

# The Successful Registrar

Managing Records, Systems and Staff

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## Turn to campus resources to help improve processes, save money

In today's budget-conscious campus environment, you're probably being pressed to do more with less. Or you may have been asked to do without some things — software, hardware or system upgrades.

But just because your institution doesn't have extra money available doesn't mean you can't improve your processes and procedures. Sometimes it's just a matter of looking within your campus to get the ball rolling for change.

This was the case at **Southern Polytechnic State University** (Ga.) when **Steve Hamrick**, registrar and assistant to the vice president for academic affairs, came on board.

Hamrick noticed that some of the processes in place were unnecessarily burdensome to students and staff. His request to hire a consultant to review the processes and come up with suggestions for improvement was impossible to grant without a budget allocation. So Hamrick's decided to ask students in his institution's quality assurance degree program for help.

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### MORE ON PAGE 4

- ASK COLLEAGUES WHAT HAS WORKED
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## Cut scheduling work and time with room scheduling software

As many a registrar can attest, room scheduling can be a time-consuming process. Whether it be for a regular class or a special event, factors such as capacity requirements, instructor preferences and audiovisual needs can make the task more difficult.

But it doesn't have to be such hard work if you use room scheduling software like EMS by **Dean Evans & Associates Inc.** In some cases, it can even mean

**Question colleagues to find out what software may be a right fit , page 8**

turning scheduling for special events, onetime classes and nonacademic programs over to someone in a different unit.

**Kathy Drennan**, student union scheduling manager at **Oberlin College** (Ohio), uses the EMS Enterprise product for room scheduling of meetings. Since Oberlin has something called Experimental College where courses are taught by students and townspeople, she uses it a lot to find space for those classes.

With so many different places to book classes and events in, it's a lot to keep

(See **SCHEDULING** on page 8)

**SCHEDULING** (continued from page 1)

track of, so the student union needed a good software, Drennan says.

The institution's search for just the right product was thorough. Oberlin's computer information technology group brought in an outside consultant to help it determine the best software fit. The consultant worked with a core selection group. Members included someone from the registrar's office, the student union and the conservatory of music. As the group got deeper into the selection process, others were invited to participate.

After reviewing a number of products, the group decided upon EMS because it met the majority of different people's needs. Oberlin's CIT group was involved in the implementation process since it had gotten a new server to house the EMS software. Their involvement after implementation consisted of doing the academic imports from the college's Banner system.

A representative from Dean Evans & Associates came to Oberlin to conduct training on the software when it went online in August 2004. And the trainer came back in January when new users were brought online. Both times, he was there for two to three days.

The system works seamlessly with data from other units. For instance, the college registrar books all academic classes in Banner and the information then gets imported into EMS.

This means the student union can book nonacademic events into shared spaces, like lecture halls.

Using EMS to book space for a variety of events and needs is also the case at **Western Kentucky University's**

conference center. The center delivers all of the university's outreach programming, such as continuing education, extended campuses, summer programs and distance learning. It uses EMS Professional to schedule anything from a three- or four-person meeting to elaborate wedding receptions with hundreds of guests.

**Sue Parrigin**, manager of the conference center, particularly likes the software's reporting capabilities. It easily computes statistics, including room usage and what time of day your rooms are most used.

When the conference center was in the market for a new scheduling product, Parrigin checked out several companies. When it came time to make a selection, however, she let her staff have the final say.

"They are actually the ones using it, so I let them demo the [ones] we were looking at," she says.

While buy-in from her higher-ups was necessary, "The recommendation from us that this was what we needed was well received."

WKU's training on the software was slightly different from Oberlin's. WKU opted to do theirs in an eight-hour

online session broken into two-hour blocks.

When it was time to implement EMS, some help from the university's IT department was necessary. But once it was up and running, it fell to Parrigin to make it specific to the center's needs. "That was easy. There's a very good manual that's part of the software and there's also a very easy-to-follow setup guide," she notes.

"Everyone has different terminology, different focuses and needs for their operation. With EMS, you have the flexibility to set it up for your specific operation," she adds. □

### Ask others what software works, doesn't work for them

If you're looking into room scheduling software options for your institution, **Kathy Drennan**, student union scheduling manager at **Oberlin College**, recommends you research the options carefully up front.

Time spent with a consultant and different vendors can be very valuable, she says.

**Sue Parrigin**, manager of **Western Kentucky University's** conference center, posted a question to her listserv colleagues when she first started researching room scheduling options. Other tips she has for those looking into scheduling software include:

1. Look at a lot of different products.
2. Ask colleagues what programs they're using and what's working — and not working — for them.
3. Check Web sites and references of vendors whose product you're interested in.
4. Note how long a company has been in existence. "I think EMS has been around for about 20 years so I felt comfortable with the level of doing what they do," she says. □

### Academic scheduling software coming soon

"The central registrar is learning more about us and asking for our product for campuswide academic scheduling use," says **Kevin Raasch**, vice president of **Dean Evans & Associates Inc.** Currently, DE&A offers only room scheduling software.

Registrars will have to wait only a little bit longer to get their requests fulfilled. The company is hoping to launch its academic scheduling tool in the summer or fall of 2006.

With the assistance of 50 different college and university customers, it is currently compiling a comprehensive list of what processes the software must be capable of handling. Once that's complete, the beta version will begin, Raasch says. From there, it's just a matter of time until the initial product is ready to be rolled out.

The academic scheduling product will consist of a desktop component as well as a Web interface. □