

The Successful Registrar

Managing Records,
Systems and Staff

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SNAPSHOTS

NEWS & NOTES

Social Security numbers and other personal information for more than 40,000 former University of Hawaii students were posted online for almost a year where anyone could access them; an e-mail identifying students at risk of failing was sent to Wesley College's entire student body; and more. **Page 2**

WASHINGTON REPORT

Review new initiatives to help community colleges produce graduates. **Page 7**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Learn the five C's of strong leadership. **Page 8**

LAWSUITS & RULINGS

DISMISSAL: A medical student who is unable to display professional behavior is not qualified to become a doctor. **Page 10**

FERPA: An institution is not required to provide copies to a qualified student who requests to review his records if the student lives close enough to review them in person. **Page 11**

COVER STORY

Create cocurricular transcripts to document diverse learning outcomes

Grades on a transcript aren't enough to satisfy most accrediting agencies that your institution's students are learning what they need to know. Documenting cocurricular learning outcomes gives you additional evidence that your institution is providing students with a solid education.

At Florida State College at Jacksonville, officials created a cocurricular transcript to record the learning that takes place outside the classroom.

Beyond listing the activities the student participated in, the cocurricular transcript provides descriptions of the activities and specifies the learning outcomes for each one. **Full story, see pages 4-5.**

Define learning to document it

Consider whether your institution's current transcripts reflect students' learning experiences. **See page 4.**

HIGHLIGHTS

Learn regs for redisclosure by state or federal officials

FERPA Doc® Richard Rainsberger explains the conditions under which government officials can redisclose student records that your institution provides to them. The 2009 regs created this option. **Page 3**

Use electronic system for document storage, access

The Registrar's Office at the University of Southern California implemented an enterprise content management system from Laserfiche. The electronic storage and retrieval options make tasks simpler for staff members. **Page 6**

Consider whether faculty members should see records

Your colleagues explained how they handle requests from faculty members to review student records. What would you do if a faculty member wondered about a student's erratic behavior? **Page 9**

Create efficient processes to handle growth

Kathy Bucklew, registrar and director of admissions at Polk State College, implemented technological solutions and improved processes to allow her institution to handle rapid growth without additional staffing. **Page 12**

KATHY BUCKLEW, REGISTRAR AND DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS, POLK STATE COLLEGE

Improve efficiency to handle growth, keep staff happy

When Kathy Bucklew became registrar and director of admissions at Polk State College in Florida



KATHY BUCKLEW

three-and-a-half years ago, the institution had recently installed a new student information system and had been without a registrar for a year.

Over the past three years, enrollment has grown by about 40 percent. Plus, the institution began offering a bachelor's program, so new processes were needed to accommodate the differences between that program and the two-year degree and work-

force training programs already in place.

To address all these challenges, Bucklew looked carefully at every process. "What can I do to improve efficiency and give the staff a job that's more enjoyable and give the students the services they need?" she asked.

First, she sat down with each staff member and tried each job in the office. "If you don't understand how something operates, you can't effect good change," she said.

She also planned opportunities for staff input. Staff members need to have ownership to perform at their best and initiate positive change. "I have to help them love their jobs," Bucklew said.

Staff members also know that if a new process doesn't work, they can change it back to the way it was before, she said.

Bucklew's first project was to determine how the student information system could be configured to support state rules and regulations and college policies.

Next, she identified where processes could be automated or simplified. For example, moving graduation application processing online saved about 1,000 hours of advising time a year, Bucklew said.

When the bachelor's program was added, Bucklew had the opportunity to design processes correctly from the beginning, she said. Officials expected 50 students to enroll but ended up with 200. Efficient processes made handling the extra students possible, she said.

Bucklew's most recent improvement was to change to electronic transcripts. Polk went live with the Avow Systems PDF transcript product in early October. "I think we're going to find as we move forward with

technology that electronic transmission is more secure than paper," Bucklew said.

Her goal is to eliminate paper transcripts. Polk's online ordering system does not offer the option of a paper transcript, although students may still request one if they really need it. For paper transcripts, they need to fill out a request in the office or send one in, Bucklew said. In the first three weeks that PDF transcripts were available, about 200 were sent out. Only two students ordered paper transcripts.

The system took about 10 minutes for the transcript clerk to learn, Bucklew said. That clerk used to spend about six hours a day entering transcript requests and printing and folding transcripts, she said.

Managing the electronic system takes only about an hour a day. That means the office gained 20 hours of staff-member time a week, Bucklew said.

The biggest learning curve for students was understanding that they needed an e-mail address for the transcript to go to. Staff members helped them find e-mail addresses and complete transcript requests if they had questions, Bucklew said.

E-mail Kathy Bucklew at KBucklew@polk.edu. ■

Follow these tips to implement electronic transcripts smoothly

Polk State College in Florida recently launched Avow Systems' PDF transcript delivery. Registrar and Director of Admissions Kathy Bucklew recommends these steps to ensure that the shift to electronic transcripts goes smoothly:

- Understand your current process. How much staff-member time goes into transcript processing?
- Define your goal. Do you want to free up staff time? Provide better service to students?
- List barriers you are likely to need to cross for the implementation to succeed.
- Weigh the costs and benefits. Determine whether you charge enough for transcripts. Polk added a \$5 per transcript fee about a year ago in anticipation of electronic transcripts.
- Let the institutions you most frequently send transcripts to know that you are going to start using electronic transcripts. Send out an announcement that this is now your preferred method.
- Educate students about the need to provide an e-mail address for the transcript recipient. ■