Columbia Advisory Group
COMPLEX ERP SOLUTION SUPPORTS STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

CONTEXT:

The RELLIS campus of the Texas A&M University System was created to feature high-tech, high-impact research facilities for technology development, testing and commercialization. The campus also features a collaborative education complex which offers multiple academic degrees from many universities within the A&M System as well as from Blinn College campuses also known as The Academic Alliance. The RELLIS campus also offers opportunities for workforce skills training to the surrounding communities. **CAG's ERP specialist team was engaged to create a recruiting and candidate tracking system along with a complex data clearinghouse to facilitate enrollment and tuition payments across the 10 participating colleges and universities.**

CHALLENGES:

Each campus had separate groups of stakeholders and independent, disparate student information systems. In addition, tuition and administrative data was siloed on each individual campus. In order for recruitment and retention to be maximized across the campus collaboration, student data and experience had to be seamless and coordinated. The project required detailed understanding of each separate data system and of the recruiting and marketing needs of the collaborative campus. In addition, a partner was needed to meet aggressive implementation timelines and coordinate the needs of all stakeholders.

STRATEGIES:

CAG helped Texas A&M University System, the Academic Alliance and a team of stakeholders from each participating institution by developing a comprehensive solution that would meet the objectives of the parties within very challenging timelines.

STRATEGIES continued:

- The project involved the contributions of a broad team of technology and higher education specialists with expertise in Oracle, Banner, Salesforce CRM, networking and infrastructure across the Texas A&M University System.

- In cooperation with leaders from each campus, the CAG team created data feeds from each institution that aggregate in an Oracle Database, which then are fed into a presentation interface in Salesforce to allow students to take courses from any of the universities or the college.

- The Salesforce Customer Relationship Management (CRM) front-end allows RELLIS recruiting and marketing staff to drive student enrollment while back-end data feeds are unique to each institution due to disparate Student Information Systems at each university or college. This allows advisors to manage data from these universities and enter advisory notes that are pushed back to the system of record for each student.

- CAG also integrated "single sign-on" and student identity authentication for the institutions.

OUTCOMES:

The CAG solution was a critical component for the launch of the Academic Alliance at RELLIS. The solution CAG provided included capabilities for recruiting and marketing of candidates on the front end to drive student enrollment and also enabled the Academic Alliance to implement a unique tuition payment process that the members had developed. CAG's design allows payments to be made to the central location at RELLIS to simplify the student experience, and agreed revenue splits are subsequently sent to each institution. The data clearinghouse CAG implemented gives students a single system login to view their course schedules and grades, thereby creating a seamless student experience. Flexibility and scalability were key factors, so the design allows the Academic Alliance and CAG to continue to develop new capabilities and functions as the Academic Alliance enrollment grows.

> *"CAG's team of IT experts are accustomed to the aggressive timelines and rigorous and evolving demands that an innovative project of this type will naturally entail. Their higher-ed focused IT services team will enable us to move quickly to provide integrated service to both our students and our member campuses."*
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> **-Mark Stone**
> *Chief Information Officer for the Texas A&M University System*

Without this shared system acting as a remote campus, some students might have been lost to a university outside of their system. The Texas A&M University System considers the RELLIS concept a strategic priority, since it will increase enrollment for all member universities.