

Efficiencies from electronic document management set up students for success at Southern University

Laserfiche integrates seamlessly with student information system to streamline information exchange and student record compilation, giving students more time for academics

For seven years, Southern University and A&M College used a complicated document management system that didn't work with its new student information system from Banner. So departments rarely used the SIS, and students spent time providing the same information to different departments and completing routine administrative responsibilities at the historically black college in Baton Rouge.

The university got a reprieve from the clunky procedures in summer 2017, when it implemented the latest version of Laserfiche, a higher ed enterprise content management system that integrates seamlessly with Banner to streamline information exchange and student record compilation.

"That was a big selling point—being able to integrate with our SIS, as well as the simplicity, user-friendliness, quick indexing and ability to pull documents," says Gabriel Fagbeyiro, associate vice president and chief information officer for Southern University and A&M College System, which includes five autonomous campuses. "Now we can click on a particular student and upload just about any document we have for that individual. That integration goes a long way toward making us smarter and more efficient."

This solution, in fact, fundamentally improves the university's capacity to provide faster, more responsive services—such as registration and payment processing—so students can instead focus on their academics and future success.

Improved efficiencies

Southern University primarily uses Laserfiche to archive critical records within Banner and to convert paperwork to electronic documents, Fagbeyiro says. This has been a significant change from the former process, which centered on a legacy system that was not user-friendly or efficient.

Modernizing operations through Laserfiche has allowed the school to incorporate more process automation and document management tools to increase efficiency on campus, starting with the finance, HR and registrar departments.

"When students have an inquiry, it's much easier to pull up documents electronically as opposed to sifting through papers in a file folder," Fagbeyiro says. "Managing student documentation electronically minimizes stress on everybody and reduces frustration—for example, if papers are misplaced."



Expansion in the works

To build on its success, the university is preparing to broaden the use of Laserfiche to the entire 13,000-student university system. Fagbeyiro expects full integration by fall.

"We want to make it a bona fide electronic document management system for the entire Southern University system," he explains. "Documents scanned at all campuses will go to a central repository managed by Laserfiche. Campuses can then share documents even better than we do today."

The current practice involves delivering hard copies through a courier service or emailing PDFs that sometimes get stuck in junk folders or are lost altogether, he says. "We are hoping that once we roll out the new processes, those issues will be alleviated." This would allow more seamless collaboration between the different campuses.

Fagbeyiro adds that the strong vendor partnership and assistance—from demonstrations of new capabilities to trainings and ongoing support—were key to the smooth implementation of the Laserfiche system.

"Gauging from end-users' comments, I can tell everything is going as we anticipated," Fagbeyiro says. "Students will be more satisfied and have less to worry about, which plays a role in how successful they can be as they matriculate through college."

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