INDIANA UNIVERSITY

STUDENT SERVICES INITIATIVE PROJECT SUMMARY

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SHARED SERVICES SUMMARY

Indiana University has completed moving student administrative functions into a Shared Services model. The implementation started in fall 2013 after benchmarking and initial assessments were completed for all seven campuses. The vision for student operations included improving student service, employing best practices, removing duplication across the campuses, and reducing operating costs through increased efficiency. Other objectives included process improvements through system development projects and implementation of the one-stop student service at the campuses.

The Shared Services project implementation plan focused on (1) admissions, financial aid, student records, and student financials processing, system-wide support functions, security, training and production support, (2) keeping common technology platforms across all campuses, (3) investing in system-wide technologies including customer relationship management (CRM), electronic document management, and business intelligence, (4) security and access enhancements and (5) a Shared Services model for international student and scholar services.

Shared Services teams with members from University Student Service and Systems (USSS), University Information and Technology Services (UITS), Financial Management Services (FMS), and the campuses were established for each module to review 187 business processes. The review sessions focused on staff working together on standardization, efficiencies through process and technology, removing of silos, and implementing best practices. The review of the business processes clearly showed the differences in processes across the campuses and the efficiencies that could be gained in standardizing back office operations through Shared Services. From the review sessions, 136 back office administrative processes were identified to be moved into a shared model, a combination of shared and campus resources, or have savings at the campus level through improved processes. The review sessions also provided detailed staffing needs for campus offices as well as the central Shared Services office (USSS).

The Shared Services project for student operations is one of the first to be implemented for a multi-campus institution. IU has been recognized nationally as a leader in student services in improving efficiency while reducing costs. The project was completed in fall 2017.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Each IU campus has successfully implemented a one-stop shop using the Shared Services model to support back-office processing. The standardization and automation of back office processes combined with processes focused on faster responses with more efficiency resulted in fewer student/family issues and questions when navigating financial aid, admissions, student records, and bursar operations, and other services at each campus. Shared Services allow campus staff to focus on individual student issues through a new combined service model instead of non-strategic, back-office processing.

Technology enhancements were completed as part of the project for efficiency, service, and to eliminate numerous campus shadow systems. In Partnership with UITS, major projects include: OnBase document management system for electronic, paperless processing and tracking of documents, Academic Works scholarship software, Salesforce constituent relationship management (CRM), Ad Astra room scheduling upgrades, building schedule of classes workflows, class waitlist enhancements, and workflow applications to improve service and processing.

Admissions focused on applicant processing, post admit recruiting and decisions, external organization management, global functions, audience recruitment management, prospects, and other admission office business processes. Processing of admission applications moved to Shared Services including the processing of high school transcripts, college transcripts, test credit scores, and other documents. New electronic processes include optimal character recognition (OCR) technology and the loading of electronic XML transcripts.

Working with the University Transfer Office, USSS staff developed articulation rules to improve the evaluation of loading transfer credit based on the determinations of the campus academic units. Automated articulation rules and online tools have been developed for each campus to assist transfer student processing.

International student and scholar services moved visa and immigration advising and processing into Shared Services. This included all campuses using Synapsis software developed by Indiana University as the enterprise-wide solution for meeting the unique and complex requirements for processing international documentation within the international services domain. Guidance and assistance and adhering to regulatory policy and practice concerning the interpretation of, application, and compliance with federal immigration regulations are now provided centrally for all Indiana University campuses

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Financial aid focused on the areas of award processing and management, ongoing tasks and processes, planning and configuration, reconciliation, and compliance. Financial aid processes moved to Shared Services include ISIR processing, mass packaging, over-awards, loan and Pell management, return of Title IV and unofficial withdrawals, repeat coursework, and satisfactory academic progress set-up and evaluation. Aggregation of case identification and resolution within USSS Financial Aid Shared Service Center has led to report improvements, batch updates, and a much faster response time. Overall, these changes have significantly improved student service, mitigated the risk of funds being disbursed in error, and increased compliance with a myriad of rules in an ever-changing state and federal regulatory landscape.

