



Ithaca College



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How Ithaca College Implemented Financials and HR/PR 11i and Reinvented Their Business Processes

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Fall 2002 OAUG Conference

Ithaca College recently went live with Oracle Financials, HR/Payroll and several web applications. Come learn what they did right and what they would do differently. We will discuss the critical success factors and describe how many of the business processes were completely rebuilt and made more efficient because of the features found in 11i.

Introduction

Ithaca College is a private, residential, comprehensive college with approximately 5,700 students and 1,300 employees located at the southern end of Cayuga Lake in Ithaca, NY.

The project started out as a search for a new human resource system but towards the end we made the decision to replace our financial accounting system also. We considered using PeopleSoft and Oracle applications. Though the HR / Payroll functions of both applications seemed equal, we made the decision to go with Oracle because the financial applications were superior and their use of web technology offered opportunities we wanted to pursue.

We next chose BOSS Corporation as our implementation partner. BOSS demonstrated a solid understanding of the complexities of the human resource implementation and instead of emphasizing industry “BEST” practices, they emphasized the “RIGHT” practices for Ithaca College. BOSS was also well prepared and provided the most professional presentations for both visits to campus. Everyone involved in the project became very comfortable with the BOSS approach and their representatives.

A contest to name the project was conducted and the winning entry was Parnassus. The significance of the project name is as follows: Parnassus is a mountain in Greece at the foot of which lay the town of Delphi, home of the famous Oracle. In Greek mythology, Parnassus was sacred to the Greek god Apollo whose



oracle resided at Delphi. Many painters have chosen Parnassus as a subject through the years, but perhaps the most famous rendering is Raphael's fresco displayed in the Vatican. This view of "Mount Parnassus" with Apollo leading the choir of Muses makes Parnassus an obvious choice for the project name, given the many talents of the creative team assembled for this project. Our "Oracle" resides on a Sun server in Information Technology and is being accessed on desktop PCs throughout campus to provide information to guide and enhance future decision-making at Ithaca College.

Project Parnassus

Our Production system went live June 1, 2002. The journey up our "mountain" was arduous, we had our moments of stress, setbacks and even some temporary lapses of tempers but we also saw many rewards and successes.

The scope of Project Parnassus was to implement Human Resources, Payroll, Advanced Benefits, Employee Self-Service, Line Manager Self-Service, General Ledger, Payables, Receivables, Cash Management, Purchasing, and iProcurement. We made progress with other applications such as Time and Labor, Internet Expenses, and Public Sector Budgeting but for one reason or another, we postponed them for later implementation.

Perhaps the most enjoyable and unintended success of the project was that the system brought diverse areas of the campus together for discussion and we were able to meet LOTS of people! At Ithaca College, many of the financial activities such as submitting requisitions, creating invoices for manual checks, journal entry, and processing budget transfers are performed in the many departments by **Administrative Assistants**. We trained over 300 individuals in one aspect or another of the system.

We evaluated every HR/Payroll and Financial business process in terms of the value it added to the college. Some were eliminated, many were changed and only a few survived management's scrutiny without some kind of change. In nearly every case the Oracle applications were able to improve the process by automating it, reducing the steps of a process, or reducing the number of people involved. We should note that we are still in the process of evaluating and modifying some of our changes. We are realizing that some of the decisions we made may not work the way we expected or the way Oracle is designed.

Business Processes Improved

We would like to share with you some examples of the improvements we were able to incorporate into our business processes as a result of Project Parnassus. In our legacy system we were using some business processes that we wanted to improve. So as we began our project, we scrutinized every business process that fell within the project scope. We did look at all of these business processes and improved many of them, dropped some of them and found that some were already as good as could be expected. We would like to talk about some of them.

Agency Customers

At Ithaca College, we manage funds for independent but affiliated campus organizations. These organizations fall under the category of student committees, housing, faculty support, and others. As a matter of convenience they deposit funds they receive with the college at the Bursar's Office and are allowed to write checks against those funds. The process by which personnel from those organizations could manage their account, and inquire on account balances was significantly improved.

