

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

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Session No. 030



ORLANDO, FL ★ JULY 6-9
NEW BEGINNINGS:
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National Association of Student
Financial Aid Administrators

**Best Practices: Shared Service
Center - Traditional Schools
Launching Distance Learning
Initiatives
Session #030**



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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS Global Campus

Moderator

Matthew Johnner: Matt is a Partner at Global Financial Aid Services, Inc. Global provides financial aid administration and inbound/outbound contact center services to over 360 campuses, disbursing over \$1.5 billion in financial aid annually.

Presenters

Timothy Opgenorth: Timothy is the Director of Financial Aid for the University of Illinois' Chicago Campus.

Rebecca "Becky" Vinzant: Becky is the Director of Student Services for the University of Illinois' Global Campus.

Slide 3

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Panel Objectives

Will talk about why and how the University of Illinois launched a major new distance learning initiative. They will explore what process they went through to setup a structure to service financial aid and student service for the new Online Campus.

Our goals:

- Outline the UIGC approach
- Encourage free flowing questions and dialogue
- Identify administrative best practices in use at other Colleges with online ventures

Slide 4

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A New Frontier

The University of Illinois set out to establish a Global Campus with the intentions of becoming a national leader in online education, focused on innovation, quality, superior instruction, services and accessibility. The economic and social future of the country at risk because of the growing gap between the percentage of Americans who finish high school and those who get a college Degree. UIGC Goals include improving:

- Student access to college,
- Cost and affordability,
- The quality and value of high education, and
- Institutional accountability

Slide 5

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What is the new Venture?

The Global Campus is a ground breaking distance learning initiative leveraging the University of Illinois' heritage to provide access and world class curriculum to a new set of students. This new distance learning program will offer online bachelor's , master's and graduate degree completion programs in collaboration with the university's residential campuses. Student's will enjoy the challenge of an online education that is instructor-led, resource-rich, and highly interactive.

Slide 6



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University of Illinois – Fast Facts

The University of Illinois was founded in 1867 and is one of the original 37 public land grant institutions created after President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act in 1862. With locations in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago, and Springfield and over 5,000 plus courses offered to a total of **69,331** students, the University of Illinois feels it has an obligation to provide broad access to all of its educational resources.

Slide 7



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Three very different campuses

- Two campuses are Direct Lending, one is FFELP
- One campus is QAP, two are not
- Two campuses are consider experimental sites, one is not
- Three different financial aid directors
- Each campus has their own policies and procedures, forms, etc.
- The student populations at all three campus are very different

Slide 8

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How is this going to work?

- The academic programs belong the land based campuses, thus the students do as well.
- Therefore, the land campuses must disburse and reconcile funds and account for on all federal and state reports.
- Also responsible for audits, so need to ensure following same policies/procedures, regardless whether the student is enrolled in the Global Campus.

Slide 9

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The Work Began

Launching a new online venture was a significant challenge. After stakeholders approved the initiative a UIGC team was deployed to research Academic, Student Service, Administration and Student Information System solutions. This panel looks specifically at Financial aid administration and financial aid counseling.

Slide 10

Financial Aid Considerations

The goal was to deliver fast, accurate and friendly financial aid counseling and processing while minimizing the impact on the existing ground campus staff, processing and technology. Questions included:

1. Do we process in house?
2. Do we use our current BANNER SIS?
3. How do we staff for expanded counseling coverage hours?
4. How do we not burden the ground campuses?
5. What processes are similar for the three campuses, what are unique?

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Options

We determined that outsourcing financial aid counseling and processing for the new venture was a viable alternative. We were attracted to it because:

1. We found high quality options
2. The outsourcer was able to scale to our numbers...regardless of what they may be
3. The outsourcer had counseling to support our coverage
4. The outsourcer had a online application, award and document management system
5. We minimized the impact to our campuses

Slide 12

Outsourcing Process

We identified that outsourcing vendors existed and started a competitive bid process. We learned the following:

1. A RFP process works
2. Agree internally on goals and what is important in a vendor
3. Dedicate the time and resources to the process
4. Look for a cultural fit, not just a process and technical fit
5. After selection work closely on customizations
6. This is a lot of work!

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The Solution

The University of Illinois has selected Global Financial Aid Services' front and back office financial aid services to assist their students with financial aid awareness. Global will provide a solution that leverages people, process, and technology. The online financial aid software is integrated with a proactive contact center that reaches out to the University of Illinois' students to move them through the financial aid process and answer questions. Global will operate under a three separate OPEIDs.

Slide 14

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Global and Global Campus worked together to create a solution that accommodated the GC needs:

UIGC will transmit daily upload files of student information for GFAS to contact students to begin the financial aid process. UIGC will also transmit ISIR records to GFAS of UIGC students. GFAS will verify and award students using the unique criteria of each campus and then will transmit the awarding information to UIGC. UIGC will download this information into Banner so the student can then receive disbursements.

Slide 15

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Lessons Learned

- It is a lot of work!
- A proper administrative function can make a real difference to student access through awareness of financial aid, speedy processing, online tools and extended hours
- Scope, Schedule and Resources: Each institution has to pick 2 and sacrifice one in the initial deployment. If Schedule in terms of desired go-live date is the priority then more resources need to be deployed and the scope of the deployment may be scaled back until Phase 2.
- We are excited about the future for UIGC to serve students

Slide 16

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Questions?



Slide 17



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Slide 18



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