Case Study

A Broadcom Company

Automic® Automation

Earns High Honors for Workload Automation at GMU

Business

George Mason University (GMU), the largest four-year college in Virginia, has become a major educational force, earning a reputation as an innovative, entrepreneurial institution with national distinction in a range of academic fields.

Challenge

- Provide fiscal, HR, and admin services to 30,000 students.
- Reduce manual interactions with day-to-day Banner processing.
- Integrate student services across diverse departments

Solution

- Calendar based and event driven automation.
- Integration with Banner and out-of-the-box templates.
- Granular security controls restrict production access.
- Rapid ad-hoc and custom reports delivered to end users.

Benefit

- Achieved total integration.
- Established reliable processing.
- Improved output management.

Client Profile

Organization: George Mason University, Virginia

Industry: Education

Business

Virginia's Largest Four-Year College

George Mason University (GMU), the largest four-year college in Virginia, has become a major educational force, earning a reputation as an innovative, entrepreneurial institution with national distinction in a range of academic fields. Founded in 1972, GMU has been called the most diverse university in the country by *The Princeton Review* and is the only university in the state home to two Nobel laureates.

Faced with a disconnected IT landscape, GMU chose Banner by Ellucian to integrate the Registration, Fiscal Services, and Financial Aid departments with the rest of the school's IT infrastructure.

Challenge

Banner Creates Manual Processing Burden

Since Banner does not provide automated scheduling, the majority of day-to-day processing at GMU required human intervention. Three main departments were burdened with a growing manual processing load.

The Registrar handles vital personal information for nearly 30,000 students, and is tasked with providing accurate transcript records, coursework, and credits. Completing daily transactions was labor intensive, with only a few production jobs automated using CRON scripts.

Fiscal Services had to manually issue financial aid refund checks that required a time-consuming manual set up process at the beginning of each term.

The Financial Aid office wanted an automation option to help with the massive task of managing aid distribution to nearly 15,000 students over two financial years at a time. According to the associate director of student financial aid, an operator needed to work long hours overnight to update student records and run the financial aid chains to ensure processing was completed for the next day's work.

Solution

Automic® Automation

Automic Automation, by CA Technologies, a Broadcom company, provided the solution. Automic Automation is a dynamic tool for automating and orchestrating complex batch processes both in Banner and throughout GMU's diverse application environment.

With Automic, the Registrar now automates nearly every routine Banner process. Brian Selinsky, director of Registrar IT services, no longer has to manually start jobs at odd hours for putting class lists in order, calculating enrollment status, coding faculty records, or purging degree audits. Resource availability and processing bottlenecks are no longer an issue. Automic Automation schedules execution by date, time, calendars, and, most importantly, system or file events.

By defining dynamic parameters in Automic Automation, GMU is able to easily stay ahead of schedule while managing up to three semesters concurrently. "Automic can handle processes that run between academic terms with multiple steps automatically and reliably, while still protecting against server overload", says Selinsky.

Automic Automation has dramatically decreased their dependence on human intervention in the processing environment and saves up to a man-hour a day with automation. With the reporting functionality, ad hoc and custom output is delivered to end-users quickly, reliably and automatically by email, network printer, or FTP.

In the Financial Aid department, Automic Automation now checks for the critical data files that arrive from multiple sources. The solution then automatically inserts the correct data file for the financial aid process and archives it, eliminating confusion and redundancy. After the chain completes successfully, end-users are emailed the resulting output. This ability to work with conditional logic has proven integral to automating Financial Aid.

"Automic has saved GMU a ton of time and a ton of resources while solving important data integrity issues", says Melis.

Meanwhile, the granular role-and-user-based security in Automic Automation allows designated technical contacts in the Financial Aid department access to the production system, while permitting only DBAs and departmental super-users the ability to build new modules and chains.

"With CA Automic Workload Automation, we can build jobs with dependencies and conditions, but still launch ad hoc jobs and create multiple schedules. continues. The strength lies in our ability to do complex processing without scripting and without human intervention."

- Laurie Miller, Director, Registrar's Information Technology.

Benefit

Faster and More Efficient Job Processing

Since implementing Automic Automation, administrators at George Mason University have enjoyed faster and more efficient processing of jobs, better distribution of resources, and reduced the risk associated with data entry errors.

“[Output management] is an unexpected benefit from Automic Workload Automation. Now when a new application request is made I often say, ‘Let’s just put it in Automic.”

- Rhonda Baumgartner, Applications Analyst

Benefit (cont.)

Automic Automation has helped free up staff resources, and provided the overall benefit of working with an automated, integrated system. As Laurie Miller puts it, “What I like is that I can build a module once and it can be brilliant and I never have to touch it again.”

For more information, please visit ca.com.

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