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Pivot forward and define your future: Partner with Oracle in higher education

WELCOME

For over three decades, Oracle has been committed to helping institutions worldwide enrich the teaching, learning, and research experience with innovative solutions that promote student success and responsible fiscal stewardship. Now, in an era rife with instability, budget cuts, fluctuating job demands, and changing student expectations, this mission is more important than ever.

This ebook explores the "art of the possible" by sharing the experiences of Oracle higher ed customers in their own words. These universities have a strong vision for their future and are using Oracle apps and technologies to realize their digital transformations and modernize their businesses. The featured institutions represent a wide swath of the higher ed industry, including Research 1s, HBCUs, and private, liberal arts schools. Some of these customers, such as Loyola University Chicago, have been with Oracle for decades; others have established their partnerships more recently. Some, such as Rutgers University, are full-suite Oracle Cloud customers, while other institutions, such as Gonzaga University, are beginning their journey to the cloud with Oracle Cloud Infrastructure. However, they all share one thing in common: Oracle's solutions are helping them see data in new ways, discover new insights, and unlock endless possibilities for their institution—and, most importantly, their students.

We hope their stories will resonate with you and open new dialogues with your institutional staff and with Oracle about the various ways your institution can pursue innovation in higher education.

—Vivian Wong,
Group Vice President, Oracle Higher Education Development

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Table of contents

ORACLE

Baylor University

Located in Waco, Texas, [Baylor University](#) is one of the nation's oldest schools west of the Mississippi and a Christian university devoted to excellence in education and athletics as well as service.

At a time when higher education budgets are tighter than ever, controlling costs, giving students exceptional research opportunities, and attracting the best faculty members are top priorities for Baylor University. Baylor is focused on modernizing its legacy back-office processes and systems to create a foundation for achieving those goals.

Founded: 1845

Location: Waco, Texas

Student population: 19,000

Oracle solutions: Oracle Fusion Cloud HCM, ERP, and EPM

Success metrics: Replaced 17 systems with Oracle Cloud; reduced monthly payroll runs from 11 to 2; streamlined employee hiring process from 26 steps to 7

Baylor University reignites workplace joy with Oracle Fusion Cloud HCM

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

When Cheryl Gochis took over as Baylor's VP and CHRO in 2014, she found that managing HR was an incredibly cumbersome process. "We had a separate recruiting system, a separate learning system, and a separate employee tracking system, forcing our employees to constantly re-enter the same piece of information over and over again," she explains.

HR wasn't the only area with this issue; the institution was using multiple systems from different vendors for financials, HR, and its student information system. "It was really one core system with a bunch of things bolted on," Jon Allen, Baylor's CIO and CISO, says, "like a bunch of barnacles glued onto the main system." The repetitive and mundane work led team members to make mistakes and introduce errors into the data, slowing the team's forward progress. As Gochis puts it, "The system stole our joy."

Modernizing Baylor's finance operations—and upgrading its ERP system—was another critical need. Making the most of Baylor's finances to support teaching and research is fundamental to its quest to become an R1 institution. "It's incredibly shortsighted to try to compete in tomorrow's economy with yesterday's technology," points out Brett Dalton, Baylor's CBO. "We have incredible faculty. We have incredible students. We have incredible equipment and laboratories. We have all of this potential, all of this value, but we were unnecessarily constrained with our poor IT systems and our poor approaches to how we did business."

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Gochis and her colleagues drew up a wish list for a new HR system; it would be easy to use, mobile-friendly, and have self-service capabilities so employees could easily access their own information. They also needed the system to be cloud-based so the university would stay current with the HR application's release cycles. "In the past we were using several systems that weren't designed around HR, so we constantly had to modify the system to make it what we wanted it to be," Gochis says. In addition, the new HR system had to make it easy to share information with systems running other business functions, as the finance team was also looking to upgrade its ERP system.

University leaders launched Project Ignite, aimed at not only transforming the university's systems but also modernizing their processes—including moving both HR and finance to new cloud-based apps—at blazing speed. "With staffing being the highest cost for our institution, we needed to make sure we have a connection across staffing, salaries, and benefits," Allen says.

WHY BAYLOR UNIVERSITY CHOSE ORACLE

As they reviewed various vendors' finance and HR systems, Baylor's finance team was looking for a proven cloud system that could help the institution standardize its business processes and gain new efficiencies while, as Dalton says, "removing the antiquated processes and procedures and bolt-on systems that had bogged our entire enterprise down." The HR team was particularly interested in how the systems could help the university standardize job descriptions across the workforce, track faculty and staff development, and store detailed employee data in order to meet regulatory requirements.

Gochis says Oracle's willingness to put its developers to work on these challenges—and to consider the university's feedback—was one reason why Baylor chose Oracle Fusion Cloud Human Capital Management for its new HR platform and Oracle Fusion Cloud Enterprise Resource Planning and Oracle Fusion Cloud Enterprise Performance Management for finance. Oracle Cloud's first-rate security was another prerequisite. It was clear to Baylor leaders that security was built in at every layer of the environment—something they hadn't seen with other cloud services they evaluated.

