



Customer Success Story | Higher Education

St. Petersburg College

University implements intelligent capture solution, dramatically improves transcript processing

Even with one of the best transcript turnaround times in the state, St. Petersburg College (SPC) wasn't content to rest on its laurels. SPC launched a three-part initiative to streamline course articulation even further and deliver outstanding student service through the automation of transcript processing, using Hyland's solutions for higher education.

Challenge

As an open access institution, St. Petersburg College accepts applications year-round in a rolling admissions process. Near the beginning of a term, a flurry of last-minute applications can be challenging, especially among the 36% transfer student population. Many of them have transcripts from multiple institutions and need confirmation on which courses will articulate and start them on the pathway to graduation.

And the right classes matter, too. In 2016, SPC launched Academic Pathways, a sequential list of courses a student needs to take and complete in order to graduate on time. If students are waiting for transfer credits to post, they might have to guess which courses will transfer when planning classes for the semester ahead, or get an override to register for a course because it needs a prerequisite that hasn't yet been posted in the system.

While St. Petersburg College's transcript processing time was already one of the fastest in the state, with a published time of 10 business days rather than the 4-6 week turnaround time at many other schools, the Admissions and Records team recognized that simply being the best isn't enough when there's still room for improvement.



CUSTOMER

St. Petersburg College

INDUSTRY

Higher Education

SIZE

44,000 students

LOCATION

St. Petersburg, Florida and other locations in the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater metro area

PRODUCTS IN USE

Perceptive Content
Brainware for Transcripts

INTEGRATION

PeopleSoft

Not only did the decentralization speed up transcript submission time, but it gave central office staff additional hours to perform higher-level tasks.

“It’s really a student service issue,” said Eva Christensen, Director of Admissions and Records. “We want to post transfer work as soon as possible.”

Plus, Christensen said, the team saw an internal opportunity for better employee utilization. “We’re always looking to leverage technology to remove rote, mundane tasks from our staff. We’d rather have them building articulation rules and performing a higher level of analysis and critical thinking instead of just data entry.”

“We have been using Perceptive Content as our enterprise-wide scanning and imaging solution for many years, and we liked what we saw with Brainware for Transcripts. The software fits into our strategic vision for articulation.”

- Eva Christensen, Director, Admissions and Records, St. Petersburg College

Solution

SPC’s desire to streamline the transfer articulation process, improve student service and leverage staff time resulted in a three-part initiative that leveraged two solutions: Perceptive Content and Brainware for Transcripts.

Shaving scanning time with decentralization

Previously, the Admissions & Records office was responsible for scanning all documents across 11 campuses. Campuses collected paper documents and sent them to the central office by courier to be scanned.

In phase one, SPC decentralized the scanning. Not only did the decentralization speed up transcript submission time—now staff at individual campuses

scan in real time instead of delay by several days via courier—but it gave central office staff additional hours to perform higher-level tasks.

“We’ve freed up more time to troubleshoot transcripts issues, accelerate the development of transfer articulation rules, and provide additional services to students and staff,” said Maria Drew, Assistant Director of Admissions and the functional lead on the project.

Eliminating data entry with Brainware for Transcripts

SPC was already using Perceptive Content for their scanning solution so they looked no further when choosing a transcript processing solution. “We have been using Perceptive Content as our enterprise-wide scanning and imaging solution for many years, and we liked what we saw with Brainware for Transcripts,” Christensen said. “The software fits into our strategic vision for articulation.”

In phase two, SPC implemented Brainware for Transcripts, a template-free transcripts processing solution that automatically validates data from the transcript with the school’s SIS system. Previously, SPC was manually entering course articulations into PeopleSoft tables for all hard copy transcripts, and even with an impressive 10-day turnaround time, they knew they could speed up processing even more.

“This was the best project I’ve ever worked on,” Christensen said. “It was a highly collaborative effort between Hyland and SPC’s Articulation, Information Systems and Project Management teams. Having our frontline staff be a part of the change process helped them understand that this solution will elevate their work, not eliminate it.”

