

WPI amps up its technology with Workday Student

Worcester Polytechnic Institute transforms critical functions to equal its world-class degree programs, ensuring a clear view of its students





Call for change

Modernizing matriculation

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) offers comprehensive project-based degree programs with an emphasis on technical expertise, science, and engineering. With more than 50 centers located on six continents, WPI's focus on real-world, diverse experiences has a tremendous educational impact. Yet the institution operated on a complex, 30-year-old legacy student system. Custom-built processes and multiple integrations created a complex network of data, detailing WPI's 6,500 student population. As the system became cumbersome and harder to maintain, oversight was difficult when it came to data capture processes, data maintenance, and ultimately the student population.

WPI wanted a more technologically advanced system to match its world-class technology-focused education

programs. It wanted to improve the student, faculty, and staff user experience with time saving automated processes, maximize reporting efficiencies, and clean up existing data so that it would be more useful and transparent. **Workday Student presented the perfect alternative. WPI had already deployed Workday HCM, Finance, and Payroll with help from Accenture, on time and on budget.** The success of those projects, along with Accenture's project management skills, effective communication, and industry and functional expertise, encouraged WPI to extend the partnership with a Student deployment that would bring all student data onto a single platform.



When tech meets human ingenuity

Tracking the transformation

WPI and Accenture embarked on a comprehensive program to document WPI's existing business processes and identify the key requirements of a new Workday Student system, leaving redundant practices behind.

The close partnership secured WPI's vision to evolve student relations, keeping it top of mind during the implementation. Despite disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Workday Student project remained on track even when transitioning to a remote implementation. The level of participation and the quality of delivery, commitment and communication remained consistent.

WPI and Accenture worked to build a prototype of the new system, keeping a record of all the legacy processes WPI wanted to keep which Workday did not yet have functionality for. At one stage, there were more than 60 such items. Accenture helped the WPI team identify workarounds, or ways the Workday system could help achieve those goals, ultimately reducing the list of items to less than 15.

WPI engaged in a thorough in-house testing program supported by Accenture's Project Portal (TAPP), which logged all activities and helped keep teams on track. The team made a concerted effort to be transparent in all communications, and TAPP enabled that during remote delivery.

When it came to deployment and integration of WPI's complex store of legacy student data, Accenture worked closely with WPI's dedicated data conversion team to map all existing data and get it into a standardized format.



A valuable difference

Streamlining student strategies

Workday Student was deployed on schedule in waves, with Academic Foundations, Student Records, Academic Advising, Student Finance and Financial Aid going live in Spring of 2021, followed by Curriculum Management and Student Core in August 2021. This important move-to-production enabled WPI, with Accenture's support, to begin building academic calendars and course schedules, including the time sensitive Fall 2021 semester course schedule, and launch registration as planned, in April. According to Patty Patria, Vice President for Information Technology and CIO, WPI, "We went live remotely with our Accenture consultants and WPI staff working entirely off-site, and honestly it worked very well."

Manual, paper-based processes are now automated and online, with access to Workday supported on mobile devices. **Accenture successfully loaded 1.5 million transactions from 23 files to Workday, with a 99.9% success rate, and performed more than 100 integrations.** WPI is leveraging Prism to seamlessly integrate historical data with current operational data, saving WPI workers time and eliminating the need for training and maintenance of other tools. Additionally, WPI is utilizing Prism to enhance its transcripts, using historical and student data. Legacy systems remained in place during the waved roll outs and will eventually be phased out once all historical data is migrated to Prism.



Since going live, WPI has successfully completed Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 registrations, with more than 4,500 unique students registered and 19,000 registrations each session. During the first registration time frame, 900 sophomore students registered for nearly 4,000 course sections in just one minute.

WPI's back-office functions and security now match the best practice, technical expertise of its world-class education programs.

A valuable difference

WPI instantly saw the benefits of the new, cleaner data and automated reporting that's now easily accessible in one place.

One of the most exciting things that WPI has found about Workday is its possibilities. **In 2020, it integrated Workday with its COVID testing system by leveraging APIs. WPI processes an average of 2,000 COVID tests per day, so an efficient process is crucial.** Accurate contact information needs to be supplied to healthcare providers at the outset, and employees and students—some testing as often as twice a week—can now input their details directly into Workday, scan their card in WPI's COVID system, and get cleared for testing on the spot, all via mobile phone.

Accenture and WPI continue to work closely and rolled out additional Workday functionality in 2021, including importing Student Historical Data, Academic Progress Reports, and Commencement. WPI was so pleased with the level of service Accenture provided, the team extended its support contract.

With the new structure and reporting in place, WPI's teams can work in a more efficient way and focus on its community and strategic innovations that support the institution's growth.



A woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a black shirt with white polka dots, is smiling broadly and looking towards a man whose back is to the camera. She is holding a pair of glasses in her right hand. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office or meeting space.

“...it’s [so] important to have the right partners to work with. Our Accenture project manager and consultants were with us every step of the way.”

Patty Patria

Vice President for Information
Technology and CIO

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Disclaimer

This content is provided for general information purposes and is not intended to be used in place of consultation with our professional advisors.

Copyright © 2022 Accenture. All rights reserved.

Accenture and its logo are registered trademarks of Accenture.