



DMACC's Workforce Training Academy Goes Paperless to Achieve Huge Time Savings

Background:

Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), the largest community college in Iowa, has six campuses, an enrollment of 29,500 credit and 34,300 non-credit students and 2,440 employees. DMACC's Workforce Training Academy offers a variety of certificate classes to prepare, unemployed, or under-employed individuals for high-growth and high-demand occupations including careers in business/information technology, manufacturing/industrial technology, health care occupations and transportation.

Challenge:

DMACC's Workforce Training Academy (WTA) grew to serve more than three times the number of students within a one year period (2013-2014), from approximately 150 students to more than 450, without adding additional staff. Lacking clear processes to handle the dramatic influx of students, the program's enrollment processes failed to keep up, causing confusion and chaos. Student applications were frequently misrouted or lost, staff efforts were often redundant and student information tracking lacked consistency and clarity. Inefficient staff utilization, partially caused by unorganized and inconsistent processes, meant that student enrollment was slow and there was often confusion regarding where students were in the process. Paperwork was abundant and difficult, databases were duplicative, and senior staff were so busy trying to help with administrative duties that they couldn't perform their actual job functions.

Solution: In less than six months, WTA went completely paperless. This eliminated searching for files, unnecessary hand-offs of paperwork, duplicate records and wasteful reporting requirements. WTA has now collaborated with Iowa's Workforce Investment Act office to streamline the application process via SharePoint and is also sharing information with Goodwill Industries (an organization that provides career assistance), saving duplication in paperwork and hand-offs.

Results:

The results of DMACC's Workforce Training Academy process improvements were dramatic:

- 50% reduction in the amount of time to enroll a student
- 40% reduction in the number of steps in the enrollment process
- Significantly reduced information handling by eliminating many multi-level excel spreadsheets
- Reduced staff time required to process paperwork
- Time spent on reporting has been dramatically reduced, from days previously to just hours!

"The most significant outcome for us has been having all of our data in one central location. Now we don't have to go to each individual's desk looking for a piece of paper while a student is waiting on the phone; we can search in SharePoint and see why a student is calling, even if the student himself doesn't know!"

- Kay Maher, Employment Training Specialist