Ferris State University

Simplify Administration, Maximize Benefits and Free Up Time

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—Angela Hollister, Assistant to the Associate Provost for Accreditation, Assessment, Compliance, and Evaluation

With a main goal to build one repository for all its assessments, Ferris State University implemented TracDat in 2008. After eight successful years, it was time to take advantage of a new offering from Nuventive: Managed Services.

Managed Services shifts the administrative role to a dedicated professional services consultant at Nuventive, freeing time and resources for schools. It provides ongoing configuration support for TracDat, report creation, and training, among other features. Ferris purchased Managed Services in 2016, citing a specific desire to create more challenging reports. Right away, the product was a good fit.

Angela Hollister is the Assistant to the Associate Provost for Accreditation, Assessment, Compliance & Evaluation and a TracDat lead. As such, she's been immersed in the school's use of Managed Services. Hollister joined the university in 1996, but her shift to the Academic Affairs Provost office in 2015 presented a natural opportunity to make the transition to Managed Services, as she had not been part of the original TracDat training. "The shift has gone quite smoothly," she says.

Hollister collaborates mainly with Paul DeSante, a Nuventive Professional Services Consultant who has led many successful TracDat implementations at colleges and universities during his ten-year tenure with the company. "Paul has always been very responsive," Hollister adds. "The difference now with Managed Services is that instead of asking how I should do something, he actually does it for me." Whether it's adding a new program or modifying an existing program, the Nuventive representative provides assistance and guidance, which, says Hollister, frees her schedule. The program was not difficult to use previously, she notes, but it did require a time investment. In sum, TracDat streamlined operations in the first place, and now Managed Services saves even more time for the school.

Managed Services allows Ferris State University to communicate its needs for various schools, colleges, divisions, and programs, and the consultant finds solutions. One recent implementation, for instance, happened with Ferris' Brew Management associates degree—a degree recently created in response to demand from the devoted beer culture of Michigan. In the past, staff at Ferris would have input all the information about a new degree into TracDat. But with the purchase of Managed Services, Hollister

Customer Profile

Located in Big Rapids, Michigan, Ferris State University is home to approximately 14,000 students. With its 180 degree programs, Ferris offers more professional majors in high-demand fields than any other Michigan university.

Opportunity

Ferris, already a user of TracDat, had a new employee who needed training. Looking to save time, both now and in the future, and to take advantage of best practices, Ferris considered managed services to handle ongoing administration, including report writing, configurations, and trainings.

Improvement

Managed Services provides Ferris a dedicated Nuventive services consultant. Rather than asking how to do something, Ferris can focus on what it wants to accomplish, and Nuventive handles the mechanics, freeing up time and resources on campus. With Touch Points during the year, Ferris stays on target and plans for new initiatives and how to take advantage of upcoming features.

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instead sent forms from the curriculum committee and pertinent information to Paul, who then set up the program resources and links to the required courses, and readied everything for launch. Now when faculty want to assess the new program, the vitals are already at their fingertips.

Hollister also appreciates the fact that the Managed Services plan provides ongoing end user training for faculty, and three scheduled "Touch Point" webinars per year to review their configuration and discuss and plan for upcoming features. "We get so many new faculty every year," she says, "We like to get them quickly acclimated to the system." The fall 2016 webinar was well attended, with many staff members taking advantage of the offering.

Three levels of Managed Services are available. Ferris started with the gold level, but after Paul developed a collection of Ad hoc reports to meet specific needs, the school shifted to silver, as it continues to allow for an unlimited number of configurations for TracDat. This will be especially useful in the upcoming accreditation process, says Clifton Franklund, Professor of Biology and the Biology Program Coordinator at Ferris. As a lead user of TracDat, Franklund is well-versed in the software's power to collect, analyze, and utilize assessment data. "It allows one person to track roughly 500 courses every semester to generate meaningful data," he says. Franklund also says that Paul at Nuventive is an invaluable resource, someone to whom he can send feature requests or questions about how something operates. Now Franklund is looking forward to the ways that the managed services will further aid Ferris in its 2020 accreditation. The process, he says, involves using more of the planning features to drive a huge project that covers all of the academic colleges. Managed Services provides just the right assistance for such a large undertaking.

Key Benefits

+ Focus on WHAT an institution wants the Nuventive solution to do, while Nuventive determines HOW to implement the solution

+ Continuity over time as team members come and go

+ Consultation regarding best practices used by other institutions

+ Insight into upcoming enhancements and new features that may impact current configuration

+ Accelerated start-up time

+ Progress ensured through continuous touch points from Nuventive

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