Student records included the processes in curriculum and records management, enrollment, degrees, policy review, and compliance management. Shared Services now includes transcripts, enrollment and degree verifications, diploma processing, residency, NSLDS reporting, system academic inputs, and inventory management and purchasing (forms and diploma covers).   The student records teams were also focused on operational efficiencies through technology for improved service and cost savings. These included enhancements to waitlist processing, schedule of classes development, collection of classroom attendance data, block enrollment, collection of immunization data and other student record processes. Policy harmonization including a common calendar, processing of test credit, transfer credit articulations, inter-campus transfers, refunding calendars, special credit fees, and establishing the cost of attendance was implemented across the campuses for student service and operational efficiency.

Student Financials continue to expand Shared Services and achieve university-wide efficiencies. Shared Services work included calculation of tuition and fees, billing, post charges/payments, write-off, repayments, student refunds, collections. Student financials expanded Shared Services to include account reconciliations, the complete collection process for Bloomington and the regional campuses, audits, private loans, bankruptcies, and service indicator cleanup. Other Shared Services such as sponsor billing and the veteran benefit processing were added for some regional campuses, with plans to expand to all regionals in the future.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Other projects included Shared Services security access improvements to streamline processes for accessing student systems, support for all veteran's legislation, rules implementation, and compliance and continued work on the Decision Support Initiative (DSI) and reporting support to minimize duplication of effort. Institutional Research and Reporting has developed reporting dashboards with Tableau software to enhance operational and management reporting.

While not part of the initial report, other Shared Services processes have been implemented. Examples include Federal Gainful Employment reporting, Indiana Statewide General Education Core (STGEC), Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) changes and processing in SIS, Indiana State Grant changes, immunization, and other required business processes not identified in the SSI Phase III report.

SAVINGS

- Total net base budget savings: $1.1 million since Phase I, plus $2.3 million from Phase III business process redesign, for a total of $3.3 million.
- The processes and personnel in academic schools and departments processes were not part of the detailed analysis. However, changes to processes will have significant downstream impact, freeing up resources in the schools and departments of a projected $4.8 million (see below)
- Total $8.1 million annual savings

A study of Indiana University by the Hackett Group identified savings in academic units devoted to student services. There were reductions in work in the schools and academic departments, particularly in the areas of building schedule of classes, room scheduling, and enhanced student self-service. Faculty and staff time freed up from automating manual processes can to be redeployed to key academic priorities. Based on the analysis of savings in the student services offices, we estimate these savings to total $4.8 million across the university. These savings are attributed to:

- Technology enhancements to class scheduling
- Migration to enterprise-wide systems vs. departmental shadow systems
- Room scheduling software
- Use of OnBase electronic document processing
- Standardized reporting environment
- New security model/access to systems
- Transfer articulation agreements and enhanced transfer credit processing

While not tracked, the project has also had a significant cost avoidance savings. This results from all Indiana University campuses standardizing back office processing using the same technology systems.

NON-FINANCIAL BENEFITS

The Shared Services structure and reorganization of staff have resulted in strong collaboration and communication between the campuses and university administration. It allows the university to implement process improvements through all campuses in an efficient manner. This leads to continued process efficiencies, increased customer satisfaction, responsiveness to strategic partners, consistency, and transparency. It also allows for new mandated processes that impact back office processing to be implemented with efficiency for all Indiana University campuses.

The outcome of the business process review sessions included the use of service level agreements (SLAs). The SLA is similar to a contract in that it defines the expectations of both the delivery organization and the customer, and governs the process to meet those expectations. Meeting the expectations of the SLA will be the top priority of the new Shared Services organization. SLA contain key performance measures that define the service and are the basis for continuous improvement.

UITS and USSS work very closely together to ensure that the SIS and other enterprise student systems operate efficiently and are updated properly. The central role of USSS allows the enrollment and academic needs of UA and the campuses to be expressed to UITS with a single voice, and for UITS to work more effectively with a single "customer." In addition, USSS can provide expertise to the enrollment and academic functions to allow them to express their technology needs effectively to UITS. This approach supersedes the go-it-alone campus-specific development that resulted in shadow systems, duplication, and inefficient use of resources.

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PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

The following Shared Services reports are located at
https://usss.iu.edu/about/student_services_initiative.html

- SSI Project Charter
- SSI Phase 1 Report (Project overview)
- SSI Phase 3 Report (Detailed review of the Business Processes and implementation plan
- SSI Project plan for International Student and Scholar Services
- SSI January 2015 Update
- SSI January 2016 Update
- Share Services Final Summary