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> " I've been in IT for 20 years, and I've never before seen a company's products advance as quickly in a year as the Oracle Cloud products advanced. That investment is what really excited us. "

Jon Allen
CIO and CISO, Baylor University

RESULTS

Baylor's Oracle Cloud implementation has replaced 17 separate systems and given users a far more intuitive user interface. Baylor is now able to tie financial information to HR information in one dashboard so that university leaders have real-time information they can use to better understand how hiring trends are impacting the university's financial health or what resources newly arrived researchers commonly require.

Oracle Cloud has helped Baylor simplify its processes and save time and money. For example, it has reduced the number of steps it takes to hire an employee from 26 to 7 and decreased the number of payroll runs from 11 per month to just 2. Baylor even attributes a $37 million increase in online education revenue in part to the introduction of simplified student onboarding processes. Furthermore, the university expects to see further cost savings because of Oracle Cloud, which will help it fund additional programs that enrich its students' educational experience.

With Project Ignite, "finance, IT, and HR locked arms," Gochis says. "We developed relationships where we could give each other very straightforward feedback and help each other understand the different contexts and business requirements around our roles." Allen adds, "Now we're communicating with each other constantly and making decisions together about how data is going to be managed or how integrations are going to work."

> "While Ignite looked like it was a systems journey, in reality it became a transformational journey for the entire institution. We embarked on this journey with a desire to have one system that served our students and staff well, and the transformation that happened in that time was truly incredible."

Cheryl Gochis
CHRO, Baylor University

[Florida A&M University](#) —or as its close-knit community of alumni calls it, "FAM-U"—is the only public HBCU in the state of Florida. With a mission to uphold academic excellence, affordability, and diversity, the university was recognized as one of U.S. News & World Report's Best National Universities in 2014 and has been named one of the best colleges in the Southeast by The Princeton Review.

FAMU prides itself on its ability to support a large population of first-generation, Pell-eligible students. The institution attracts students not only because of its commitment to social justice and academic excellence, but because of its low tuition and proven potential for social mobility. Dr. William E. Hudson Jr., FAMU's vice president for student affairs, says that while the household income of many FAMU students is below $40,000 a year, "with a degree from FAMU, many students make more financially than their family income."

Founded: 1887

Location: Tallahassee, Florida

Student population: 9,000

Oracle solutions: Oracle Student Financial Planning and Oracle's PeopleSoft Campus Solutions, Financials, and Human Resources

Success Metrics: 37% increase in award completions; 22% increase in ISIRs loaded and matched.

Florida A&M University builds the financial office of the future with Oracle Student Financial Planning

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

FAMU sees optimizing financial aid resources for its students as a moral imperative. "The majority of our students, between 60% and 65%, are Pell-eligible, and more than 80% to 85% receive some type of financial assistance to attend college," Hudson explains. Yet the higher education industry "falls short, not just in terms of funding but in how we educate individuals on how to receive funding and how difficult we make the process to get funding. We've got to streamline some of the processes to make funds readily available to those who are most needy."

While many prospective and current students have experience with the financial aid process, others need more support from the institution. "Some of our students have never had a bank account and have never had to deal with money in that way," says Hudson. "You need to be able to talk with those individuals one-on-one about their options—how to manage their finances throughout college and beyond." Yet a small financial aid office and a highly manual financial aid system made it difficult for staff to find the time to advise these students and further those personal connections. To transform their financial aid capabilities, FAMU knew it needed an equally transformative financial aid tool. They chose [Oracle Student Financial Planning.](#)

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WHY FAMU CHOSE ORACLE

FAMU was interested in adopting Oracle Student Financial Planning because it saw automation as a valuable means of improving the customer experience at their institution. Oracle's solution manages each student's financial situation independently and provides real-time visibility into a comprehensive, multiyear plan. Students get instant feedback on the financial implications of their academic choices, helping them make better-informed academic and borrowing decisions. In short, Hudson sees the solution as not only equipping students with funds but, just as importantly, also giving them the agency they need to make the best choices for their educational journey and future. "My vision for financial aid moving forward is going to be significantly impacted by Oracle Student Financial Planning," he says.

Hudson believes that Oracle's solution will help the school achieve its goal of providing financial literacy as well. "Leveraging technology to get rid of all the paperwork will allow our staff to spend more time educating students and parents and doing financial literacy with them early, so that they understand what it means to take out a loan and how it impacts them financially after college," he explains.

Hudson adds that "technology changes daily, so moving to a cloud platform was attractive to me," as Oracle manages all product updates, along with all changes to federal and state aid, to keep FAMU in compliance. And because FAMU is also an Oracle PeopleSoft Campus Solutions customer, the university can take advantage of the out-of-the-box integration between Oracle Student Financial Planning and Campus Solutions, which allows the school to share data across these systems securely and effectively.

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RESULTS

FAMU went live with ISIR processing using Oracle's financial aid solution in the fall of 2020 and went fully live in fall 2021. Students and parents have commented on the improved user experience, from managing esignatures and forms to tracking their award status in the Student Portal.

Oracle Student Financial Planning's integration with the U.S. Department of Education and its powerful automation capabilities has increased the speed at which the financial aid office is able to process financial aid. Now FAMU's staff has streamlined its delivery of financial aid packages from its former timeline of 7 to 10 days to just 2 to 3 days. The university has already seen a 22% increase in ISIRs matched and loaded and a 37% increase in award completions.

