

3 million
estimated pages of student records

University Aced the Records Challenge

Registrar's Imaging Initiative Pays Off



Our client, one of Connecticut's oldest public institutions of higher education, has 7,000 full-time and 5,000 part-time students. Over 100 years they accumulated hundreds of thousands of student files that became too costly to manage and too risky to protect in paper form. Canon Business Process Services, Inc. imaging and records experts were brought in to convert the paper files to digital. Now the registrar can turn around requests for student records on a dime using electronic retrieval, saving time and money.

THE CHALLENGE

Like most colleges and universities, this university's registrar depends on paper forms and computer printouts to create, capture, archive and distribute student records. The records go back 100 years, accumulating an estimated 3 million pages. During the past decade the university has seen a yearly increase in student enrollment, and a corresponding growth in paper files, storage and workload.

The registrar faced several challenges—fulfilling requests for records in a timely manner and satisfying state mandates for disaster recovery. According to the registrar, “During peak enrollment season we receive about 100 requests per day for student records. The files were stored in many buildings, including the library, registrar's office and various storage areas.

Retrieving, copying, re-filing and mailing within a reasonably short time became a significant cost burden.”

The registrar wanted to increase the efficiency of the department and shorten the turnaround time without hiring

more staff. A good portion of staff time was consumed searching, retrieving, copying and re-filing files. Cost, productivity and responsiveness were not the only challenges.

Another concern was providing disaster recovery in accordance with state mandates. Since the paper files were the only copy, there were no backup copies in case the originals were destroyed due to disasters such as fire, water damage or even inadvertent destruction.

THE SOLUTION

Canon Business Process Services (Canon) imaging and records management experts assessed the university's needs and goals.

Based on the study, Canon designed the solution architecture and specified the hardware and software requirements. Process and workflow were then designed to execute the image capture operation. Working with the client, a phased conversion approach was developed. First, the student “grade books” were imaged.

As the student records were brought online, improvements in several business metrics were immediately noticed.

These files contain student class grades that are most active. An electronic repository will increase productivity immediately and provide a backup. The second phase tackles “current files,” defined as the past ten years’ files. All the documents in these files are imaged and indexed per the university’s records retention schedule.

The third phase converts files older than ten years. These files are also purged of documents that exceed the retention schedule. The physical paper files are thinned by destroying documents no longer needed, reducing the physical storage space.

Canon designed and installed the imaging technology and process and staffed the scanning operation. Anticipating a variety of paper conditions, best-in-class image cleanup software was deployed to minimize labor and maximize image quality. Nevertheless, image quality assurance is still dependent on human skill to correct problems the scanner and software cannot handle such as fading, pencil and Post-it notes, bleed through documents, etc.

On the process side, Canon implemented high-quality controls to ensure 100% of the documents are captured

and 100% of the images meet the test of reproduction and readability. The imaging facility is secured by controlling physical access and all electronic access is cut off to ensure student information is not compromised. Finally, the electronic image archive is also backed up to microfilm, ensuring compliance with state requirements.

ABOUT CANON BUSINESS PROCESS SERVICES, INC.

Canon Business Process Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of Canon U.S.A., offers managed services and technology for information and document management, business process outsourcing and specialty workforce services. We help clients improve operational performance while reducing cost and risk. Canon Business Process Services has been named a Global Outsourcing 100 Leader by IAOP for the past eleven years and recognized in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Managed Print and Content Services for five consecutive years. We have also been acknowledged by CIOReview magazine as a “20 Most Promising Legal Technology Solution Provider.” Learn more at cbps.canon.com and follow us on Twitter @CanonBPO.

THE RESULT

As the student records were brought online and the registrar’s office began to use the electronic system to fulfill requests for records, improvements in several business metrics were immediately noticed.

1. Pressure to hire additional staff dissipated and there was no need for overtime.
2. The chronic backlog in requests for records was eliminated. Now the requests are turned around immediately. And, in an era of instant gratification, that is good news for the customers and the university.
3. Physical files are not disturbed and records do not get misfiled.
4. Valuable space was freed and is being refurbished for other uses.

In addition, the university officials can feel a little better knowing that should anything happen to the paper files, business will not be interrupted because they now have an electronic and microfilm archive.