Financial Services used to process all the receipts and payments in their Miscellaneous Receivables system requiring extra copies of paper work to be submitted, processed, and filed. Now, the receipts are recorded directly in the General Ledger as a credit to their account in a separate fund and the payments are processed in Payables as debits to their account. After the nightly GL update, the agency account has the correct account balance. Personnel responsible for these agency accounts process their own invoices and manual payments and have access to their accounts. Through the use of Security Rules, they can only see the balance of their accounts.

Sales Journals

We have on campus a bookstore, a number of restaurants, stores, and other campus-related businesses. These businesses record their sales daily in our general ledger and reconcile the cash deposit to the sales journal. In the past, they entered their sales journal into the general ledger and sent their paper work with a summary sheet to Financial Services for reconciliation to the bank statement.

We basically replicated this process using recurring journals. We set up the recurring journals and trained personnel in these businesses to generate and process them. We considered using ADI and demonstrated it as well as the recurring journals to these businesses. They chose recurring journals.

Inquiries - Drilldown

Campus departments manage their budget and finances using a Department Financial Statement that is essentially a statement of budget, encumbrances, actual expenditures, and available funds. The Financial Statement Generator does a great job in preparing and distributing this report. The Administrative Assistants can run it on demand. Ultimately, we will have departments retrieve this information from a data warehouse. We are choosing to use the data warehouse to minimize the resource drain on our database and because we believe the warehouse reports will give us more flexibility in report writing. We are currently trying to get reports written for an intermediary ODS until the warehouse is developed. If we had the project to do over again, we would have paid more attention to reporting. Areas of campus are somewhat frustrated because they feel that they are not able to see the information that they need to do their jobs.

There were, however, improvements in the inquiry process due to the ability to inquire on an account balance and drill down to the transactions and view the journal or drill further to the source document be it an invoice, a receipt, or some other source. This saves a tremendous amount of research time.

Many individuals including the Administrative Assistants enter invoices and have access to the Payables Inquiry forms. We modified the custom.pll of these forms so that most payables responsibilities could only view invoices (and the related payments) that they entered. This alleviates problems with the "if they can get that, then I should have one too" syndrome.

Improved Accountability Through Budgetary Control

Though our legacy system had the capability to do funds checking, we didn't use it as much as we wanted to because of several limitations. With Oracle, we used three summary account templates to set up three categories of funds checking, namely, utility expenses, equipment expenses and non-salary operating expenses. We used absolute control on all of them except utility where we used advisory control. We didn't set up any salary or benefit controls because we would monitor those expenses through position control and we considered those expenses already committed by the time the funds checking would take place. Nevertheless, the budget office has confidence in the budgetary control in requisitions, purchase orders, invoices and journals in the operating expenses. This confidence allows them to focus on other aspects of their budget responsibilities. It also gives the department managers confidence that when they approve requisitions and purchase orders they won't get a nasty note from the budget manager because of excess expenditures.

Journal Posting

Typically we process all of our interfaces and post all of our journals in a nightly cycle. At month-end we will post journals during the day as needed. If we wanted to post journals in the legacy system, we had to bring it down so no one had on-line access to it. With Oracle we can post journals at will and not take away any features from others on campus.

Foreign Currency Journal Entries

We have a campus in London, England and we have to account for their transactions in our financial reports. In the past, we received a report twice a month with all their transactions listed. Lynn Eastman, the Director of Financial Services individually translated the British Pounds into US Dollars. We explored processing their transactions monthly but for several reasons we determined that semi-monthly was necessary. Now, Lynn doesn't need to calculate any amounts, she only enters a currency rate. The foreign

currency features of Oracle journals allow the London campus to only enter the amounts as stated in pounds and the system translates them into USD quickly and without errors.

Procurement Cycle

The most dramatic and significant improvements came as a result of re-engineering the various processes in the procurement cycle.

