A Tale of Two Systems: A Quick Guide* for Faculty

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*Find more information by visiting https://soundnet.pugetsound.edu/optimizetraining and selecting Campus Solutions from the top or left menu.

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PeopleSoft Campus Solutions a Work in Progress

Optimize Puget Sound, the university’s project to implement an integrated technology solution, rolls on this month with go-live on March 25 of the PeopleSoft module called Campus Solutions. This follows the January 1 go-live of the Human Resources module, including payroll and timekeeping, and implementation of the Financials module last July.

The term “go-live” is used to mark the point when a computer system goes into official use, usually after an extensive period of design, development, and testing.

“Campus Solutions is very complex, dealing with financial aid, registration, academic advising, and other student-focused functions,” says Travis Nation, project manager for Optimize Puget Sound. “Over the past few months, the module has been going live in bits and pieces, so we could use it for Fall 2013’s incoming class.”

The early decision process for applicants went live last December, and in February a new menu item called Student Center, which links to PeopleSoft, was added to Cascade for all students.

Initially Student Center contained just the Fall 2013 class schedule and a “To Do List” where students will see notifications from offices such as Student Financial Services, Academic Advising, and the Registrar.

On March 25 and beyond, more functionality will be added to Student Center, making it the go-to site for students to manage their personal information, academics, and financial matters. In similar fashion, faculty will have a Faculty Center for managing classes and advisees. Eventually, these “centers” will be accessed through a new portal, called myPugetSound, scheduled to replace Cascade later this year.

With all these “go-lives” taking place, what exactly will happen March 25?

“The term ‘go-live’ suggests a complete and sudden change-over,” notes Sarah Moore, associate dean and professor of psychology, “but we’re actually in a period of active transitioning from Cascade to PeopleSoft, certainly for the rest of Spring 2013. On March 25, PeopleSoft will become the system of record, but there are still some things we’ll need to finish up in Cascade [see below].”

Moore stresses the functionality in PeopleSoft will feel unfamiliar and perhaps basic in some ways, requiring the patience of faculty, staff, and students adapting to the new system. In response, the implementation team is providing training sessions, self-help materials, and one-on-one support (see page 3).

Successfully implementing Campus Solutions requires the dedication and hard work of many faculty and staff. Offices involved include Academic Advising, Admission, Associate Deans, Business Services, Career and Employment Services, Institutional Research, Registrar, Student Affairs, Student Financial Services, Technology Services, and University Relations.

“This project is a huge learning process,” comments Mattie Watts, student financial services systems manager. “We’ve had our challenging times and our uplifting times, but I do love it when I see others learning and using PeopleSoft.”

“It’s been an interesting process to review every action we take in Cascade and then translate that into PeopleSoft,” observes Landon Wade, director of academic advising. “Seeing the behind-the-scenes work of all my colleagues reminds me how dedicated our community is to preparing for the challenges and opportunities ahead.”

Send project-related questions or feedback to optimize@pugetsound.edu. For assistance with PeopleSoft, please contact the Technology Service Desk at 253.879.8585 or servicedesk@pugetsound.edu.
Creating Digital “Pepa-gogy” in a Liberal Arts Setting
by Kyle Cramer, Educational Technologist for the Humanities

It seems we are in the midst of a paradigm shift from traditional brick and mortar institutions, once considered the epitome of scholarship and learning, to new technologies and educational platforms that are grabbing much media attention.

Professor of Hispanic Studies Pepa Lago-Graña anticipated this shift and is facing it head on. An early adopter of classroom technology, she uses Moodle for courses and incorporates a digital component into the majority of her assignments.

“Lago-Graña has also experimented with popular technologies to create interactive platforms for student work. As an example, she has utilized Google Maps to showcase students’ Powerpoint presentations.

“I incorporate tools students are likely to be using outside class,” Professor Lago-Graña explains. “It is also technology they will need to handle in their professional life after graduation.”

To further her understanding and foster the use of digital pedagogy, she has attended and presented at numerous conferences and meetings focused on the digital humanities.

Now, Lago-Graña is taking her digital work a step further. As part of a Spring 2013 sabbatical, she is developing her first course completely focused on digital pedagogy.

