Administrative Systems Management Constituent Group Meeting

Educause 2012

Thursday, November 8th

The meeting was attended by approximately 40 people, ranging from Hawaii to Edinburgh. Based on a show of hands, it was clear that the group was diverse, with a wide range of enrollments and types of systems.

Demographic questions

* Types of systems (best of breed,home-grown, vendor packages)
  + Mostly vendor packages and best of breed.
  + Significant number of Ellucian clients (no surprise)
* Size of organizations (10,000+ FTE, 3,000-10,000 FTE, >3,000)
  + Again, fairly mixed, with a minority from small schools

Since the group was small enough, participants were asked to introduce themselves briefly, explain where they were from, what systems they were using, and describe one major challenge they face at their institution regarding administrative systems. The list of challenges includes the following:

* change management
* data governance
* keeping up with the technology
* changing / increasing student expectations
* staffing -- finding, retaining, and paying staff
* multiple system environment
* new system implementation
* how to have deep expertise on a system (as opposed to "wide" expertise)
* handling growth of the institution
* Oracle Corp
* Ellucian Corp and changes there, especially technical changes and updates
* helping users understand the full flow of data from ERP, using it properly, understanding integrated nature of system
* decentralized environment / maintaining consistency and communication across multiple campuses / colleges sharing a system
* data warehousing
* keeping staff focused on necessary maintenance above innovative and clever
* supporting a legacy system and planning a migration away
* prioritizing feature requests and supporting more modules/add-ons with the same staff
* integrating 3rd party add-ons to existing ERP / integrating data across multiple systems
* transitioning development projects to ongoing support
* supporting a BI environment / improving reporting
* change management: getting people to think differently
* managing customizations
* disconnect between user expectations and capacity to deliver
* Ellucian – is vendor consolidation causing grief?
  + they are spending a lot of effort to bring older systems up to date that had been neglected (PowerCAMPUS and Banner)
  + Colleague users - do we notice much difference?  Tech support is remaining the same.
  + Some tools are being dropped - Banner relationship manager > Recruiter, that's going to be somewhat painful
  + Utilize their Action Planning process to get an analysis of ways of improving use of the system
  + Does change in Banner technology look to be a good thing?
* Keeping up with new technologies: who is better at it, campuses or vendors?
  + Ellucian is rolling out Banner XE in bits and pieces, means campuses now have to support multiple technologies -- has huge impact on support--need staff who can handle both new and old technologies.
  + Demand is there from user community for new technologies, but IT doesn't have the staff capacity or capabilities to do it
  + Paradox of user expectations vs traditional role of administrative systems groups to avoid cutting edge, be safe/conservative
* Staffing problems - any clever strategies?
  + outsource to consultants for things you can't hire for - but it's more expensive
  + being able to pay competitive salaries
  + beefed up internship program to build skills internally
  + irony of having internal staff do maintenance work and hiring consultants to do the "fun" projects-- how do you keep the internal work interesting?
  + partnered with local consultant group which gives better rates in exchange for a longer term commitment.
* Anyone been to EDUCAUSE Enterprise conference?
  + yes -- good content, but much more general not vendor-specific
  + small conference.

Next steps

* Encourage people to join CG mailing list
* Continue this discussion there