In addition, Oracle's financial aid solution is enabling the institution to fulfill their number one goal: to move away from manual tasks such as verification and document matching so staff can build more personalized, impactful relationships with students and their families. Hudson hopes that FAMU's financial aid office will be known for its efficiency and excellent customer service. He hopes that with the time his staff saves, they'll do more to educate students—not just about financial aid but about financial literacy in general. In addition, FAMU now has students who serve as financial aid liaisons and talk to families about the FAFSA form, available grants, and much more. "They can advise on money management, time management, living within your means, and what it means after you graduate to have debt or not have debt," Hudson says.

> " If a student feels they have their financial aid all set up and they can focus solely on their academics, then their grades are going to improve, their persistence to graduation is going to improve, and their feeling about the campus and their experience is going to be better as well. All of that plays a role in student success. "
>
> **Dr. William E. Hudson Jr.**
> *VP of Student Affairs, Florida A&M University*

GONZAGA
UNIVERSITY

[Gonzaga University](#) is a private liberal arts university based in Spokane, Washington. While it's perhaps best known for the historic success of its NCAA men's basketball team, Gonzaga prides itself on its ability to provide a supportive community for its 7,300 students, as evidenced by its 94% student retention rate and its 80% four-year graduation rate, which is almost double the national average.

Founded: 1887

Location: Spokane, Washington

Student population: 7300

Oracle solutions: Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI)

Success Metrics: Saved 25% by moving from on-premises data centers to OCI; eliminated $40,000 contract with third-party encryption management vendor

Gonzaga University improves disaster recovery and security with Oracle Cloud Infrastructure

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Gonzaga University runs many of its campus operations, including student registration, on an ERP system called Ellucian Banner. In 2017, Gonzaga IT staff learned that Banner version 8, which they were running in their own data center, would soon be retired, and they would need to upgrade to the new version, Banner 9. At the same time, the IT staff committed to a cloud-first strategy.

Running the new version of Banner was the core objective of the project, but the IT staff was also focused on maintaining their strong security posture and adding the disaster recovery capability they were missing. An additional goal was to stop sharing resources between production, test, and development environments.

The existing implementation of the Ellucian Banner student information system ran in their own data center on 30 virtual machines and a 700 GB Oracle Database. Although there was some local high-availability capability, there was no dedicated offsite disaster recovery capability, and the IT staff was worried about unacceptably long recovery times.

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WHY GONZAGA UNIVERSITY CHOSE ORACLE

The timing for the upgrade—and therefore the cloud migration—was critical, as Gonzaga needed to finish before registration for the new school year began. The school considered moving to a SaaS ERP system but knew it would need to keep the old system to manage historical records, so it seemed better to do an upgrade.

The primary reason the team selected Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) over any other approach was due to cost. Gonzaga IT estimated that it could save 25% by switching to OCI. In addition to its own analysis, the team spoke to other universities running the same applications and concluded: "If you are on a campus license for Oracle Database, it makes sense to go to OCI," Darren Owsley, Gonzaga's CTO, says. Rather than just pocket the savings, Gonzaga IT spent that budget on improvements to security, disaster recovery, and test/dev capabilities.

Oracle Cloud fit nicely with Gonzaga's multicloud approach to providing students, faculty, and staff with seamless and strong security, and ensuring disaster recovery and business continuity. "We are very security focused at Gonzaga. Security was one of the top three priorities for us as we moved to the cloud," Owsley says. "Our goal was to really mesh what we had on-premises in the cloud and keep our security standards high."

Additional benefits included the improved performance of running on bare metal servers in the cloud and the ease of migrating an on-premises Oracle Database to OCI.

> " We were 95% moving to AWS. But at the end of the day, our infrastructure team, our ERP team, our project management team voted—it was unanimous for OCI. "

Darren Owsley
CTO, Gonzaga University

The initial project focused on doing the version upgrade and test in the cloud and then migrating users when they became confident. As staffers were working in the cloud, they realized that starting new systems was effortless, so tasks completed much faster. The project was originally scheduled for nine months, but it was completed in only seven. That project velocity advantage continued into future projects, with some cloud-based deployments taking 75% less time than they would on-premises.

The integration between Banner 9 and OCI is so smooth that the engineers found that the configuration work in the cloud is exactly the same as they were used to on-premises and delivers a seamless experience. "If we did not tell our developers or functional users that we were deploying in OCI, they would have no idea their ERP was in the cloud," says Owsley. Before moving to the cloud, the team initially had concerns about the time frame for disaster recovery. Happily, "with OCI, we can typically failover to our disaster recovery site in 5 to 10 minutes, if that. That's given everybody on the infrastructure side a lot of confidence," says Owsley. The university currently uses Fortinet firewalls on-premises, and it has made a significant investment in configuration and processes around them. Gonzaga was delighted to see that it could integrate on-premises FortiGate firewalls with OCI to mesh with what the university had on-premises and keep their security standards high.