The course, Latin American Studies 380, fulfills the Connections Core requirement, focusing on historical, political, and literary texts that inform the reading of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s novel, One Hundred Years of Solitude (English translation). She will offer this course during the first term of Summer 2013.

“This is a capstone course designed for about-to-graduate seniors from a variety of majors,” notes Professor Lago-Graña. “My goal is to design, assign, and assess work that is digitally born and delivered.”

“By making all assignments digital, I want to add consistency to the delivery,” she continues. “But this won’t alter the essence of the course, as our time in class will still be based on discussion and close reading of texts. By adding the digital element, I will try to integrate what happens in class with how students connect to the course content outside class.”

Lago-Graña has invested a great deal of time and planning in this project. She has considered various tools and met with educational technologists in Technology Services to discuss the methodology for turning traditional assignments, such as essays, into more interactive projects, while still meeting the learning objectives for her students.

Since the course focuses on deepening student understanding of texts related to the core novel, she has opted for tools that are language- and text-centric. These include text mining tools to find trends and patterns within a text, word clouds (also known as tag clouds) to visually represent key words and phrases, and word usage charts to graphically identify how frequently a word or phrase is used.

Lago-Graña will also utilize the university’s installation of WordPress [see related box] to facilitate the creation and sharing of student work. She will require a blog from each student instead of the traditional final paper.

“The blog will provide a dynamic, visual way for students to develop and display their learning process and research within the course,” she comments. “It will also create a sense of ownership and interest in the final result that may not be present in the traditional essay.”

While Lago-Graña has considerable experience using basic digital tools in her teaching, she sees this course as offering the opportunity to truly integrate the digital with the traditional.

“Students come to a liberal arts school like ours to be in an environment based on small class size, with a strong emphasis on student mentoring and community building,” she observes. “The challenge for us is to incorporate the technological necessities of contemporary society while staying true to our mission, values, and image.”

Professor Lago-Graña hopes to present her experience with this class at EDULEARN13, the International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies. For more information, see http://iated.org/edulearn13/.
Training and Support for You

Associated Dean Martin Jackson leads a recent faculty training session on how to manage classes and advisees in PeopleSoft. The Campus Solutions team has scheduled ongoing sessions in several buildings across campus to assist faculty and support staff in learning to use the new system.

To register for a session, visit soundnet.pugetsound.edu/optimizetraining and select Campus Solutions from the top or left menu. The training site also provides online instructions and self-help videos for those who prefer to learn on their own.

As always, for assistance with PeopleSoft, please contact the Technology Service Desk at 253.879.8585 or servicedesk@pugetsound.edu.

Reasons We are Moving to PeopleSoft or Why are we giving up Cascade, anyway?

by Alyce DeMarais, Associate Professor of Biology

Implementing PeopleSoft is an enormous undertaking, and you may be wondering why Puget Sound is subjecting itself to such an ordeal. Although the reasons for the conversion are complex and involve a range of technical and strategic issues, there are two rationales that are especially compelling to me as a faculty member.

1. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems are incredibly complex and our “homegrown” system can’t keep up.

Twenty years ago, when Cascade was developed here at Puget Sound, it was feasible to build a homegrown core system and supplement it with a host of vendor-supplied products like Banner, Kronos, PeopleAdmin, etc. Over the past several years it has been increasingly difficult just to maintain this infrastructure, and it would take an extraordinary amount of time, personnel, and money to expand and enhance the system as we require. Updating our infrastructure is necessary given that we need to work with students effectively, keep up with changing regulatory requirements, and stay current with technology such as browsers and operating systems.

If that isn’t enough, the technical platform on which Cascade is built (Oracle Forms) will soon be obsolete and no longer supported by the vendor.

Converting to a system like PeopleSoft allows us to leverage the knowledge and best practices of hundreds of other higher educational institutions as well as the support of a company filled with developers whose job is to provide timely updates that meet regulations and improve the software in an ongoing way. This means our own in-house developers and functional offices will be able to focus on meeting needs that are specific to Puget Sound.

2. We are currently at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing and utilizing information key to student retention, student recruitment, and financial planning.

