

## **Upgrade means more functionality for staff, students**

by **David Williams - Tuesday, May 27, 2008**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/928/system-upgrade-means-more-functionality-for-staff-students/>

This summer the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh will pioneer a new system within the UW System for accessing electronic resources.

At 7:45 a.m. Monday, July 28, UW Oshkosh will throw the proverbial switch on a PeopleSoft upgrade that will rev up the way students enroll for classes and check grades as well as how professors input grades and maintain class rosters.

The upgrade from Campus Solution's PeopleSoft 8.0 to Campus Solutions 9.0 also will affect numerous departments and offices on campus, including the faculty, Admissions, Student Accounts and Human Resources.

"From the administrative side, there are features in 9.0 that will greatly improve behind-the-scenes processes," said Scott Johnson, associate registrar and functional lead for the upgrade.

Other benefits will include the ability for faculty to monitor and control enrollment in their courses, the capability of scanning transcripts into the system and the accessibility of official records for students.

Campus Solutions 9.0 also interfaces with the University's Desire2Learn (D2L) software, a suite of online tools that UW Oshkosh faculty uses to manage content and communication, which will make it easier for instructors to keep in touch with their students.

### **One-stop shop for students**

UW Oshkosh students will notice the PeopleSoft upgrade when they log onto Titan Web, the University's online registration system. While version 9.0 shares a lot in common with 8.0 as far as functionality goes, the upgraded version makes great strides in accessibility.

"Navigation is a one-stop shop. We think students will like that," Johnson said of the portal-like overview, which is a marked improvement over the former setup, which used "bread crumbs" to show a user's movement throughout the program.

Demos and online tutorials already have begun for the new system.

"Student test groups needed very little guidance," Johnson noted.

The new layout also will allow students to access and/or alter their class schedules in a more straightforward fashion and to find their financial aid status, contact information, enrollment dates, adviser information and a "to do" list — all from a single screen.

Not only will students be able print a semester's schedule, but also they will be able to view and print their entire course history.

Future applications include a preview function that would allow students to preview their potential schedule two weeks prior to the enrollment period as well as a planner they could use to plot out future semesters.

## **Logistics and labor**

Almost every University of Wisconsin institution uses PeopleSoft, though UW Oshkosh will be the first to go live with the 9.0 upgrade. UW-Madison is scheduled to upgrade to 9.0 a week later.

"In the mid 1990s, UW System adopted the principle of using 'common systems' for the information technology (IT) systems needed to support UW institutions whenever feasible," said Ken Splittgerber, executive director of information technology at UW Oshkosh.

The University purchased PeopleSoft's Student Administration System in 1997, a year after UW-Madison chose that program to replace its legacy system. UW Oshkosh's last PeopleSoft upgrade — Version 8.0 — came in 2003.

The University's IT generally works somewhere between 12 and 24 months to complete a major PeopleSoft upgrade, making the switch to Version 9.0 the IT project of 2008.

Up to \$100,000 was allocated for the PeopleSoft upgrade, including the costs for consulting services.

"The process begins with an evaluation of the hardware, operating systems, middleware and the database needed to support the environment," Splittgerber said. "Every process needs to be tested — admitting, registering, billing, grading, etc."

"Where processes do not function as needed, the IT staff must work with offices to find a workable solution," he said.

As functional lead, Johnson keeps track of those functions that are not working and what needs customization.

"There's a substantial amount of testing going on. It's a busy summer for everyone," said Johnson.

The entire system will be shut down from July 18 to 28 while the data moves from the old system into the new one.

"No problems are anticipated, but we do have a back-up week built in just in case," Johnson said.