Gonzaga's philosophy of incorporating security best practices throughout the campus is both for the protection of its students, faculty, and staff and to help meet compliance objectives. The university must adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, which require Gonzaga to encrypt its data at rest. With Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, encryption at rest is on by default, allowing Gonzaga to eliminate an annual $40,000 contract for on-premises encryption. This $40,000 cost savings goes directly back into the university to fund further IT improvements.

To protect sensitive data, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure gave Gonzaga the flexibility with its ERP system to require VPN for all off-campus access, mitigating risk for both the internal administrative components and external self-service capabilities for students, staff, and faculty.

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> " I think success really comes down to the partnership. Gonzaga really found a true partnership in working with Oracle. Our Oracle partnership didn't just start three years ago; it has been a long and positive relationship. We talk weekly, and that helps build confidence and success. "

Darren Owsley
CTO, Gonzaga University

LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

Loyola University Chicago is a private Jesuit, Catholic institution. It was founded in 1870 with an emphasis on cura personalis, or "care of the whole person." Students come to Loyola not only for its excellent academic programs but also for its commitment to service, leadership, athletics, and global engagement. LUC's footprint encompasses 13 colleges across six main campus locations (four in the Chicago metro area and two global centers in Rome, Italy, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam).

To support nearly 17,000 undergraduate, graduate, and adult students, LUC has been using Oracle's PeopleSoft Campus Solutions as its student information system (called LOCUS, or Loyola's Online Connection to University Services) since 2004 and upgraded to Campus Solutions 9.2 in 2018.

Founded: 1870

Location: Chicago, Illinois

Student population: 16,900

Oracle solutions: Oracle's PeopleSoft Campus Solutions and Oracle Digital Assistant

Success Metrics: 91% positive user feedback; 86% accuracy rate; costs reduced from $4.25 per transaction to $0.29 per transaction; reduced percentage of match-fail transactions from 33% to 2%

Loyola University Chicago improves student services with Oracle Digital Assistant

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Loyola University Chicago sought to improve its student services and refocus its academic advisors' time on more complex academic planning questions. Office hours and the availability of appointments with advisors are limited and often don't coincide with the hours when students are available and seeking answers to their questions. Loyola's leadership knew that using advanced technology, integrated into its core administrative solutions, could help the institution address this pressing challenge and ensure that its staff's time was being optimized effectively.

"With nearly 17,000 students demanding more-timely and more-modern engagement, we established a technology strategy to advance the Loyola Digital Experience (LDE)," Susan Malisch, Loyola University Chicago's VP and CIO, says. "The transformational theme of LDE includes leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and deployment of 'LUie,' an AI digital assistant running on Oracle Digital Assistant with automation and integration from IntraSee."

WHY LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO CHOSE ORACLE

Because LOCUS is the primary administrative system for students, it was imperative that the digital assistant could easily integrate with and extend its capabilities. The team knew that Oracle's PeopleSoft integration framework could leverage the integration between PeopleSoft administrative systems and the Oracle cloud platform.

LUC used Oracle Digital Assistant and the PeopleSoft Chatbot Integration Framework to build and deploy its digital assistant for students and advisors. Unlike a traditional chatbot, which is primarily reactive and can only be used in limited use cases, Oracle Digital Assistant uses artificial intelligence and natural language processing to communicate effectively with the student and learn in real time, becoming more sophisticated and proactive and continually elevating the customer experience over time.

Loyola upgraded to the newest version of Oracle Digital Assistant in May 2021 and saw a dramatic improvement, with transactions that failed to answer the question dropping from 33% on average to only 2% using the new technology.

RESULTS

The results have been exceptional. Beginning in the summer of 2019, LUC built its digital assistant, LUie (a moniker playing off the institution's initials and their mascot, LU Wolf), in only six weeks and began piloting it with Loyola's undergraduates in the fall. The pilot began with fifty users in three different departments (the bursar's office, advising, and the IT service desk). As of Fall 2021, it has been expanded to include content from Admissions, Residence Life, the Wellness Center and University Marketing and Communications and rolled out to more than 11,000 undergraduate students and staff members. Of LUie's approximately 430 questions across a variety of topics, its most popular content areas have been Health & Wellbeing, Student Grades, and Financials. Currently LUie is available to anyone who visits the Loyola website.

Loyola University Chicago has found that LUie has been able to greatly improve the student experience and free up its student advisors for more important tasks. Usage tripled with expanded placement of the chatbot on Loyola's websites in May 2021. LUie can answer frequently asked questions—for example, about building locations, academic course