With the new system we will eventually be able to track patterns that we have not been able to analyze through Cascade and other systems currently used on campus. With all student, human resource, and financial information in PeopleSoft, we will be able to connect information across those areas much more easily. For example, we will be able to consider a variety of factors that influence student enrollment and retention. We can, therefore, be more proactive and less reactive with regard to decisions that influence our work with students.

It is important to note the conversion process is just that – a process. Initially, not all of us may experience improvements as compared to Cascade. But as elements of the new system are more fully refined, we will see capabilities that match and even, in many ways, exceed those of Cascade.

While the ultimate benefits of this transition are largely institutional, it does have an impact on us as individuals. PeopleSoft will allow the underlying infrastructures that support university operations to function more effectively. In the highly competitive environment in which we find ourselves, that is a very real and important advantage.

Are We There Yet?

Financials, Human Resources, and Campus Solutions may be the “big three” as far as PeopleSoft modules implemented for Optimize Puget Sound, but there are still more new services, features, and tools scheduled for go-live in 2013. They include (but are not limited to):

- HR Recruiting [see page 4]
- Benefits Administration
- Student Housing
- Analytics
- Room and Events Scheduling
- Portal (myPugetSound)
- Mobile Apps
- Community Music
- Orientation
- Student Alert Group

As we move forward in the year, more information will be posted at www.pugetsound.edu/optimize.
How HR Survived Go-Live
by Shannon Briggs, Director of Compensation and Benefits

What do a sense of humor, lots of chocolate, and a mischievous monkey have in common? It turns out they’re all things that kept our office motivated as we worked toward the January 1 implementation of the PeopleSoft Human Resources module, which included payroll and timekeeping.

Sense of humor – makes sense. Chocolate – goes without saying. Monkey? Yep!

In December, we received an unexpected visitor by the name of Mischief S. Monkey, who showed up one day with résumé in hand and stayed to help all month long. “Help” is a really loose term in this case, as he was mostly up to monkey business, such as making snow angels out of paper hole punches, tanning himself on the copy machine, and replacing pictures of our family and friends with pictures of himself. What a scamp! While Mischief never did any actual work, he did make us smile and was a great cheerleader for the team. For that, we’ll always be grateful.

Now we are moving forward with the next phases of Optimize Puget Sound related to Human Resources. Before the fiscal year ends June 30, we’ll add the following functionality in PeopleSoft:

- Self-service tools which will allow faculty and staff to update their addresses and other personal information,
- Benefits Administration so faculty and staff can enroll in benefits and access benefits information, and
- HR Recruiting which will replace PeopleAdmin, the university’s current recruiting and applicant tracking tool [see related article].

We deeply appreciate the patience and support shown by those of you learning to use the new system. It is challenging to make these kinds of transitions (we are still learning to use the new tools ourselves), and we know there is still work to be done in order to realize the full benefits of the system. Thank you for your support as we continue to make this important transition!

A Tip from Payroll
Memorize this number: 6-21!

Generally, time is submitted on the 6th for hours worked the 22nd through the 6th and on the 21st for hours worked the 7th through the 21st. Supervisors must approve time on the 7th and 22nd.

For more information, including the 2013 Payroll Calendar, visit www.pugetsound.edu/payroll and select the link to Online Timekeeping and Semi-Monthly Payroll.

New HR Recruiting System Coming Soon

Implementing an enterprise resource planning system like PeopleSoft is a long, involved process. The switching on, or “go-live”, of each module requires many months of intense work, but it is not the end of the story. Once the new module is up and running, it’s time to start making refinements and adding new features.

Such is the case for the Human Resources team, as Shannon Briggs relates in her article. The first major addition to the HR module in PeopleSoft is the new recruiting system scheduled for go-live in April.

“We’re moving from PeopleAdmin to the PeopleSoft applicant tracking system for faculty and staff searches,” reports Kelsey Wilburn, recruitment coordinator. “This allows us to streamline the process and access new and improved functionality with third-party vendors for background checks and employment forms.”

Nancy Nieraeth, director of employment and people development, anticipates the implementation will provide many benefits across campus.

“We’re hopeful the new system will allow us to focus on the recruiting activities that add the most value to applicants and managers,” Nieraeth notes.

For updates on HR recruiting and other Optimize news, visit the project blog at http://blogs.pugetsound.edu/optimize.