Published processing time has gone from 10 business days to 3-5 days, and in some cases, within 24 to 48 hours.

Further streamlining transcripts processing with additional course articulation rules

Accurate course articulation is critical to the transfer process. While an institution may accept a credit from a similar course at another school, that course may not fulfill the institution's specific course requirements for a degree. Course articulation is the process that defines which courses transfer and count for graduation, and with hundreds of feeder schools, SPC had its work cut out in manually processing those transfers.

In phase three of the transcripts processing initiative, SPC set a goal of getting 40,000 course articulation rules into PeopleSoft to further automate transcripts processing. SPC continues to create course articulations on a rolling basis rather than as a one-time project.

"Each term, we update course articulation rules for our top 10 feeder schools, and then upload new rules for the next ten feeder schools," Drew explains. "It's a rolling process that we've been able to accelerate after implementing Brainware with the time gained from reduced manual data entry."

"This was the best project I've ever worked on. It was a highly collaborative effort between Hyland and SPC's Articulation, Information Systems and Project Management teams. Having our frontline staff be a part of the change process helped them understand that this solution will elevate their work, not eliminate it."

- Eva Christensen, Director, Admissions and Records, St. Petersburg College

Results

With Brainware for Transcripts in place a mere six months, SPC has already seen a number of incredible benefits. Not only has the department increased the evaluation rate of hard copy transcripts from 66

percent to 73 percent, but published processing time has gone from 10 business days to 3-5 days, and in some cases, within 24 to 48 hours.

In addition, one staff member was promoted and moved to another unit within enrollment services, reducing the Transfer Articulation Team by one full-time position from four to three. The remaining three staff members no longer spend the majority of their time scanning and performing manual data entry, but now have the freedom to work on higher level projects like creating course articulation rules and managing transcript exceptions.

Realizing unforeseen benefits

The team has seen some unexpected benefits in the areas of staff time and interdepartmental relationships.

"Day to day, the 'has my transcript been evaluated yet?' phone calls and emails have noticeably decreased," said Lori Condie, an Academic Records Specialist who works in Brainware every day. "Those phone calls and emails from academic advisors and students took up quite a bit of time, but now students and staff are able to log into their respective portals and see that the transcript has already been evaluated."

Condie estimated that phone calls have dropped from around 20 per day to just five—a 75 percent decrease.

Drew noted that implementing Brainware created a greater understanding between the Admissions, Records and IT teams. "To be together in a room working toward a common goal helped us develop professional relationships across departmental lines. Our team gained technical skills and learned at a deeper level how Brainware works, so we're all smarter for the project."

Now that Brainware for Transcripts has been successfully implemented and the course articulation project is well underway, SPC will look at improving internal workflows around transcripts processing.

Finally, the Brainware for Transcripts implementation pairs perfectly with SPC's Academic Pathways initiative. "With increased accuracy of articulated credits and decreased processing time, students are able to enroll in courses with the confidence of being on the optimal path to graduation in their given major," Drew said.

"We're always looking at how we can be more efficient and faster, yet still maintain our high quality of service to students. Brainware for Transcripts was crucial for this process."

- Maria Drew, Assistant Director of Admissions, St. Petersburg College

On the horizon

"As we pick up speed and efficiency, we can expand transcript evaluation beyond those students who have applied, paid the fee and submitted a transcript. We can begin to evaluate applicants with incomplete files and proactively reach out with transfer credits results," Christensen said. "This can only help us from a competitive standpoint."

Now that Brainware has been successfully implemented and the course articulation project is well underway, SPC will look at improving internal workflows around transcripts processing. Currently a team member follows a transcript from submission to processing in Brainware through to PeopleSoft, but leadership wants to experiment with workflows, possibly by segmenting the process and have a single person perform a specific task instead of an entire single transcript.

"As always, we are looking to improve, improve, improve," Drew said. "We're always looking at how we can be more efficient and faster, yet still maintain our high quality of service to students."

Learn more at [OnBase.com/Higher Ed](https://OnBase.com/HigherEd) »