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registration, and so on—leveraging information pulled from Loyola's website, Google Maps, and other sources. Because of its integration with PeopleSoft Campus Solutions, it can extract personalized information directly from LOCUS in real time. For example, students can ask LUie about their grades, how to apply for graduation, and hundreds of other questions while also completing tasks such as updating their address and phone number. By adding the chatbot to the Fluid instance of PeopleSoft Campus Solutions in Spring 2021, the utterances with LUie increased significantly, accounting for a third of all LUie activity.
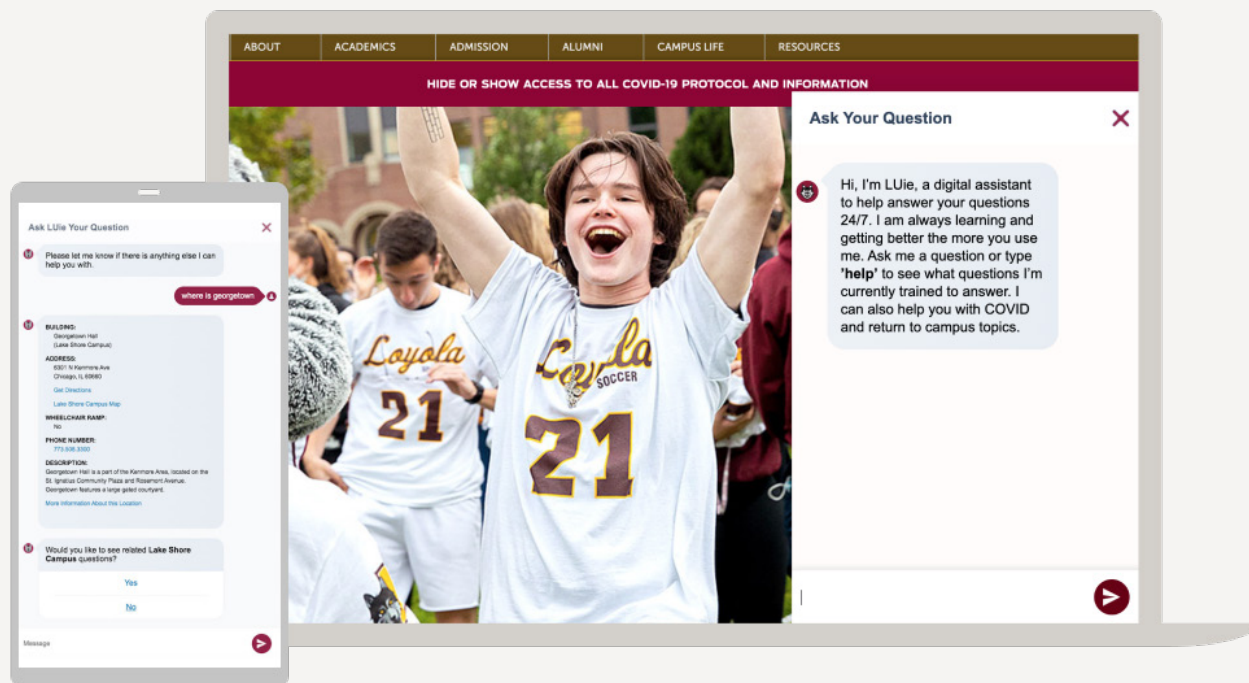

The pilot chatbot was able to successfully answer 86% of questions, compared to a first call success rate of 74% for human interactions. Additionally, the chatbot was available 24/7, responded in a matter of seconds, and was able to process queries in multiple languages. When pilot users were asked to comment on their experience, 91% provided positive feedback.

By the summer of 2020, LUie had officially been rolled out to all undergraduates and all advising staff and expanded for unauthenticated guest access. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, LUie's ability to instantly respond to students and surface data from several systems and websites has proven to be invaluable to Loyola. Even during this period of uncertainty and rapidly changing guidelines, LUie kept students, staff, and faculty up to date with the institution's latest policies and information on topics as varied as tech support, residence hall move-in procedures and refunds, grading policies, and more.

In recognition of LUie's success, Oracle awarded Loyola with a PeopleSoft Innovation award in 2020.
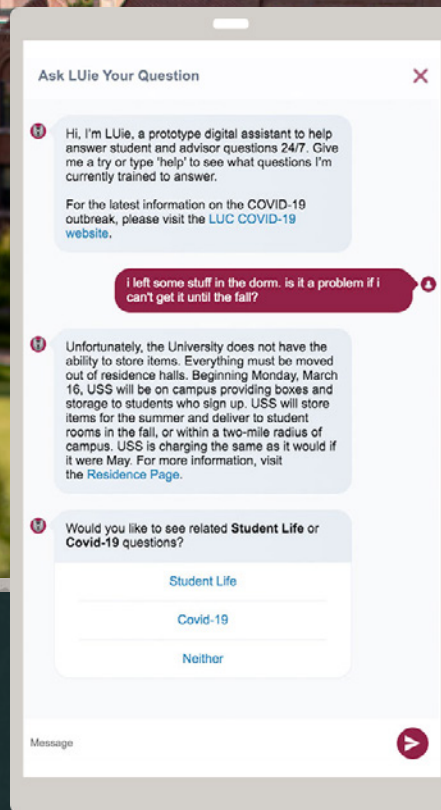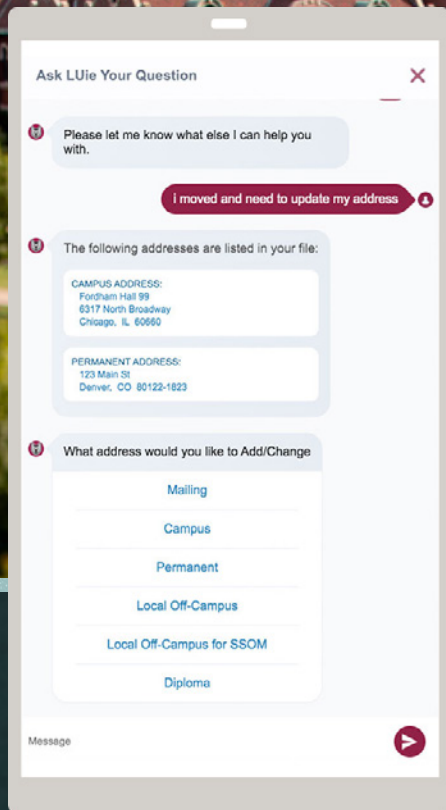
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> "LUie currently provides hundreds of answers to common questions. Early results were great, with initial accuracy rates of 86% that improved to 91% after the Oracle Digital Assistant upgrade. Pilot feedback was encouraging, with 91% positive comments, and we continue to broaden LUie to handle even more questions for more audiences. We're excited about LUie's future potential."