- The ability to submit **requisitions on-line** has produced the following benefits;
 1. Reduced paper work that had to be reviewed, handled, forwarded, filed, and used again in later stages of the procurement cycle.
 2. All transactions are on-line.
 3. Accounting controls for accounts, amounts, budgets, suppliers, and approvals are automatically enforced.
 4. Approvals are automatically routed to the appropriate personnel using the Requisition and Purchase Order hierarchies.
 5. Managers efficiently approve requisitions and purchase orders via their email or logging on to their Oracle Self-Service homepage.
 6. The people involved can complete their work from any computer so long as they have access to the Internet.

Financial Services spent a considerable amount of time in the course of the project to understand the features available in Purchasing, Payables and iProcurement. They scrutinized every step of the process and wrestled with the fact that some managers would chafe at the prospect of having to turn their computers on and actually use them. (Sharing usernames and passwords was common in the legacy system). Carl Sgrecci, Vice President and Treasurer, was firm in supporting the policies that changed the way business was done and to allow the college to take full advantage of the system's features.

iProcurement is an area that has also presented some challenges. All departments order and receive items and in most departments multiple individuals can create requisitions. We wanted to maintain vertical segregation between departments so that departments would only be able to see their own requisitions and not other departments. The requisitions are tied to the owner of the requisition and the way our system is set up only the owner of the requisition can see it. This has caused frustration in the departments because they cannot see the requisitions created by other members of their own department. We are currently looking for ways to limit viewing (and receiving) to departments rather than individuals.

- The **procurement card** process is unique at Ithaca College in that the credit card transactions are distributed to the cardholder who only verifies that they are valid. The Administrative Assistant next checks the receipts against the transactions and enters the correct account number. After their approval, the transaction is cleared for posting. Some of the improvements in this process are;
 1. Ithaca College used the standard Oracle process to automate the distribution and approval of procurement card transactions.
 2. Modifications to the workflow enabled the Administrative Assistants to view and modify the transactions without interrupting the on-line handling of the transactions.
 3. The Administrative Assistant keeps the receipts.
 4. Transactions are processed much more quickly improving the financial reporting and reducing the time to reconcile outstanding transactions.

Prior to the implementation of Oracle, we had a purchasing agreement with Staples that enabled authorized personnel to order supplies with a simple phone call. The problem was in processing the transactions and identifying the proper accounting. That was a manual process. Initially, we attempted to replicate and automate this process in Oracle. Then we asked the question, why. Why not tell our employees to use their procurement card to purchase supplies at Staples. Now the procurement card process handles the Staples transactions as well as all other credit card transactions.

In addition when the departments purchased goods from the Bookstore, we used to do journal entries to record these “chargebacks”. Now we have departments use their procurement card, eliminating all that extra work for the Bookstore.

- **Electronic Funds Payments** to suppliers has improved the supplier payment process by;
 1. Reducing the number of checks that must be handled.
 2. Improving relationships with suppliers.

When we offered this option to our suppliers, many of them elected to participate. It is unfortunate that Oracle doesn't deliver a good output file for this process. We had to make extensive customizations to the output file before we could use it.

- **Manual Checks** – The Bursar's Office has distributed checks to authorized administrative assistants for use in the purchase of items that can't be procured in any other manner. There is a \$500 limit on the check amount. In the legacy system, Administrative Assistants processed hundreds of these checks every month. Though necessary to procure items that didn't meet the threshold of a purchase order and to make payment to suppliers who didn't accept credit cards, these checks were used extensively and bypassed several accounting controls. We wanted to reign in the use of these checks. Project Parnassus helped us do this.
 1. We prepared more clear and concise procurement policies.
 2. Oracle made the use of procurement cards more attractive and efficient for the Administrative Assistants.
 3. The manual check process in Oracle is not as efficient as the other procurement methods and by its nature discourages the improper use of this feature.

