

The Successful Registrar

Managing Records, Systems and Staff

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2010

SNAPSHOTS

NEWS & NOTES

Proposed federal legislation addresses diploma mills; Paul Gammill is ousted as director of the Family Policy Compliance Office; California passes a law requiring electronic textbooks; President Obama calls for changes in student-loan repayment terms and a domestic spending freeze; and more. **Page 2**

RESEARCH

Review trends in the numbers of associates degrees and occupational certificates awarded. **Page 7**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Learn to recognize and address harassment promptly. **Page 8**

LAWSUITS & RULINGS

TUITION: A university may not collect tuition debt discharged in bankruptcy. **Page 10**

FERPA: An institution must adopt safeguards to protect student records from unauthorized disclosures. **Page 11**

COVER STORY

Use your sense of humor to keep stress under control

When we asked registrars to share the funniest thing that ever happened to them, many of them had to give the question serious thought.

Being a registrar is tough, important work. But studies show that people who laugh regularly and see the humor in their daily lives are healthier and live longer.

We've compiled a few funny stories about life in the registrar's office. Have a healthy laugh break on us. And next time you're having a tough day, remind yourself of two things — you really are making a difference for your campus community, and you might just have a good story to tell once the crisis is over. **Full story, pages 4–5.**

Did he really say that?

When you work the counter in a registrar's office, you never know what you'll hear next. **See page 4.**

HIGHLIGHTS

Understand limits to a student's right to nondisclosure

FERPA allows students to request nondisclosure of their directory information. That right continues after they leave the institution. But there are exceptions, FERPA Doc Richard Rainsberger explains. **Page 3**

Take the work out of e-transcript ordering, processing

Staff members in registrars' offices can concentrate on their other duties when PDF transcripts are sent through Avow Systems, Inc. At the University of Kansas, the process is completely automated. **Page 6**

Review law that lets ill students keep health insurance

Seriously ill students often need medical leaves to address their health problems. But in the past, they risked losing their health insurance if they were not enrolled. Review the provisions of a new law that addresses that problem. **Page 9**

Provide needed services with innovative technology

Budget cuts are a reality at most institutions. The Evergreen State College in Washington is no exception. Registrar Andrea Coker-Anderson maintains excellent service with innovative technological solutions. **Page 12**

Make e-transcript ordering, production hands-free

Imagine that students can order transcripts online and have them sent as secure PDFs to any e-mail address in the world. And your staff members don't have to do a thing.

For Cindy Derritt, university registrar at the University of Kansas, that's reality. Last June, her office started using Avow Systems, Inc. for transcript ordering and electronic delivery.

Avow offered features that KU officials had identified as important. The company offered both online ordering and delivery. Transcript recipients do not need to be members to receive or open the documents. And KU can print paper documents in-house for students who order them in that format.

In addition to these features, Avow has enabled the office to cut two days off the time it takes to fill transcript requests. PDF transcripts go out immediately so long as there is not a hold on the records. The paper transcript requests can be filled more

Consider multiple uses of e-document delivery

While a registrar's office is most likely to use electronic document delivery for transcripts, Avow Systems, Inc.'s clients could use the service for many types of documents. Those might include diplomas, apostilles, degree verifications and academic suspension letters.

The technology allows users to send secured documents to any e-mail address. The recipient does not need to be a member. The cost is the same whether the document goes to a potential employer down the street or to an institution halfway around the world. ■

Security features protect documents' integrity

Whether transcripts will be printed and mailed or delivered electronically, document security is a major concern. Some registrars worry that a transcript sent to an e-mail address could be viewed by someone other than its intended recipient. But it's no different for a student to provide an e-mail address than for him to provide a physical one, said Dennis Dulniak, Avow Systems, Inc.'s vice president for higher education services.

"Paper loses its integrity as soon as the envelope is opened," Dulniak said.

PDF documents sent through Avow Systems' process are checked for tampering each time they are opened, Dulniak said. The recipient sees a blue ribbon to certify that the document has not been altered. If changes have been made, the blue ribbon changes to a red X.

Plus, the sender can control the document even after it is sent. The sender can limit the amount of time a PDF transcript can be opened or cap the number of times it can be opened. The sender can also recall the document, ending the recipient's access to it. That's useful if officials discover a lack of academic integrity, revoke a degree, or need to end access because of a disciplinary action, Dulniak said.

If someone prints one of the PDF transcripts, institution officials can choose to have words such as "copy of an official transcript" printed diagonally across the page. These words are not visible on the PDF version. ■

quickly also since staff members no longer have to key in the information. "I don't think we realized how much time we were spending on data entry on transcripts," Derritt said.

When KU implemented the Avow system, Derritt and her staff members noticed a few things they wanted to improve. For example, students thought the Web page for ordering transcripts was confusing. Avow addressed KU's concerns immediately, Derritt said. "The entire process of working with them was great," she added.

Derritt is considering other ways to use the Avow system. The technology allows users to send any type of document. KU officials are discussing using it for enrollment and degree certifications. They might also use it to send letters that currently go out through certified mail, such as academic conduct and academic dismissal letters. Students complain that it's too inconvenient to pick those up from the post office, Derritt said.

Most institutions implement Avow in two steps, said Dennis Dulniak, Avow's vice president for higher education services. They first create online transcript ordering. That's easy to do and frees up the time staff members would spend keying in information, Dulniak said. Then they add and test the transcript delivery component.

Avow's pricing is flexible, depending on the extent of services institutions want, Dulniak said. Besides cutting down on the high cost of sending paper transcripts, the time savings for staff members is an important part of the equation, he said.

You may contact Cindy Derritt at cderritt@ku.edu. E-mail Dennis Dulniak at ddulniak@avowsystems.com. Visit Avow Systems' Web site at www.avowsystems.com. ■