Susan Malisch
VP and CIO, Loyola University Chicago

RUTGERS

Rutgers University is a leading national research university and the state of New Jersey's preeminent, comprehensive public institution of higher education. Established in 1766, the university is the eighth oldest higher education institution in the United States and home to more than 150 undergraduate majors, 400 graduate programs, and 65,000 students and 25,000 staff members.

Founded: 1766

Locations: New Brunswick, Newark and Camden, New Jersey

Student population: 65,000

Oracle solutions: Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP, EPM, and HCM and Oracle Student Financial Planning

Success Metrics: Moved from an annual close to a 12-business-day monthly close cycle; eliminated 300 balance sheet accounts; implemented a governance model for more than 130 activities across 20 different workstreams; reduced financial statement preparation time by 80%.

Rutgers streamlines business planning with Oracle Fusion Cloud EPM

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

In 2013, the New Jersey state legislature passed the New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Education Restructuring Act, the largest merger in higher education history, in which Rutgers merged with most of the units of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ). As a result, "we had to understand and define what 'the new Rutgers' would look like," says Ernie DiSandro, Rutgers' AVP and university controller.

"We strive to provide new and better experiences for our students," explains Michele Norin, SVP and CIO at Rutgers University, "but the size and scale of Rutgers presents many challenges as we work to manage and develop our systems." For example, while Rutgers had been using Oracle E-Business Suite and Oracle's PeopleSoft, UMDNJ had been using Banner, so "we ended up with two of everything: two general ledgers to our payroll systems, two student systems, the works," says Mike Gower, Rutgers' EVP and CFO.

As part of its strategy to streamline its use of technology and make the right investments for the future, Rutgers began exploring a move to the cloud.
By moving away from applications that were hosted on-premises, the university could have greater scalability and vendor-managed disaster recovery. In addition, adopting cloud-based applications ensures that the institution could take advantage of new features without reimplementation and transform its business practices to reflect more-modern best practices embedded in the software.

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WHY RUTGERS UNIVERSITY CHOSE ORACLE

One of Rutgers' first tasks was to produce a consolidated financial statement with mappings from its two separate general ledger systems. "We used Oracle Cloud EPM's Financial Consolidation and Close and Oracle Data Relationship Management to implement a new chart of accounts design and, ultimately, for the migration in the Oracle Cloud ERP platform," DiSandro says.

Along with Oracle Fusion Cloud Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), the implementation of the Oracle Fusion Cloud Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) suite advances Rutgers' overall effort toward standardizing business processes and improving collaboration across various campuses and units. Oracle EPM provides insight into a broad range of accounting, financial, strategic, and operational management processes, from automating the close process to providing workforce planning capabilities. In doing so, Oracle EPM supports Rutgers' staff's financial stewardship of the university's funds.

RESULTS

In the three years that Rutgers has been using Oracle EPM, the university has realized noticeable benefits. "We've been able to leverage new features and functionality that are available to us," DiSandro says. "For example, we've moved from an annual close process to a monthly close." Oracle EPM has not only improved the reliability of Rutgers' financial data but has also expedited its yearly audit process. "Our auditors can start performing interim fieldwork based on our third-quarter results and that helps them get a head start on the year-end audit process," DiSandro explains.

> " With Oracle Cloud EPM, we've moved from an annual close process to a monthly close. "
>
> **Ernie DiSandro**
> *AVP and University Controller, Rutgers University*

Rutgers' ability to move from its previously annual close process to a monthly close was made possible by tools such as Close Manager (part of Oracle EPM's Financial Consolidation and Close module), which their staff can use to build a monthly template, create a schedule, and keep track of fulfilled and outstanding tasks.

Oracle Account Reconciliation enables Rutgers to centralize its more than 1,000 balance sheet accounts and ultimately rationalize and eliminate more than 300 balance sheet accounts. At the same time, the Compliance Dashboard's "traffic light" indicators help with accountability by visualizing which users have completed their reconciliations and which users might need a nudge.

Another key Oracle EPM module is Narrative Reporting. It helps manage the production of the university's annual financial report, "which used to be extremely manual and paper based; the Controller's Office was full of binders and schedules," DiSandro says. "Three years ago, we implemented Narrative Reporting to eliminate paper and automate the production of the financial statement, but more importantly, we streamlined the overall process so that the functional owner or contributor actually owns their own part of the document, eliminating the middle administrator."