Administrative Assistants have to enter an invoice, then a payment and link the invoice to the payment. This is in addition to actually preparing the hand written check. In addition, the Bursar's Office has to create a new bank account document every time it distributes a batch of checks.

Travel Advances

In the past, employees who were traveling could request and receive a travel advance. The employee filled out an advance request form, obtained his/her supervisor's signature, and then submitted it to Financial Services where the Accounts Payable department entered an invoice, cut a check, and forwarded it to the employee. Independent of Project Parnassus we had instituted an American Express travel card and this reduced somewhat the number of travel advances but we still allowed employees to request them. Our Payables Manager, Ann Martin, challenged the policy and determined that the value added to the college did not justify the time, energy, and costs to support it. Carl Sgrecci supported this position. We eliminated this time consuming process and though Oracle features weren't directly responsible for eliminating it, the business process was changed as a direct result of Project Parnassus.

Work From Home

Though some employees had the ability to work from home in the days of the legacy systems, they were few and it took considerable effort to set that up. Now, any employee who has a computer and access to the internet can connect to the self-service applications. If an employee is willing to load J-Initiator then he or she has access to the core applications as well. There are many benefits to Ithaca College and to the employee as well, namely;

1. The ability to complete work at home.
2. Gives IC the flexibility to give the employee personal time off during business hours knowing that they will complete their work later.
3. Promotes a family-friendly environment.
4. Work proceeds to some degree even during inclement weather.
5. Employees can complete work or check on the system during the weekend from home that would otherwise require a commute to the office.

HRMS Modules and 11i

Human Resources

As pointed out in the opening section, the main driving force for implementing new systems at Ithaca College was the desire to improve on the many Human Resource processes. One of the first steps in Project Parnassus was to map out all of the current business processes for all of the affected areas throughout the college. We used Visio to diagram these processes so that we could easily see the flow of information from one department to another. These diagrams quickly pointed out areas that needed improvement and streamlining. We also wanted to take advantage of the new Workflow embedded process in 11i and the Self Service features.

Within the Human Resources area, we divided the processes into the following categories:

- Hiring and Staffing Needs
- Employee Data
- Compensation
- HR Processing / Actions
- Student Employees
- Benefits

When completed, we mapped sixty different processes in these diagrams. We also used the Selection Process document mentioned in the opening section to generate the Requirements Mapping matrix. This matrix was then compared to Oracle's standard functionality and the anticipated new features announced for Release 11i to generate a list of "gaps". Below is a discussion on the new features we hope to utilize and the gaps that we must address through customizations or business process redesign.

Tenure Tracking

Tenure and tenure tracking is very important for higher education organizations such as Ithaca College. We reviewed the initial Oracle solutions for tenure tracking and sabbatical leave and found them lacking. Instead, we used the new Extra Information Types again to develop our own tracking subsystem. This allowed us to track this information in the same manner as the legacy system.

Applicant Tracking

Ithaca College plans to fully utilize the Applicant Tracking module along with Position Control to monitor and track the various open positions throughout the campus. One of the major customizations we identified includes a workflow-based process that tracks the necessary approvals before a position is considered vacant and open. This process will be discussed in more detail in a following section. Once again, a needed module, I-Recruitment arrived on the scene too late to be included in the initial implementation. Therefore, many of the desired improvements were postponed until a future phase.

Position Control

Position Control is a major issue for Ithaca College. With the exception of Advanced Benefits and the "new look and feel of 11i", the Position screen has the most added functionality. It is clear that Oracle has big plans for Position Control just by looking at the new date-tracked Position form. It includes many new fields but most do nothing right now. Sadly, a position is still directly tied to an organization and a job title. This means that if an employee is promoted to a new job title, but still holds the same position, Oracle requires you to create a new position using the new job title. All attributes of the old position must be copied over to the new. There are new copy functions for positions to make this task easier. Oracle has stated that future releases will remove this restriction. This will present challenges for Ithaca College. Many times Ithaca College will fill an open professor position with part-time instructors if a full professor cannot be found. Ithaca College does not want to lose the original budgeting numbers for the approved position and wants to track the part-time instructors that are temporarily filling this slot. We will attempt to solve this problem by constructing our position key flexfield with four segments. The final segment will track a sequence number. The main position record will have '00' in this fourth segment. If we must create a new position for the part time instructors, this new position will have the same first three segment

values, but will have '01' in the sequence number. Any position reports we develop will summarize totals by the first three segments. Some of the new fields on the Position screen include:

