

South Dakota Leverages Campus E-transcript for Higher Education

South Dakota Board of Regent members process an average of 15,000 admission applications while also managing 600 to 800 state-based scholarship awards to high school graduates annually. The Regents felt an improvement in the processing of these applications would lead to a higher ratio of South Dakota graduates remaining in the state for their college educations.

Leveraging the Existing Investment

To improve, the Regents wanted to streamline the processing of the current paper-based student applications while more efficiently matching the paper-based transcript provided from high school guidance counselors. The Regents had a unique opportunity to streamline the entire application process by taking advantage of the state's K12 statewide student education management system, DDN Campus and SIMS.net.

"We were aware of the statewide K12 student information system initiative," says Mike Merrill, a project manager for the South Dakota Board of Regents. "We realized we could leverage the technology being implemented and provide our Regent Enrollment Services Center with real efficiencies."

The underlying system behind DDN Campus and SIMS.net is Infinite Campus. DDN Campus provides South Dakota districts and schools with an education process management system. SIMS.net, the Student Information Management Network, provides a statewide repository for student data from all 168 South Dakota districts.

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Project Manager
South Dakota Board of Regents

Removing Paper from the Process

DDN Campus was already providing printed transcripts for high school graduates to higher education institutions. The student would request a transcript to be sent to a particular institution and the guidance counselor would then process the request, print the transcript and mail it to the institution.

The Regents realized they could reduce paperwork and mailing expenses by automating the transmittal of South Dakota student transcripts and streamlining the application matching process. They decided to also take advantage of the SIMS.net ability to assign unique student IDs when the student is enrolled in K12 as part of the matching process. The Regents could use the unique student IDs to match the transcripts with their new online application automatically, reducing the hand matching process and speeding the approval process.

"We developed an online application to improve the admission process," continues Merrill. "By utilizing similar data elements as our K12 counterparts, our staff members should more easily match the application with the electronically transmitted transcript."

Retaining More Graduates

Another driving force to automate the process was the state-based resident-only scholarship, the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship. South Dakota high school graduates who complete a challenging high school curriculum and score well on college admission exams are eligible for a \$5,000 scholarship to attend a South Dakota scholarship participating university.

South Dakota Board of Regents

Michael Merrill

Project Manager

120,000 SIMS.net Students

24,089 South Dakota Regent Member Students

The information required to determine eligibility includes South Dakota residency at the time of high school graduation, acceptable ACT or SAT scores, completion of the Regents Scholar course requirements and a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

By using Campus E-transcript, South Dakota districts will be able to assemble the eligibility requirement information managed in their Infinite Campus database and send it via a secure network to the Regent Enrollment Services Center. Through an easy-to-extract report, the admission officers at the institutions will use the transcript as a tool to help verify the students that qualify for the scholarship since the data is coming from a trusted source - South Dakota school districts.

This process helps provide the graduate with an early conditional admittance to South Dakota higher education institutions and full admittance upon receipt of their final transcript. The intent of improving the response time for conditional admittance and the financial incentive is to increase the recruiting and retention of graduates to study and remain in the state after graduation.

XML and Statewide Integration

Campus E-transcript works through XML messaging by assembling the requested data already managed at the district level for the transcripts needed by the Regent system.

“When the South Dakota Board of Regents came to us, we knew the required data could be identified within DDN Campus to meet their transcript and scholarship transmittal needs,” according to Rick Weaver, Infinite Campus project manager. “The Regent members are automatically provided a listing of the qualified students from the transmission which includes the student identification number, grades, college admittance test scores, specialized curriculum detail and cumulative GPA scores.”

The XML technology used for transmittal from the Infinite Campus database is important for the South Dakota Regents since it will allow the state to meet the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)/Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council for National High School Transcript Standards. This initiative intends to classify school codes for the transfer of transcript data.

Efficiencies Lead to Savings

South Dakota is looking forward to the efficiencies created from transmitting this information electronically. This new feature will reduce the paperwork for guidance counselors and admission officers so they can focus their energies on the ever increasing duties and demands of their positions.

“Our goal is to leverage South Dakota’s current technology to improve our member’s application processes,” Merrill summarizes. “Infinite Campus is giving us the power to provide a more efficient system of approving applications and awarding scholarship money which will help us to achieve our goal of keeping graduates in South Dakota for college and beyond.”

The Regents are planning on using Campus E-transcript for early conditional admission for the class of 2007 beginning spring 2006.

Campus E-transcript

Campus E-transcript lets guidance counselors electronically send transcript information from Infinite Campus to higher education institutions in a secure XML or PDF format. The ease of transmitting data and approving students for admission provides higher education institutions with efficiencies in their admission process by eliminating the need to match applications with a paper-based transcript from high schools.

About Infinite Campus

For more than a decade, Infinite Campus has successfully implemented its solutions for customers of all sizes. Today, Infinite Campus applications manage more than 2.5 million students in 40 states. Infinite Campus customers range from districts with fewer than 100 students to those with more than 100,000 as well as regional consortia, state departments of education and the federal government.