Ensuring a Seamless Student Experience with Course Scheduling & Registration

New SIS? No Problem. Migrating to Workday during academic year didn't disrupt student experience or impact adoption.

Background:

Over the past 100 years, Bentley University (Bentley) has grown from 30 accounting students in 1917 to over 5,000 students today. They have evolved to expand their curriculum and plan for the changing student landscape with additional resources and support. However, behind this vision is the essential task of finding the right classes for students to support them along their academic journey to graduation.

Problem:

Bentley has a very tight class schedule, which presents high competition for course placement. This is heightened when students have to plan around extracurriculars and work commitments. In years past:

▶ Pen and Paper Scheduling

Students spent a significant amount of time with pen and paper working out class schedules and meeting with advisors to prepare for their designated registration appointment time.

▶ Outdated Seat Counts

Their standard of up to date information was nothing more than an online list of classes with seats available so students could sort through what courses were closed.

▶ Tactical Conversations

Advisors and students craved more time for strategic conversations, instead of spending valuable time sorting through course data.

However, with a Student Information System (SIS) migration to Workday planned two years later, administrators at Bentley were concerned how this change would affect students, especially with registration opening shortly for the fall term.

Solution:

Migrating to a new SIS can be a massive undertaking, but once the migration conversations began, Civitas Learning presented a clear plan to ensure a graceful transition. Bentley's project team worked on the Workday integration in parallel with Civitas Learning. Beginning just after the 1st of the year and finishing in line with an April launch, the Civitas Learning team was committed throughout and worked in a targeted sprint in the final month to deliver final testing and quality assurance to Bentley. There was no disruption to the student experience or downtime in course scheduling and registration.

> Our students have always loved Civitas Learning's Student Experience solution for their registration. As we prepared to move to Workday, it was clear that we needed to continue to provide them access to the tool. The staff at Civitas Learning were incredibly responsive in every phase of the transition. With their support, we were able to provide our students with a consistent and rewarding registration experience.
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> — PJ Dickson
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> *Assistant Dean / Director, New Student Academic Programs Bentley University*

BUILDING UPON THE PROJECT TIMELINE SUCCESS, ADOPTION RATES SOON FOLLOWED:

2X	~90%	Workday
NEW LOGINS	**ADOPTION RATE**	**TRANSITION**
New logins nearly doubled from 2018 to 2019	The adoption rate hovered at just under 90%, reflecting the solution's ease of use, word of mouth marketing from older classes	Seamless transition to Workday *(not to mention, within a defined timeline and budget)*

Lessons Learned:

Looking back on the process, a few best practices rise to the top and may be helpful for those who are embarking on a similar project:

✔ Engage Stakeholders Early

Bentley was aware of their plans to migrate early, and engaged the Civitas Learning team to inform them of their timeline and technical specifications.

✔ Eliminate Disruption To Students

This early engagement allowed for Bentley's students to experience no disruption to their course search and scheduling process due to the efficient planning and streamlined communication from administrators.

✔ Carve Out Time For QA

Towards the end of the project, both technical teams (Bentley IT and Civitas Learning) reserved time for quality assurance testing in order to feel completely confident there was no loss in functionality for the student experience.

Solution Benefits:

Bentley's success with Civitas Learning expands beyond a successful SIS implementation. They continue to uncover features and services that make the class selection and registration process easier. Among these include:

Intuitive Visual Calendar

Bentley values the visual presentations on the student dashboard and the option for students to view schedules side-by-side. Previously, they spent a lot of time advising students to not take too many courses in a row, or too many in one day, and the visual presentations help reinforce this.

Pre-Registering

Advisors are grateful for the solution's ability to pre-load required courses to students schedules, ensuring that they don't make too many registration mistakes that will end up hurting them in later semesters. This feature means less monitoring by advisors after registration and more time to discuss longer term, more strategic planning.

Personalized Training & Adoption Support

Bentley partnered with Civitas Learning to create a training video and posters for the launch to First-Year incoming students during the Summer of 2017. They have iterated off these resources for subsequent registration periods. Additionally, the Bentley team followed Civitas Learning's guidance to only offer registration instructions using the solution for incoming first-year classes.

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> We spent a lot of time advising students to not take too many courses in a row, or too many in one day. The visual presentations in Civitas Learning's Student Experience tool helped us reinforce that for students.
>
> — Anne Pugliese
> *Director, Data Management & Application Services Bentley University*

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> Due to our scheduling solution's ability to connect to *any* SIS, we were able to migrate Bentley's interface from their legacy system to Workday without any interruptions to service or loss of data. Supporting customer migrations to the cloud is an important aspect of Civitas Learning's Student Experience solution. We are uniquely suited to achieve this flexibility.
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> — Brad Ledford
> *Director of Engineering Civitas Learning*

About Civitas Learning:

We help colleges and universities harness the power of their student data to improve student success. We embed actionable insights and applied analytics into connected workflow applications to support the student journey. Equipped with our platform, leaders, advisors and faculty have the tools they need to measurably and sustainably improve enrollment, course success, persistence, graduation and equity.

Today, we support more than 400 colleges and universities, reaching nearly 9 million students. Together with our growing community of customers, we are making the most of the world's learning data to help a million more students graduate.

Learn more about Civitas Learning's student experience solution at **www.civitaslearning.com/student-success/planning**