- Position Control (these are currently grayed out, promising new functionality later. Options are Open, Under Review, Approved Future Actions, and Temporarily Transferred)
- Position Type (Options include None, Pooled, Shared, Single Incumbent)
- Hiring Status (Options include Active, Deleted, Eliminated, Frozen, Proposed)

There are also three new regions on the Position screen to track Hiring Information, Work Terms, and Additional Detail. We are still in the "discovery phase" in determining what functionality is currently available and what will be delivered in the future Position Control update.

Student Employment

Since students make up approximately one third of all employees at Ithaca College, student employment is a major concern. Ithaca College's current student information system tracks all demographic information for students. The legacy HRMS interfaces directly to the student information system so that the demographic data is not duplicated. As most of you know, student demographic data must reside in the Oracle HRMS tables if Oracle Payroll will be used to pay these employees. One of the major interfaces we built during Project Parnassus provides a link between the existing Student System and Oracle HR. We developed a Student Hire screen that is used when a new student is hired. The screen accepts a Social Security number and searches for the new hire first in Oracle. This will keep Student Employment from entering the same student more than once through this interface. Next, it will attempt to find the student in the legacy Student System. If found, the screen presents the chief demographic data for the student. If the information is correct, then Student Employment accepts the data and the information is automatically copied via the APIs into the Oracle tables. If the interface cannot be found in the Student System, then the entry is rejected.

Federal Work Study

Another major consideration for student employees is the management of Federal Work Study grants. The federal government supplies funds to the college to disperse to need-based students as wages for services provided. These funds must be carefully monitored to insure that they are properly used. The legacy system accomplished this task through a very cumbersome reallocation process that involves the payroll, financial accounting and student information systems.

Using the new Extra Information Types (EIT), we were able to construct a solution for categorizing student tasks for proper Federal Work Study processing. We stored valid tasks for each student and determined which tasks were eligible for Federal Work Study funding. Each task identifies its rate, default costing, Federal Work Study category and owning department. Through Fast Formulas, we categorize the student wages by Federal Work Study category. The student task also simplified the time entry. Students only have to report their hours by task. The system will be able to automatically derive the rate from the Student Task EIT.

We then created a created an interface to the existing Student Information System to pass these dollars by student by FWS category so that SIS could track FWS funds by student. We then created a concurrent manager process that generates a flat file to be sent to the Student System for later processing. Since the Student System tracks all of the awards and balances, we felt that this system should continue to monitor the balances. Information Technology personnel at Ithaca College then streamlined the allocation process within this system to simplify this cumbersome task.

Payroll

We created many new earning elements in Payroll to facilitate the special needs of a university or college. The most creative solution allows faculty members to elect to receive their salary over nine or twelve months. This solution, entirely based on elements, table structures and Fast Formulas, tracks the faculty member's election, paid balances and accrued earnings. The formulas will self adjust the calculations when life events like salary changes or unpaid leave occurs. For the faculty members who elect to have their

salary spread out over the entire academic year, we accrue the earned salary in special "Summer Reserve" balances. This allows us to cost the earned wages in the correct fiscal year.

We also created special earning elements to pay our part time "Period Salary" faculty. The elements track the start and stop dates for the payment, as well as the total payment amount. The Fast Formulas allocates this amount across the period and automatically stops the earning element when the stop date is reached. Other special earning elements were created to handle special compensation like Chairperson's pay, Summer Assignments, and Overload Assignments.

