

The Successful Registrar

Managing Records, Systems and Staff

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 9

NOVEMBER 2002

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COMPLIANCE

Gardner-Webb University is in an uproar after the president maneuvered to get the star of the basketball team eligible.

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A registrar explains how he built campuswide support before implementing a policy to put disciplinary notations on transcript.

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NEWS & NOTES 2

Earthquake spurs Cal State Northridge to imaging, more efficient work process

Aftershocks of the 1994 earthquake that hammered Northridge, Calif. continue to reverberate — but in a good way at **California State University-Northridge**. No longer is there a separation between the records and admissions offices, a consequence of a revamped work process.

No longer is the operation subject to the unpredictability of another damaging rumble, where temporary offices had to be set up without the ability to communicate internally.

Imaging permits access to documents anywhere on campus, leaving inconvenience down there with the rubble. And CSUN made that the cornerstone of its recovery plan — to emphasize processing of transfer students' transcripts, since it receives about 42,000 per year.

"We were trying to recover from the quake and rebuild our enrollment," says **Eric Forbes**, director of operations.

After the earthquake, CSUN focused on transfer students because they were the new constituency.

(See **IMAGING** on page 4)

MORE ON PAGES 4-5
• GET WHAT YOU NEED
• EASING THE BURDEN

Institutions are well-schooled at dealing with parents demanding to see child's grades

Technology has brought great improvement to the workplace, simplifying chores and providing convenience to our culture. Across the country institutions are taking advantage of students' ready access to computers and have ceased mailing grades home.

Students can get their grades much faster and institutions have trimmed the printing and mailing expenses.

See survey results, page 7

Of course, when an angry parent calls to say he wants to see his child's grades and feels darn well entitled to them, as the footer of the bill, you have to wave the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** at him.

The Successful Registrar surveyed institutions that have stopped mailing grades to see how they have handled an issue that can be volatile, and some colleges and universities are adept at resolving the problem.

"We explain that getting a grade report is easier than ever," says **John Hall**, executive director of enrollment services and registrar at **Southern Methodist**

(See **PARENTS** on page 6)

Meeting calendar**TACRAO (Tennessee)**

Nov. 20-22

Location: Nashville Airport
Marriott Hotel, Nashville, Tenn.**CACRAO (CAROLINAS)**

Dec. 1-4

Location: Kingston Plantation,
Myrtle Beach, S.C.**VACRAO (VIRGINIA)**

Dec. 2-4

Location: Marriott Crystal
Gateway, Arlington, Va.**MSACROA**

Dec. 2-5

Location: Trump Marina, Atlantic
City, N.J.**SACRAO (Southern)**

Feb. 9 - 12, 2003

Location: Biloxi, Miss.

WACRAO (Washington)

Feb. 12-14, 2003

Location: Rainbow Lodge, North
Bend, Wash.**NJ-NYACRAO**

March 6, 2003

Location: Kean University,
Union, N.J.**AACRAO**

April 6 - 9, 2003

Location: Washington, D.C.

This month's ethics question ...

To allow a student-athlete to play, your institution's president demands you recalculate the student-athlete's grade point average, ignoring the F that was received for cheating. What do you do?

Direct your thoughts and comments on this month's ethics question to Editor Jay Margolis at jmargolis@lrp.com.

INS investigates Iowa State professor's transcripts

Phony academic transcripts are at the heart of an investigation into whether an **Iowa State University** professor was studying and working illegally in the United States, *The Des Moines Register* reported.

The **Immigration and Naturalization Service** is looking into an allegation that **Li Cao**, an assistant mechanical engineering professor, obtained her visa with faked records.

Complaints from Cao's husband, **Ziyi Dai**, ignited the investigation. Dai, a former graduate student at ISU, was recently sentenced to 15 years in prison after pleading guilty to attacking his wife with a knife and cutting her fingers, hands and arm.

He claims he was set up by Cao so he couldn't notify authorities about using the bogus documents to enter the United States.

The **National Science Foundation** is also scrutinizing Cao's academic credentials after awarding her \$375,000 to do a seven-year study concerning engineering and biotechnology.

Cao's academic records were requested from the **University of Minnesota**, the **University of Cincinnati** and the **Beijing Institute of Clothing Technology**. ■

English students get forge-proof test certificates

Students in England who pass matriculation examinations now receive forgery-proof exam certificates, according to the BBC.

The anti-counterfeiting measures include a hologram, an ultraviolet image that can't be seen by a human eye and heat-sensitive ink that disappears if photocopied. ■

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Get everyone on board before implementing notations policy

Before your institution begins implementing a policy for including disciplinary notations on student transcripts, follow this advice from **Yechiel J. Rosenrauch**, senior registrar at **City University of New York Hunter College**, which has had success with its policy:

- Develop and publicize a very clear policy to regulate disciplinary notations.
- Establish a committee and a process for determining when to make and how to word transcript notations.
- Get all key administrators on board with the policy.

