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# Washington State University

## *Education Solutions*

### **Business Challenges for Academic Institutions**

With increasing competition between academic institutions nationwide to admit and enroll qualified students, the university admission process needs to work smoothly and efficiently with quick response back to the student applicant. Washington State University (WSU) needed to improve its processing of applications for admission, reducing the amount of paper and time required to complete the entire process. WSU also required a system that enabled users at all university branches and departments to immediately access student records. Replacing the University's outdated manual and paper-intensive admission processing with electronic documents and automated workflow would dramatically increase the efficiency of WSU's entire admission process.

Processing of a student application at WSU can be complex, since there are numerous steps in the admissions process and an application may remain active for up to two years. Along with an application, a student must furnish transcripts, test scores, and optional narratives or letters of recommendation. This information often comes in various formats and arrives at different times. When a student's file is complete and credentials have been reviewed, an admission decision letter is sent to the applicant and stored in the student's file. Other university offices such as the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships or the Student Advising and Learning Center must have access to the student's admission status and documents to continue their processing.

After the student makes a decision to attend the university, the Registrar's Office and Student Accounts also need access to the student's records for enrollment and billing purposes. Advisors in the academic departments use the transcripts and other information in the student's file to provide guidance on the student's program of study. Compilation and organization of all documents in a student's permanent record can be a time-consuming and labor-intensive process for academic institutions. To stay competitive, universities need to provide excellent student service, and increasing

administrative efficiency is a major step toward that goal. A solution that would allow departments such as Admissions, Financial Aid, the Registrar's Office, and Student Accounts immediate access to students' records, while still keeping files confidential and organized, is a tremendous advantage to today's university.

### **What Acorde offers to Academic Institutions**

Leveraging the power of Optika's Acorde™ family of solutions, universities can accelerate information sharing between departments and the processing of student admissions, resulting in a significant cost savings for the university and stronger communication between all departments within the university. Acorde solutions allow academic institutions to turn information into value and wealth for the entire university, its departments and its students.

Acorde offers academic institutions the ability to resolve erroneous transactions — such as an incomplete admissions application package or an error in the student's financial aid offer — online and in real-time. With Acorde Resolve™, universities can involve individual departments and easily resolve these transactions without the paper shuffle and hassle of routing hardcopy documents. Acorde solutions allow educational institutions to offer student self-service over the web, reducing the cycle time for processing admissions applications.

### **What Acorde has Accomplished for Washington State University**

Washington State University chose Acorde to provide storage, indexing, retrieval and workflow processing of its complex admissions documents. Using Acorde Process™, admissions application processes are now fully automated. All WSU campuses scan and index their own local documents into the Acorde solution, which currently holds over 500,000 admission documents. Acorde Context and Acorde Process allow more than 100 users at all campuses to simultaneously and immediately access and view documents from admissions and student records, greatly enhancing communication and productivity across the university.

WSU's implementation of Acorde enables academic advisors and departments to view and print transcripts and other admission documents without calling the Admissions Office for copies. Remote campuses are processing applications using workflow, permitting admissions documents to be quickly and easily managed and tracked throughout the entire business process. This electronic processing capability has increased the quality of student services and decreased paper volumes across all departments at WSU.

### **Future Plans to Integrate e-Business**

Washington State University plans to automate processes over the web for other academic departments within the University. Using this strategy, departments will actively participate in reviewing applications for their graduate programs and in making the admission decision for graduate applicants.

WSU currently receives a large percentage of both graduate and undergraduate admission applications via the Web. WSU is considering creating a Trading Partner Resolution Network (TPRN) to allow students to access their own files and review their status in the application process. In the financial area of the university, Acorde Resolve could be used to allow vendors access to invoices and receiving reports to expedite resolution of problems with vendor payments. It could also enable employee benefits providers to access benefit contributions and other employment information to help resolve employee claims.

### **About Washington State University**

Washington State University (WSU), with its main campus in Pullman and urban campuses in Spokane, the Tri-Cities and Vancouver, enrolls more than 21,000 undergraduate and graduate students. WSU offers more than 150 major

fields of study taught by over 2,000 faculty members, including many with national and international reputations. As a leading research institution, WSU also offers a nationally ranked Honors College and worldwide distance-learning degrees. WSU's student population includes citizens from 90 different countries.

For more than a century, WSU has offered academic programs in liberal arts, sciences, business, education, architecture, pharmacy and nursing. Traditional land-grant programs include agriculture, engineering, economics and veterinary medicine. Bachelor's degrees are available in all major areas, with master and doctorate's available in most. As Washington's only statewide university, WSU has offices in all 39 counties, eight regional learning centers, seven research and extension facilities in various locations, and 24 Small Business Development Centers statewide. Money magazine has called WSU a "public ivy" and rated the Honors College one of the best in the nation.

WSU is also known to be a leader in technology. In 1999, WSU was ranked as the #1 "wired" public institution of higher education by Yahoo magazine. WSU was among the first to offer a wide array of self-service information services for its students on the World Wide Web. The Cougar TRACS (Transfer Credit System) web site, which offers academic planning tools to students considering transferring to WSU, won the 1999 EDUCAUSE Best Practices in Higher Education Information Resources Award.



*"We're very pleased with the efficiency improvements that the Acorde product family delivers to our student records processing. The web-based interface promises key collaborative benefits by giving staff across the University quick and easy access to the information they need."*

Lavon Frazier  
Assistant Director, IT  
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