In addition, the EPM Planning module enables Rutgers to manage workforce planning and employee compensation and expenses (which make up 65% of Rutgers' operating expense base); this capability will be even more useful when integrated with Oracle Fusion Cloud Human Capital Management (HCM).

“During the COVID-19 pandemic we used Oracle tools to analyze millions of dollars in refunds for housing and dining issued to students and their families and to understand that impact on our bottom line. ”

Ernie DiSandro
AVP and University Controller, Rutgers University

Rutgers used Oracle Cloud EPM and ERP during the COVID-19 pandemic to tackle challenges such as moving to remote operations and managing budget cuts and student refunds. Oracle EPM enabled Rutgers to have dependable financial data and better forecasting and scenario planning. "We used Oracle tools to analyze millions of dollars in refunds for housing and dining issued to students and their families and to understand that impact on our bottom line," DiSandro says. "And we were able to access these tools remotely; because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we did the whole audit with the audit team and external auditors entirely remotely last year."

Ultimately, technology is an enabler, not an end in itself. Oracle EPM helps Rutgers' financial staff focus on the business of finance and manage their institution's funds more effectively. This is especially critical given the decline in state funding to New Jersey's public institutions over the past two decades. "We need to be able to understand the real cost of certain educational programs or research activities or clinical activities. And that's something that's very difficult to do in higher education," Gower explains. "With Oracle EPM and ERP, we've aligned the chart of accounts, the financial system, the budget planning tools, and the cost accounting tools all around our ultimate goal of being able to understand where we might be subsidizing programs," ultimately helping Rutgers ensure its programs continue to enhance its institutional mission and meet its students' needs.

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UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Though Wyoming is the least populated state in the United States, around 11,800 students attend the state's only public four-year institution, the University of Wyoming, which was founded in 1886—predating Wyoming's statehood by four years. The university is in the city of Laramie, 7,200 feet above sea level, giving its football stadium the distinction of being the highest in the country.

While the state is well known for its pioneer history, the University of Wyoming is a pioneer in another regard: it is one of the first higher ed institutions to move to Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP and HCM, Oracle Project Portfolio Management, and Oracle Analytics Cloud.

Founded: 1886

Location: Laramie, Wyoming

Student population: 11,800

Oracle solutions: Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP and HCM, Oracle Analytics Cloud, and Oracle Project Portfolio Management

Success Metrics: Found $2.7M in cost savings from strategic sourcing initiatives; saves 11 weeks of time by implementing Oracle Procurement's supplier self-registration portal; saves 31 weeks of time processing change orders with Oracle Payables' Invoice Tolerance.

The University of Wyoming embraces remote operations with Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

The University of Wyoming's leadership wanted to do more creative, what-if analysis to inform administrative decisions such as budgeting, and to identify questions they'd like their data to answer so that they and their staff could better help their students. But the university's decades-old, fragmented information systems limited their ability to do such analysis. Employees first had to manually gather information into spreadsheets from many unconnected systems scattered across departments.

The university also wanted to increase the efficiency of operations in areas such as finance, procurement, and human resources. Most processes were paper based. Paying hourly workers, for example, was a twice monthly process that relied on paper time sheets and supervisor signatures.

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WHY THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING CHOSE ORACLE

As part of their drive toward nimble, data-driven analysis and decision-making and improved efficiency, the University of Wyoming leadership decided they needed a suite of cloud-based finance, supply chain, human resources, and analytics applications. The university chose Oracle Fusion Cloud Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Enterprise Performance Management (EPM), Supply Chain and Manufacturing (SCM), and Human Capital Management (HCM), and Oracle Analytics Cloud to modernize business operations and analysis. Oracle Cloud's suite of applications—the "WyoCloud"—allows its staff to have one integrated source of information across all functions and departments. It was also critically important that Oracle Cloud applications include industry best practices that are regularly updated on a quarterly basis so the university is always using the latest versions and features.

RESULTS

The University of Wyoming's finance team has realized major benefits using Oracle Cloud ERP. "In our old system, we'd literally compile all these spreadsheets to get a snapshot of financial reporting and budgets versus actuals," one university business leader says. "It wasn't real time, and it was really hard to plan for revenue changes. Furthermore, we couldn't really roll up our financial reports—you could see things at the unit level, but you couldn't see them at the divisional level—and that was very problematic, as managing processes like changing revenue and budget reductions requires accurate figures."

Today the finance team has access to faster, more accurate financial reporting and can roll up their financial reports and look at budget versus actual figures, both at the organization and division levels. They now also have greater transparency and a better ability to track transactions than they did with paper-based processes thanks to their centralized, fully accessible reporting platform (their Oracle Fusion Transactional Business Intelligence dashboard) and a campus-wide trackable training platform on Oracle Learning Cloud.

In addition, by moving away from manual processes, the university is saving considerable amounts of time. Oracle Cloud systems have decreased the institution's reliance on shadow systems and duplicative data entry, which had accounted for up to 60% of the time business services personnel spent re-entering information. Implementing an XML invoice program

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(via Oracle Business Network) saves the accounts payable team from having to manually enter invoices, which they estimate saved the university 317 hours in fiscal year 2020.