Advanced Benefits

Probably the most exciting new feature to come to the Oracle HRMS family in recent years is the new module Advanced Benefits. Because Ithaca College offers its employees a flexible cafeteria-style selection of benefit options, Advanced Benefits provided a strategic advantage over other software offerings. The college offers benefits including:

- Medical
- Dental
- Employee Life Insurance
- Dependent Life Insurance
- Accident Insurance
- Long-Term Disability
- Health Care Reimbursement Account
- Dependent Day Care Reimbursement Account

This module automatically calculates the available flex credits that are awarded to employees. We used special Fast Formulas to calculate these amounts and attached them to the flex credit definition screens. Many of the initial bugs in this module were in the flex credit maintenance functions. We are still struggling with the issue of properly allocating excess flex credits.

Ithaca College also plans to use the Self Service features of Open Enrollment. This will be a very visible enhancement to the entire campus workforce. There are standard communication letters that can be generated to alert employees on how to make their enrollment selections via the Web. Advanced Benefits allows you to track the progress of these open enrollments through reports and on-line views. At the time of this writing, we are currently setting up the open enrollment process so that employees can use Self Service for our next open enrollment process.

One improved process that Ithaca College will enjoy with Advanced Benefits is that the imputed income amount for domestic partners can now be calculated automatically based on selections made during open enrollment. This amount was manually calculated on the legacy system and prone to error. Using the Tax Withholding Rules screen Oracle Payroll can now tax this imputed income separately.

Employee Self Service

This seems to be one of the most popular changes at Ithaca College. Employees can view their pay slips on-line, make changes to their W4 elections and direct deposit banks, change their demographic data, add dependents, and view benefit enrollment information. Benefits plans to allow employees to make their open enrollment elections via Self Service Benefits. When employees experience a life event (like marriage, or gain of a child), Oracle Advance Benefits can detect this change and "open up" enrollment opportunities for the employee via Self Service. Only allowable changes will be displayed, based on the life event experienced.

Line Manager Self Service

Line Managers or Supervisors can now make assignment changes for the employees under their control. This will eliminate the need to process paper Personal Action Forms (PAFs). These requested changes are automatically routed through proper approvals via Workflow. Eventually, Compensation Workbench will allow supervisors to request merit increases, bonus payments and other compensation distributions. Once

again, the late arrival of Compensation Workbench forced the team to delay this implementation until a subsequent phase.

OTL - Oracle Time and Labor

11i and the new self service framework finally provided a web-based employee time entry system that will allow employees to enter their time on-line. Approval routing lists can be constructed via workflow to allow supervisors to approve the entry. These timecards can then be passed into Batch Element Entry batches for processing in Oracle Payroll.

On-line time entry was one of the expected process improvements delivered by Project Parnassus. However, the team had to delay this improvement, due to the late arrival of OTL. Having suffered through many of the initial bugs of 11i, the team decided to wait until this product became more mature. In the meantime, the team created a temporary interface from the existing legacy entry system to Batch Element Entry (BEE). OTL is high on the list for phase II projects.

Major Plans for Future Phases

Time Reporting

One of the main drivers for moving to a more “self-service” model, was the process of collecting time data and sending it to their payroll system. Currently, all time data must be manually written onto the Ithaca College Time Reporting Form (TRF). These forms are then sent to the Data Center, where they are keyed into the legacy payroll system. After several “brainstorming sessions” we have identified three different ways that Ithaca College must collect time data. The new solution for time reporting must be able to:

- Allow selected employees to “clock-in and clock out” using time collection hardware. All time collected should then be automatically transferred to Oracle Payroll for processing.
- Allow eligible employees to enter their timesheets weekly using a web-based system. These employees do not have to punch a time clock, but they must report total hours worked by work function. Also, exempt employees will use this option to record vacation and sick time taken.
- Allow supervisors to batch enter time for employees who do not have access to the Web. This is also a catch-all option that will provide an emergency method to quickly get time into the payroll system.

