

University of Kansas - Admissions

When the University of Kansas (KU) sought a solution to remove workflow bottlenecks and control paper processes in the Admissions Department, it chose process and content management technology from Lexmark, including Perceptive Content. The solution quickly integrated with KU's existing PeopleSoft application to provide instant access to critical files, connecting staff and students to relevant information in a secure, electronic environment.

Challenge

Similar to most large public universities, the Office of Admissions at KU faces many challenges typically associated with traditional paper processes. The physical amount of paper can be overwhelming to even the most seasoned higher education professionals. For example, at KU each student file contains up to 30 pages, and admissions staff processes approximately 25,000 documents each month. The sheer volume of files and folders can make critical information difficult to locate, and the duplication, transfer and exchange of thousands of hard copy documents potentially exposes the university to security risks.

Reclaiming storage space

After researching technology solutions to address these challenges, KU chose Lexmark to accelerate admissions processes, improve collaboration among staff and improve student service. Converting paper files to an electronic format has reduced the need for file cabinets and freed up physical storage space for other uses. The department has gone from 400 square feet of dedicated filing space required for admissions files, to six square feet earmarked temporary storage. In addition, electronic workflow has eliminated many manual tasks, which optimizes staff time and resources in the department.

One of the most important, but also most time consuming processes in admissions is the sorting and cataloging of student applications and related documents. Previously, the admissions staff at KU linked and sorted approximately 15,000 applications manually. This process required opening each application and linking it to the individual record in the student information system. Managing this process during peak processing periods required the equivalent of two additional full-time two staff members.

Meet the University of Kansas

The University of Kansas (KU) was founded in 1866, shortly after the end of the Civil War. Today, KU is a major public research and teaching institution with 28,000 students and 2,600 faculty and staff spread over five campus locations. Within 13 schools, KU offers 345 degree programs in 200 fields of study, attracting students from all 50 states and over 100 countries. KU's special education and city management urban planning programs have also received a prestigious #1 ranking by U.S. News & World Report.

- ▶ **Founded:** 1866
- ▶ **Location:** Lawrence, KS
- ▶ **Enrollment:** 28,000
- ▶ **Faculty & Staff:** 2,600

Products in use: Perceptive Content, Perceptive Transform, Perceptive Workflow, Perceptive eForms

Integration: PeopleSoft

Solution

Answering students' questions in seconds

With Perceptive Content, applications are now automatically linked to student records in the SIS. The script takes only minutes to run, even when 1,000 applications a day are being received during peak application times. A nightly report generates results that are loaded into Perceptive Content, and applications are moved into the appropriate queue without manual intervention. This implementation has decreased seasonal staffing hours by 50%, and reduced the average processing completion turnaround from five or six weeks to less than two weeks.

Cassie Keefer, Assistant Director of Admissions at KU, has seen the positive impact this technology has on student services first-hand. "One of the main benefits is improved student service. Even in our busiest times, we are able to work faster," says Keefer. "We've cut our response time down significantly, and students receive their decisions faster. We're now at a point where some students receive their decisions on the same day—even during peak processing periods."

Results

The benefits of process automation

According to Clinton Everhart, Associate Director of Admissions, the impact of deploying a process and content solution to address the challenges associated with paper processes has been significant.

"When you deal with paper, you have less flexibility in sharing information with other departments," explains Everhart. "With paper processes, documents are more likely to be lost, misplaced or misfiled, and this becomes a bigger problem when you process thousands of applications each year. Perceptive Content has saved on space and reduced processing times. It also has helped with sharing documents, and with our workflow—people can make decisions really fast."

A significant benefit the university realized after deploying Lexmark solutions was improved collaboration across campus. Before deployment, when key stakeholders needed to discuss a student's admission status, staff members would hand-deliver paper documents between people and departments. This method of file exchange added time to the overall admissions process, and was an inefficient use of staff resources. Security was another concern for staff, as the exchange of paper records increased the potential for lost, misplaced or misfiled documents. The sensitive nature of information contained in student files also exposed the university to risk, should a security breach occur.

With Perceptive Workflow, secure access to documents and information directly from any desktop gives staff and faculty the relevant information they need to assess applicant files and deliver decisions more quickly to prospective students. And faster admissions decisions help build positive relationships between the university and students, even before they step foot on campus.

Improving communication across campus

"Having electronic files has revolutionized the way we communicate with other departments at KU, and it's much easier for academic advising staff to review what students have submitted," explains Everhart. "It's made a huge difference for us to share information electronically."

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Cassie Keefer

Assistant Director of Admissions, KU

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Associate Director of Admissions, KU

Adds Everhart, “From a student service perspective, the primary impact is the speed and efficiency with which we’re able to make decisions and get students the information they need, when they need it.”

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