and Microsoft SQL programs to access data and to connect with others on a central portal, faculty, staff, and students are improving collaboration, streamlining processes, and making better use of college data. TCC's new strategic information management solution has turned the college into a more cohesive, productive campus community.

Statement of the Problem/Initiative

Before early 2007, TCC didn't have a unified online environment through which students could manage important information about college life. They had to remember three passwords to access course grades and curriculum requirements; financial aid status; and registration forms using a third-party database system called EagleNet. Students required a fourth password to use a Web-based course-management system. The IT department had to manually administer these passwords for 15,000 students.

Faculty and staff members faced similar problems trying to find information stored among data silos and directories on the college's network drives. There was no single place to publish information or go to for administrative forms, nor a way to easily automate workflows for those forms.

As a result, TCC administrative staffers performed unproductive, repetitive work that took time away from more important duties. The college's 40-member IT department also spent a lot of time responding to information requests from faculty and staff. IT staffers had to perform manual extracts to the college's database, and it was not optimized for reporting.

To establish an optimal setting for its strategic information management solution, TCC needed to upgrade and standardize its infrastructure.

.Design and Implementation

Tallahassee Community College shaped a plan to roll out of the new infrastructure and took important steps towards business productivity infrastructure optimization by standardizing and simplifying the messaging and collaboration environment at TCC. They began by deploying products that would play a supporting role for the new strategic information management solution.

The Information Technology department designed three portals to house information for outside entities, the District Board of Trustees, the faculty and most importantly students. At the same time an IT team was formed to begin the process of building a robust business intelligence solution to allow all authenticated users the ability to approach and mine the information to support decisions across the organization.

The infrastructure of the systems is funded under two grants: Achieving the Dream funded by Lumina and the Federal Department of Education's Title III grant. Both of these initiatives include transformational change objectives for TCC as well as student success agendas. The cost of the implementation is roughly \$55,000 for software and \$25,000 for hardware annually. Additionally, College IT staff resources were used to develop the systems. Most importantly this was a transformational change for the IT staff.

The public access portal (<https://presentations.tcc.fl.edu>) and the District Board of Trustees portals (<https://presentations.tcc.fl.edu/bot>) allowed TCC to share information with outside organizations. This portal also housed the College's District Board of Trustee monthly meeting site. This portal contains a site for every monthly meeting as well as workshop materials

available to the DBOT. Each month the College's Executive and Management teams review data on the multitude of student success items contained in the College's three year strategic plan. Additional topics include budget, enrollment and other pertinent DBOT workshop topics.

The faculty and staff portal (<https://port.tcc.fl.edu>) was designed by the Assistant to the Vice President for Information Technology. This individual is responsible for the taxonomy of the system as well as training faculty and staff on managing/using portal sites. First a few 'champions' were sought to create sites. These included collaboration sites for developmental studies, safety and security and even the Executive team. These groups created a presence on the portal and other departments soon sought to create their own collaboration and communication areas. The portal also houses departmental forms and archives content created by faculty and staff, including team meeting sites and personal sites. The portal also houses a single sign on environment for email, access to shared drives and access to the College's enterprise resource planning system.

The portal for students (<https://tccpassport.tcc.fl.edu>) consolidates the functions available in EagleNet under a single sign-on. Active Directory provides user authentication so that IT staffers are saving time managing passwords. The site is a one-stop shop for students to manage their college life. It provides access to class registration, scheduling, academic planning/advising, tuition payment, transcripts, graduation status, e-mail and teacher communication, and financial aid. The portal also provides student's access to Blackboard; the College's learning management system. This portal has an oversight committee lead by the Director of Student Success. Each area on the portal has an 'owner' who represents other departments across the organization: Library Services, Registrar's office, Student Life, Athletics, etc. This group is responsible for updating content and managing the student portal spaces.

The data warehouse team has provided insight in to management data to drive decisions across the organization. Business Intelligence is beginning to roll out across the organization with the help of a newly formed Institutional Research Department. The Business Intelligence tools include a web based reporting tool, a data mining system which integrates into Microsoft Excel and a product that allows end users to create their own Dashboards and deploy them to the portal. The Executive team directs the warehouse team on priorities. The first data dimensions built are related to student data: applicant, grade history and enrollment data.

Training for faculty and staff is provided by the Assistant to the Vice President for Information Technology. Over 250 faculty and staff have been trained on using and managing the portal technology. The Institutional Research Department is providing training on the reporting and data mining tools. The IT staff is providing training on the dashboard tools.

Benefits

The portals have had many benefits. The DBOT portal was extremely important when decisions about tuition increases came in the spring of 2007. The board members were able to use models on the portal workshop site to calculate possible state budget cuts, enrollment growth, and tuition increases in real time. This model illustrated the impact of each of those adjustments on the future budget year. The tool provided to be a powerful enough experience to cause the DBOT to have an unscheduled vote on tuition.

One example of a benefit enjoyed since implementation of this best practice can be found in TCC's annual faculty recruiting process. Prior to having the use of the faculty and staff portal, HR employees spent hours processing paper faculty applications, creating and sending letters to those applicants, and forwarding applications to the appropriate hiring committees. The newly

deployed portal technology allowed applicants to submit their applications online and through workflow, TCC HR was able to automate the generation of letters and/or emails to the applicants, and forward applications to internal portal sites designed for the hiring committees to use when reviewing applications. The new online process using SharePoint portal technology saved the HR Department approximately \$10,000 in staff time and materials.

Another example would be the data provided across the organization during the summer months to paint the picture of enrollment. This information was shared weekly with the Executive team and then disseminated across the organization using the portal. This even allowed the organization to rollout a campus wide call campaign for potential students. This project engaged everyone across the organization to assist with enrollment.

The student portal allows students to access all of their information from one logon. Currently under development is a student dashboard. This will be placed on every page of the student's portal. This dashboard will show student's indicators on their own performance in their current semester classes, progress toward their goal, information about their college finances and indicators of any college process which they may need to complete (i.e. graduation check, fee payment, etc.). This dashboard will also push and track interventions as needed for each student.

The college has adopted a practice of using the portal technologies for presentations and this has paid dividends in sharing information campus wide. The managers review the workshop monthly after each DBOT meeting. This presents the same information to everyone across the organization. This technology is also used to present budget initiatives. All the information is in one place for any authenticated user to access.

In summary, the portal systems have provided a *platform* for all TCC faculty and staff to engage in collaboration, find information and develop new processes that will make efficiencies for the organization. The technology is easy to use and fairly simple to deploy. The costs are minimal because of the Microsoft educational licensing. These are only a few examples of the information housed on the portals. Daily requests for additional training and new ideas are continuing. TCC has only initially tapped the potential of the data and portal platforms that have been installed. Tomorrow will bring new staff innovation that will continue to create student success.