As stated above, we planned to use Oracle Time and Labor to deliver these solutions. Due to the late arrival of this module, we have delayed this implementation until phase II.

Reappointment Process

Every year, Ithaca College plans for the coming academic year with their reappointment process. They must determine the needed faculty to support the planned class offerings for the academic year. Reappointment forms are mailed to the appointees after being carefully reviewed by various offices throughout the campus. Our plan is to convert this entire review and approval process to Oracle Workflow.

The first task in the process was to diagram the existing procedures with Visio. By demonstrating the complexity of the existing reappointment process pictorially, we hoped to point out to the administration at Ithaca College that this process should be streamlined. Our proposed solution will start with information derived from the Budget office with a completed and approved salary budget. We will create a custom Oracle table that will extract data from the budget and HR and list all faculty who should be reappointed. HR will modify this table to update any known leaves of absences and sabbaticals. Next, this list will be forwarded by Workflow to the appropriate deans for approval. Results of the dean’s actions will be routed by Workflow back to the budget office for notification purposes. This will allow Budget to reconcile any differences between the original budget and our custom table. Once completed, the process will generate

salary proposals through the APIs into the Oracle salary management screens. Workflow will generate notifications to the proposed faculty members. When accepted, the proposed salaries will be approved.

The current process requires mounds of paperwork that must be manually tracked through the various stopping points. By using Workflow, we hope to streamline and control the progress of the various approvals. This may prove to be one of the greatest benefits of Project Parnassus.

New Hire/Vacancy Process

Ithaca College plans to extend the applicant tracking and position vacancy processes in Oracle to capture some additional approvals and checks. In order to fill an open position, a hiring supervisor must receive either an authorization to begin recruitment or, if a preferred candidate exists, a waiver to post. The review and approval process is currently a paper system in which a form is filled out and routed for approval. This new process will enhance and streamline the current practice to take advantage of Workflow.

When a dean or supervisor becomes aware of a vacancy, he/she will complete an Authorization for Recruitment / Waiver to Post form online. Based on the approval levels of the supervisor, this form will either be routed to the appropriate approver, or sent directly to HR through Workflow. HR will review for completeness and when approved, will route the form to the Budget office. Budget will insure that the salary is budgeted and if approved, will route the form to Affirmative Action. AA will review and make any necessary recommendations for the advertisement process. The form is finally routed back to HR to generate a vacancy within Oracle Applicant Tracking modules.

Once again, workflow will be an integral tool to streamline a current process that tends to be inefficient and slow.

Critical Success Factors

There were a number of factors that led to the success of Project Parnassus and to these process improvements.

1. First and foremost was the willingness of senior management to take the time to become involved in some of the details, to explore options, to consider opposing viewpoints, and in the end to make decisions.
2. Vigilance to avoid customizations. We didn't want to have to support customizations through future patches and upgrades. The only customizations we made were in reports, interfaces, custom.pll, and in workflow most of which should survive upgrades. This also encouraged us to adapt our business practices to the delivered functionality.
3. Constantly stressing the need to communicate anticipated changes to the campus
4. The determination to not take shortcuts in training. We engaged a firm, Gillespie and Associates who produced our training documentation and provided us with knowledgeable instructors.
5. Obtaining support from the President who was willing to invest in necessary infrastructure to move the campus forward. Peggy Williams was very much interested in the progress of the project especially as it neared the end. She stressed the need to give the employees the chance to get acclimated to the new system before going live.
6. Patience with Oracle. We began our project in the very early days of 11i when bugs were many, help was scarce, and our learning curve was steep. Sometimes we didn't know a bug from a feature but in the end, Oracle was able to solve nearly all our problems.
7. Last but not least, engaging a good consulting partner, BOSS Corporation, who gave us experienced consultants and led us through many, many workshops and Conference Room Pilots.

Conclusion

All in all, Project Parnassus was very successful. We believe the campus has benefited from the time and energy we put into it. We improved many processes and we are on track to deliver additional features and reporting capabilities as we work to improve our system.