

COLLEGE GETS HIGH MARKS FOR ACHIEVEMENTS IN BPM, INCLUDING \$1.39 MILLION SAVINGS PLUS EFFICIENCY GAINS OF 500 PERCENT

Challenge

Florida Community College Jacksonville (FCCJ) wanted to eliminate time-consuming paper-intensive processes across its five campuses. So the college undertook a major Business Process Management (BPM) initiative to automate processes, starting with human resources processes used by every employee.

Solution

FCCJ built on its Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) framework using the webMethods Business Process Management Suite. The college first automated work schedule and leave processes — a project that resulted in major time and cost savings and also extended the value of core systems built on Adabas and Natural.

Benefits

- New online processes are fast, efficient and easy to track
- Automated forms streamline processes and eliminate paper
- Productivity gains valued at more than \$1.39 million over five years
- Staff leave requests now approved in less than one day—a 500% improvement
- Work schedules guaranteed accurate and auditable
- New business processes delivered rapidly – in less than two weeks



Florida Community College Jacksonville, one of the largest baccalaureate colleges in the U.S., serves more than 73,000 students a year. It has the largest workforce development program, IT curriculum and distance learning programs in Florida. FCCJ is also the largest provider of undergraduate education to the U.S. Navy. The college ranked first in the annual survey of Digital Community Colleges by the Center for Digital Education and the American Association of Community Colleges. In 2008, FCCJ also was recognized by the Computerworld Honors Program and received a Best Practices award from KMWorld.

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“Software AG has seen the light. You must have partners you can trust. No one else comes close to Software AG’s product suite, or to its vision and strategy. This is the only company I can say has never disappointed me.”

Dr. Rob Rennie | VP, Technology and CIO | Florida Community College Jacksonville

Boosting technology leadership

FCCJ regards IT as a value-creation engine. “Our brand is technology leadership,” explained Dr. Rob Rennie, Vice President, Technology and CIO at FCCJ. “We do everything in a highly efficient way.”

The college has built “a higher order workflow and business process management solution” by working with Software AG. “We’re very committed to SOA and Web services,” Dr. Rennie said, “and we’re very committed to having extremely good, rock-solid technology.”

Software AG, he believes, is ahead of many vendors. “There are very few products that allow you to integrate your legacy applications, take advantage of the newest technologies, rely heavily upon standards and enable you to run a central repository for all of your services infrastructure,” he said.

Getting smart about human resources

Using the webMethods BPM and SOA suites, FCCJ has improved how it manages one of its most important resources — people. The college recently automated work-schedule and leave-approval processes used by every employee and that affect every major module of their ERP system, which was built using Adabas and Natural.

These processes also integrate with the college’s portal, enterprise communication and calendaring applications. Such integration enables FCCJ to extend information in existing databases to other system components, keep systems in sync and assign tasks for human intervention automatically.

As an example, here’s how the leave-approval process works:

- Once an employee inputs a leave form, AJAX calls determine if request aligns with the employee’s work schedule and if there is enough of a balance to cover the request.
- A Web service call is then made to the college’s Microsoft Exchange server to place the requested leave days on a tentative hold in the employee’s calendar.
- A Web service call also determines (through a Natural application) the approval hierarchy for the employee, and the task is assigned into the supervisor’s approval queue.

- The supervisor approves or rejects the leave form. If approved, the form is assigned to the supervisor administrator. If rejected, it’s returned to the employee.
- The supervising administrator reviews the leave request. If the administrator approves it, the employee is notified, the leave request is placed into the ERP system and the hold in the Exchange calendar is converted to “out of the office.” If the administrator rejects the request, it’s returned to the employee, the supervisor is notified and the tentative hold in the calendar is released.

All this takes place in less than one business day — 500% faster than the previous manual process, which took five business days. Additionally, the college has a systematic way of matching leave with scheduled work.

webMethods produces measurable results

The webMethods toolset was the obvious choice for the creation of the new system due to the system's workflow and process characteristics. First the approval hierarchy system was built using Natural and exposed as a Web service using webMethods EntireX. Then the Human Resources department worked with campus administrators to design a process that was aligned with college policies and could be used uniformly throughout the organization.

webMethods Business Process Management Suite (BPMS) tools were used to create the Web form that integrated with the input and approval processes.

The results are impressive. Along with a shorter turnaround on leave approvals, the college has realized productivity gains valued at more than \$1.3 million over five years. This is based on a resource savings of moving from a paper-based workflow of manually routing, managing and entering time and attendance forms into the ERP system to a digital workflow experience.

Delivering valuable new processes – faster

Students are also benefiting from automated processes at FCCJ. For example, a new transfer advocacy process was developed in less than two weeks to help community college students with transfers to universities. Students began using the process within five minutes of its availability.

Here's how the process works: students complete a form on the student portal. Once submitted, that form launches a process built using the webMethods product suite and places the item in queue for a triage team. That team then determines how best to assist the student.

A task force designed the process, identified the tasks and then defined the roles and responsibilities. The technology team used this information to model the process using webMethods process modeling and then created the Web form using webMethods Composite Application Framework (CAF).

The process improves student services, and it's also projected to have a major regional economic impact by assisting students in moving forward — faster — with their educational goals so they can attain high-wage, high-skill positions.

KEY COMPONENTS

The college's ERP system was written using **Natural**.

Adabas houses all ERP data, including data on finances, human resources and payroll.

webMethods EntireX application code rapidly turned existing application functions into Web services.

webMethods BPMS tools were used to model processes and create Web forms.

All service sequences – also exposed as Web services – are created and deployed with the **webMethods Enterprise Service Bus**.

All Web services are managed with **CentraSite™**, the SOA management and governance platform.

ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

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Our industry-leading product portfolio includes best-in-class solutions for managing data, developing and modernizing applications, enabling service-oriented architecture, and improving business processes. By combining this proven technology with industry expertise and best practices, our customers improve and differentiate their businesses - faster.

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