"Here it works very smoothly," Rosenrauch says. "As long as there are established rules and everyone's aware of them, implementation is very, very easy."

Although most transcript notations are for academic reasons, some are for disciplinary reasons, but the notations do not distinguish between the two.

"Disciplinary charges could be brought for various reasons — grade changes, plagiarism, theft, anything that happens at the institution," Rosenrauch says.

To those who say the student's transcript is solely for academic notations, he says: "It's part of their life at the college, so I don't really see the distinction between academic and disciplinary. Anything that goes on at the institution, it's part of the record, the way I see it."

The policy had been on the books for a few years before Hunter College decided to implement it, he says. Now, only a handful of notations are made each semester.

"They felt this was the best way to stop some of the things that were going on," says Rosenrauch, declining to elaborate on the incidents.

Making disciplinary notations on students' records is important because "students need to know there are consequences for their actions," he says.

Disciplinary or academic notations help maintain the institution's integrity, he says, and keep grade changing, plagiarism and cheating from becoming commonplace.

Although notations do not usually mention the violation or behavior that led to the suspension, expulsion or

How Hunter College's process works

This is **Hunter College's** disciplinary notations process:

1. Disciplinary charges are brought against a student.
2. The charges go before the disciplinary committee.
3. The disciplinary committee decides the outcome, or sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, which may include a transcript notation.
4. The disciplinary committee provides the wording of the notation to the registrar's office.
5. The registrar puts notation on student's transcript.
6. The student may appeal to the college president. (If the president agrees with the student, the president tells the registrar to not make the notation.)
7. Notations remain on the student's transcript indefinitely, even after completion of the suspension period. (The exception would be if the disciplinary committee had included a "rare, built-in statement, 'to be removed at end of suspension,'" Rosenrauch says.)
8. When a student requests a transcript be sent out, the institution will receive a transcript including the notations. ■

other outcome, Rosenrauch says institutions receiving the transcript can easily read between the lines.

Here are samples of recent notations he's made:

- Student ineligible to repeat (specific) class. Student will have an F grade in (specific) class. (Read between the lines: cheating, plagiarism.)
- Student suspended for theft; items must be returned.
- Student has to reimburse institution for damage.
- Student suspended for two semesters.
- Repayment plan will be made between student and the office of continuing education.
- Student suspended from the college.
- Student expelled, effective immediately.

For more information, contact **Yechiel J. Rosenrauch** at yechiel.rosenrauch@hunter.cuny.edu. ■

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Partnership with company helps university get the product it needs

There is more to a transcript than just the document itself.

“Scanning a transcript is not an easy thing,” says **Doug Norton**, general manager at **Hershey Business Systems Inc.** “A transcript is similar to a form. It has a structure to it. It’s because of the structure we were able to build a template. We then apply the template to the image we scan and we can extract all the pertinent information that is key-entered into the information system.”

Working closely with a university and creating a partnership gave Hershey invaluable insight into the needs and practices of higher education. The company worked with both the **University of Alabama** and **California State University-Northridge** to develop solutions that worked for each, examples of how Hershey has leveraged the relationships to create 13 products.

This article is not intended to endorse Hershey, but to show the value of working with a company to develop a

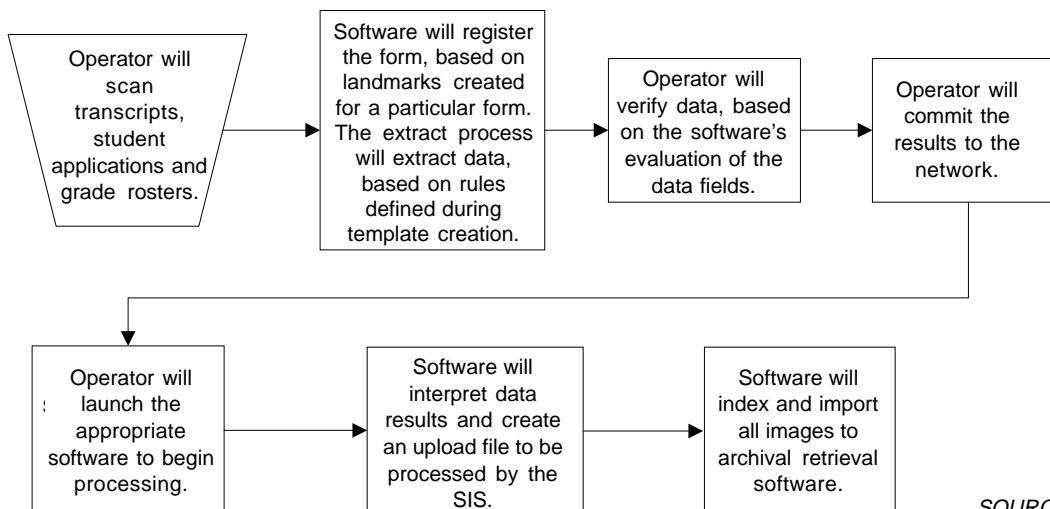
product that meets your needs instead of purchasing a product made for a business-world environment and modifying it to suit the world of higher education.