Similarly, eliminating its paper-based time card process now saves UWyo an average of 10 hours per month that business and financial staff had previously spent collecting and entering employee time sheets. Using Oracle Procurement's suppler self-registration portal saves the institution 11 weeks of time per year, and Oracle Payables' Invoice Tolerance saves 31 weeks of time per year processing change orders.

With Oracle Procurement Cloud, the university has increased their control over spending. The requisition process workflow enables approvals to be completed before users seek out goods and services and receive an invoice for purchases. UWyo can now more easily roll out strategic sourcing catalogs. Since going live with Oracle Cloud, it has released four catalogs, which streamlined the purchasing process and resulted in increased savings. For example, in the first two years of having a strategic contract with CDW-G for computer supplies, the university has saved $2.7 million dollars, which it is able to reallocate back to teaching and research.

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TRANSITIONING SUCCESSFULLY DURING COVID-19

While COVID-19 disrupted the University of Wyoming's spring 2020 semester—moving students and staff off campus and delivering all services and courses online—the institution was able to transition to remote operations quickly and efficiently, thanks to Oracle Fusion Cloud HCM and Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP.

During the early days of the pandemic, the university's emergency executive policy group would hold 8 a.m. meetings and often request information they needed to make decisions. UWyo's analytics team could deliver those insights that same day, thanks to Oracle Cloud HCM and ERP's insight and analytics capabilities.

Oracle Cloud capabilities allowed the university to move to remote processes with less friction. Only one of more than 70 employees in the school's financial affairs division needed to come to campus (to print checks for a few suppliers who still required paper). All other financial processes were online and could be done remotely using the Oracle Cloud system.

The institution's finance department now has much greater flexibility to manage change as well. The team could easily add a program code into the Oracle Cloud ERP system, which, along with its Project Portfolio Management module, helped track COVID-related invoices and payments. When receiving the funds, UWyo was able to quickly and easily set up those funds as awards in Oracle Cloud Project Portfolio Management which provides a simple way to track spend by project and bill back to sponsors.

"I can go into the system and in five minutes run a report on our invoices that's filtered by code or project and see how much we've spent on COVID," one university business leader says. "Before moving to the cloud, reporting on budget versus actuals would have required weeks of going department by department, pulling spreadsheets, and then manually adding them together to get a static number that by the time the report was done was likely out of date. Now, being able to quickly get the big picture and drill down from there has been so beneficial."

Additional resources

CUSTOMER STORIES

Three Ways to Improve Financial Aid for COVID-19–Weary Students

Back to School During COVID-19: The Story of Baylor and Wyoming

Customer Spotlight on Baylor University (55:06)

Reimagining Financial Aid with Florida A&M University: Oracle Student Financial Planning webinar (60:43)

The Tambellini Group Analyst Report: FAMU Boosts Financial Aid Services with Oracle Student Financial Planning (PDF)

Loyola University Chicago Sought to Improve and Extend Student Services

The Tambellini Group Analyst Report: Upgrading to Oracle Cloud: Rutgers University Finds Scalability and Efficiency for a New Multi-Campus Environment (PDF)

How Rutgers Transformed Its Close and Reporting Processes with Oracle Enterprise Performance Management (60:04)

Learn How Oracle Student Financial Planning Helps Rutgers Spend Time on Students, Not Process (60:05)

University of Wyoming 2020 Roadshow Video (1:11)

Customer Spotlight on University of Wyoming (24:01)

HIGHER EDUCATION

Building Resilience in Turbulent Times: Customer Ebook (PDF)

Cloud Questions and Answers for Higher Education PeopleSoft Customers (PDF)

Oracle Higher Education Products Overview

ORACLE CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE

New Realities for Higher Education: Technology and the Campus Transformed

Take an OCI Product Tour

ORACLE DIGITAL ASSISTANT

Oracle Digital Assistant Datasheet (PDF)

What Is a Digital Assistant?

ORACLE FUSION CLOUD EPM

Measuring the Value of Oracle Fusion Cloud Enterprise Performance Management (PDF)

Overview Video: Planning in Oracle EPM Enterprise Cloud (8:00)

EPM: Financial Consolidation and Close Overview

Overview Video: Key Features in Oracle Planning and Budgeting Cloud (5:15)

ORACLE FUSION CLOUD ERP

How to Cloud: A Five-Step Guide for Successful Oracle Cloud ERP Projects

Your Complete Guide to Modern ERP

Value Realization of Unified Finance and HR in the Cloud

ORACLE FUSION CLOUD HCM

Delivering Modern Experiences Your Employees Expect (PDF)

Oracle Cloud HCM Solution Overview: Work Made Human (PDF)

Top 10 Reasons Customers Select Oracle Cloud HCM (PDF)

Work Made Human Webcast: Innovation for the New Workplace (80:56)

ORACLE STUDENT FINANCIAL PLANNING

Oracle Student Financial Planning Data Sheet (PDF)

8 Key Features in a Financial Aid Solution

All About Oracle Student Cloud

Infographic: Financial Aid at a Glance (PDF)

Leveling the Financial Aid Playing Field (PDF)

Oracle Student Financial Planning: A Student-Centric Approach to Financial Aid (7:33)

Oracle Student Financial Planning: Extreme Automation for Financial Aid (7:20)

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