



## ACHIEVING GREATER STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH OPTIMIZED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Located along Florida's Space Coast, the Florida Institute of Technology was formed in 1958 to provide continuing higher education opportunities for scientists, engineers, and technicians working at what is now NASA's Kennedy Space Center. It has since evolved into the only independent, technological university in the Southeast and is continually listed as a Tier 1 "Best National University" by U.S. News & World Report.

Florida Tech has managed to keep pace with its phenomenal growth and growing reputation for excellence in teaching and learning by providing its students with the latest available technology. In 1991, the university elected to migrate from its legacy platform to the Banner by Ellucian administrative system. It also elected to engage Ellucian Technology Management Services to help optimize the new system's capabilities. Nearly a dozen employees work onsite to help manage the ERP platform and to implement new technologies that improve student success.

"It may be a cliché to say this, but they're right here when we need them," said Florida Tech CIO Eric Kledzik. "For anyone that has to work through major upgrades and unexpected emergencies, even back in 2004 and 2005 when we had disastrous events such as hurricanes, it was great having the staff right



**Florida Institute of Technology**  
High Tech with a Human Touch™

### PROFILE:

- Melbourne, Florida
- Enrollment: 8,816
- [www.fit.edu](http://www.fit.edu)

### CHALLENGES:

- Optimize the Banner® by Ellucian™ administrative system with limited resources and IT staff
- Serve a diverse student body while enhancing teaching and learning
- Increase productivity by creating a paperless environment

### SOLUTIONS:

- Ellucian Technology Management Services
- Ellucian Application Management Services

### RESULTS:

- Numerous processes now conducted online, enabling greater productivity and ease of use for campus community
- Expanded expertise and knowledge base as well as flexible staffing help university meet strategic objective of greater student success



here that you could reach out to. They were intimately familiar with the campus systems and were able to address those needs when we had them. It really adds peace of mind to have them here, available to help us through the challenges.”

T. Dwayne McCay, executive vice president and chief operating officer, believes a key advantage to having Ellucian assist in optimizing its technology is its ability to locate and make available the expertise necessary to meet the university’s challenges. “We have all the issues that a school 10 times our size would have, but we have to accommodate all those needs with a minimal staff. By using an outside contractor such as Ellucian, we have access to expertise and lessons learned nationally that would not be readily available to us without a major investment.”

### **PAPERLESS TRANSACTIONS PROVIDE COST SAVINGS AND IMPROVED STUDENT SATISFACTION**

Most recently, Ellucian has introduced a number of applications that have enabled electronic transactions, thereby saving the university time and money. For example, a process that now allows for the online hiring of graduate students has reduced the administrative handling time from what could take up to six weeks to a matter of days. The time that originators spend on data entry and validation has been reduced by as much as 90 percent.

Students can change their majors electronically. And an online admissions process, both for undergraduate and graduate students, now allows for a faster response rate for students who apply to the university. As a result, Florida Tech has enjoyed rapid enrollment increases the past few years.

“When Ellucian’s onsite executive director made a presentation to our deans recently, I reminded them: ‘If you’ll remember when you were a student, if you got information quickly from a school, you paid attention to the first ones you got back.’ We’re real proud of our relationship management system, the e-mails, the customized viewbooks that go out,” said Robert Niebuhr, Florida Tech’s senior vice president for financial affairs and chief financial officer. “If we can be their first responder, not only to their inquiry, but also when they make application, that can make the difference.” Ellucian staff also have worked with other software providers to negotiate waived or minimal costs for the software and services that support Florida Tech.

“A lot of it comes down to the people,” said Niebuhr. “Even though Ellucian is a vendor, we don’t treat them as a vendor. We treat them as our administrative computing unit. It’s recognizing that we’re all in this together. They work hard and we work hard to try and

“We have all the issues that a school 10 times our size would have, but we have to accommodate all those needs with a minimal staff. By using an outside contractor such as Ellucian, we have access to expertise and lessons learned nationally that would not be readily available to us without a major investment.”

T. Dwayne McCay  
Chief Operating Officer  
Florida Institute of Technology

---

solve our problems. I'll bet there are many people here that don't even realize they are part of a different organization.”

#### **REMOTE APPLICATION SUPPORT PROVIDES GREATER PRODUCTIVITY**

In addition to the Ellucian staff who serve the university onsite through Ellucian Application Management Services, Florida Tech is able to rely on other flexible resources for special, short-term projects as well as ongoing support and maintenance of its Banner system. “It's really about fulfilling our needs,” said McCay. “And those needs and priorities change every two or three months. If it's a team effort between Ellucian and us, then we can all adjust fairly rapidly. It's not really much like a contractor relationship. It's a lot more like an internal, collegial effort to try and provide the best support we can to all the various components of the university that require it.”

Florida Tech enjoys a diverse student body. Eighty-five percent of its more than 8,800 students are from all 50 states, but the remaining 15 percent represent 106 different countries. And while the university has traditionally been known for its science and engineering programs, almost all of its online growth has been in the disciplines of business and psychology. Nearly 3,500 students take online courses and are able to choose from 65 online programs.

“Ellucian has really made an impact the last two years helping us to increase our enrollments,” said Niebuhr. “When you have 78 percent of your revenue coming from tuition, we're dependent on Ellucian and our technology to keep those numbers up.”

Kledzik said increasingly decisions at the university are being supported with meaningful data. The institution is implementing tools that will enable administrators to make even more data-driven decisions.

“For example, right now we are looking at the analytics of our marketing campaign,” added Niebuhr. “We've been blessed the last two years with tremendous enrollment increases. We attribute a lot of that to our relationship management system and our marketing campaigns, but we really don't know which of those campaigns have triggered the most response. We're looking forward to assessing in more detail the cause and effect relationship.”

McCay said words like “diligent” and “responsive” come to mind when describing the support Florida Tech receives from Ellucian. “We have to have a lot of faith in you because we don't really have the ability or the time or the inclination to try and evaluate whether we're maximizing the bang for our buck all the time. We've enjoyed a long-term relationship so there's trust and confidence that has been developed that allows us to relax and state what our needs are and to have faith that those needs are going to be met.”

“One of the advantages of having the Ellucian team members here onsite is they become motivated with us and they share in our success. They start taking pride in not only what they do daily, but also being innovative partners and helping us look for those creative solutions.”

Eric Kledzik  
Chief Information Officer  
Florida Institute of Technology



#### ABOUT ELLUCIAN

Ellucian helps education institutions thrive in an open and dynamic world. We deliver a broad portfolio of technology solutions, developed in collaboration with a global education community, and provide strategic guidance to help education institutions of all kinds navigate change, achieve greater transparency, and drive efficiencies. More than 2,400 institutions in 40 countries around the world look to Ellucian for the ideas and insights that will move education forward, helping people everywhere discover their futures through learning.

To learn more, please visit [www.ellucian.com](http://www.ellucian.com)

**ellucian**<sup>™</sup>