Beyond just imaging documents, Hershey provided a method for extracting header information (name, Social Security number) and all the student’s coursework. The process saves three to five minutes of the time it takes for a clerk to enter the data manually, according to Hershey research.

Having the transcript online permits any number of people to access it at the same time.

For institutions that acquire a new information system with a degree audit module, they still need to get the data into the system, Norton says.

The technology can be used by 90 percent of higher education, he says. As examples, he cited human resources to process employment applications and the finance office to process invoices. ■



This chart traces the route a transcript takes from when it is scanned into the computer system until it arrives at the archive.

SOURCE: Hershey Business Systems

IMAGING (continued from page 1)

“We beat the problem by turning the thing inside out,” Forbes says. “The degree audit now functions as an admissions tool. The key was scanning — extracting data from the transcripts.”

The strategy worked. In 1994, CSUN had 2,312 transfer students. In five of the last eight years, it has surpassed 3,300.

His evaluators needed a year to develop a sufficient level of rules for courses from other institutions to begin realizing a benefit. A priority was placed on establishing the rules for 20 institutions in the Northridge area that provided the majority of transfer students. Then evaluators worked on courses from other institutions.

As a result, staff no longer had to key in transcript information. With that process, transfer students usually

didn’t know until the end of their first semester what courses they would need to fulfill degree requirements.

“It’s an outreach and recruiting tool. We’re helping students by giving them the information while they’re attending another school,” Forbes says. “It becomes an advising tool, a retention tool, a support tool.

“It’s a huge, powerful weapon against mediocrity in helping people find their way through college. The time for transfers to graduate is less.”

CSUN receives transfer applications from 9,000 students and another 5,000 for graduate applications, and each student averages three transcripts. Forbes said a student following a catalog as stipulated and graduating in four years “is a rare person.”

For more information, contact Eric Forbes at eric.forbes@csun.edu or (818) 677-3776. ■

Technology eases transcript evaluation burden at CSU-Northridge

Sometimes it pays to be a saver. When **California State University-Northridge** needed the right imaging product, **Eric Forbes**, director of operations, pulled out the business card a pesky salesman handed him 18 months before.

Though the salesman had left his company, his successor assessed CSUN's situation and recommended **Hershey Business Systems Inc.**

Hershey had established a reputation for integrating products to create something new, and the company sat down with CSUN to think through the issues, Forbes says.

"It isn't just scanning. It's extraction," he says.

CSUN devoted 25 people to evaluation before imaging. Today there are seven. The records office informs students of how their courses meet requirements and what they have to take within a week so they can select the courses they need with certainty for their first semester.

Fewer people are now needed to evaluate transcripts and CSUN eliminated the paper flow.

"You get an archive accessible to anyone with a personal computer and you get the data extraction," Forbes says.

The workflow changed. Transcripts were scanned into the system and verified as they came in. Each evaluator is 10 times more productive and there are no files to manage. On average, 378 transcripts have to be evaluated each day, and they all get done. When employees go on vacation, Forbes can manage the workflow around their absences, and students still get a quick response.

"This technology has a lot of applications," Forbes says.

One of those applications is taking paper applications and imaging them. He's working on an electronic transfer agreement with community colleges that will encourage students to complete basic subjects before transferring to CSUN. Through the pact, students will know how their community college's courses will fulfill the university's requirements.

"We're trying to make the relationship as seamless as possible," he says.

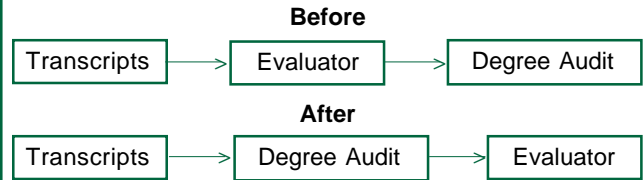
"We're trying to provide service and keep the students in the center of the process. Technology is the spine that helps us. We changed our business practices to conform to the way technology could deliver it."

A partner that provides the support and experience for a project like this was key to CSUN getting what it wanted. Forbes praised Hershey.

"What makes the difference is the insight into the educational environment," he says. "Everything is different for every campus. An imaging architect can come in and help you think through those options."

In other words, taking the lowest bid isn't necessarily the wisest decision. ■

How the workflow changed



The introduction of the imaging process at **California State University-Northridge** allowed the registrar to change the workflow. In the old system, the file was reviewed by the evaluator before the degree audit could be done. Today, imaging with archive and extraction occurs between transcripts and the evaluation. ■

SOURCE: California State University-Northridge

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