Eastern Gateway Community College Partners with Oracle to Rapidly Scale Its Capacity

EASTERN GATEWAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Founded in 1968, Eastern Gateway Community College is a state public, two-year institution with campuses in Steubenville and Youngstown, Ohio. The College offers accredited associate degrees, programs, and certifications across more than 60 major areas of study. EGCC has recently scaled from an Ohio community college enrolling 3,600 students to an online continuing education provider with nearly 42,000 students, offering free online programs to US union members and their families. EGCC also offers non-credit courses and supports its community by hosting meetings, workshops, and cultural events.

INITIAL CHALLENGES AND SELECTION

In 2015, EGCC began offering free education programs for members of two local unions in Ohio. In 2017, EGCC, in partnership with several US unions, including those under the AFL-CIO...
umbrella, embarked on an innovative business model to provide free college programs to more than 15 million union members and their families. Anticipating significant growth, EGCC hired Michael Geoghegan as Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer to lead this initiative.

Geoghegan quickly determined that EGCC, which initially served a population of 3,600 students, would need to bolster its enterprise administrative systems to support an increased number of faculty and students. The current enterprise systems included Microsoft Great Plains for finance and payroll, and human resources was handled manually with Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. All the business processes were manual and paper-laden. Resources for staff, faculty, and students were scattered, and there was no support for basic technologies, such as single sign-on, workflow, and campus-wide Wi-Fi.

Geoghegan partnered with EGCC’s Senior Vice President and Chief Operations Officer Robert Roeschenthaler, who had joined the College in January 2017. Geoghegan and Roeschenthaler created a five-year technology plan to support the College’s growth by moving EGCC to integrated cloud-based enterprise administrative systems for finance, budget and planning, human capital management (HCM), and student. The EGCC team evaluated the use of several application suites. After a comprehensive review, EGCC selected the Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications because the solutions best met the institution’s requirements, and the solution suite was highly scalable and could support EGCC’s large and growing number of users. Other compelling factors that led to an Oracle selection were Geoghegan’s previous experience with Oracle and the ability to leverage the Inter-University Council Purchasing Group of Ohio. Geoghegan and Roeschenthaler secured the full support of its board of directors, who were fully aware of the College’s potential growth path. In late 2017, the EGCC team selected Oracle Fusion Cloud Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Oracle Fusion Cloud Enterprise Performance Management (EPM), and Oracle Fusion Cloud Human Capital Management (HCM). Oracle’s willingness to offer longer term subscriptions and pricing visibility also accommodated EGCC during a period of significant growth.

IMPLEMENTATION

EGCC began implementing Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications in early 2018 and deployed the applications using a phased approach, starting with Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP and Oracle Fusion HCM. EGCC selected Avaap as its implementation partner, and together EGCC and Avaap were able to carry out a rapid implementation, standing up Oracle Fusion Cloud ERP, HCM, Payroll, and EPM by mid-2019. Payroll was the last solution deployed.

Following the go-live of the Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications, EGCC continued to migrate other applications to the cloud, including a student system (Campus Cloud Services) and learning management system (Instructure Canvas), which are integrated with the Oracle
EGCC has a robust roadmap focused on eliminating all on-premises applications with cloud deployment to help serve its increasing enrollment and streamline current manual processes.

Fusion Cloud Applications using the Oracle Integration Cloud (OIC). In summer 2021, EGCC launched the Oracle Analytics Cloud, which provides online dashboards to analyze the institution’s programs, enrollment, retention, persistence, and finances. EGCC also launched the Oracle Digital Assistant chatbot in August 2021, which is deployed on the College’s website and is currently designed to answer admissions, advising, and help desk questions. In the next few months, the Oracle Digital Assistant will also be primed to answer financial aid and registration questions. The EGCC team reports that their efforts to move to the cloud put the institution in a good position during the COVID-19 pandemic by readily allowing staff to work remotely and facilitating remote learning.

In addition to deploying the Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications, EGCC has also gone live with a homegrown student app for Apple iOS and Android devices that is directly integrated with the student system and OIC. The app allows students to view their course schedule and finances with full visibility into student portal data. Using this app, students also have direct mobile access to EGCC’s online learning system.

ROADMAP

While EGCC has deployed a significant amount of technology in a short period of time, the institution still has a robust roadmap focused on eliminating all on-premises applications with cloud deployment. EGCC is currently implementing Oracle Student Financial Planning (SFP) with selected implementation partner Highstreet IT Solutions. The anticipated go-live for Oracle SFP is the 2022–2023 packaging year. EGCC selected Oracle SFP to serve its increasing enrollment and provide an automated financial aid environment that will streamline the College’s current manual processes. According to Roeschenthaler, 98 percent of EGCC’s enterprise applications will be in the cloud once Oracle SFP is deployed.

The next big EGCC undertaking is implementing the Oracle Data Warehouse, which will allow the College to aggregate data from the Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications, its student system, learning management system, and other non-Oracle applications into a central repository. EGCC can then use Oracle Analytics Cloud to provide stakeholders with student and financial statistics for program analysis and better understand faculty and student performance and satisfaction.
BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Roeschenthaler leads a team of 17 IT staff who support the EGCC help desk, Oracle applications, Active Directory, student system, and LMS. Migrating from on-premises deployment to a modern SaaS model brings about changes in how IT is organized and how it works. As such, Roeschenthaler recommends that IT managers discuss with employees how their roles will shift from managing on-premises servers and running back-ups to managing the needs of departmental users.

According to Roeschenthaler, change management was a critical component of the adoption and success of the Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications project. Working with implementation and change management partner Avaap, EGCC started very early in the project to ensure that staff were kept abreast of evolving business changes across departments. Roeschenthaler recognized upfront that migrating to a modern SaaS solution would require EGCC staff to shift from paper-laden, manual business processes to a structured environment with standardized business processes. Before the Oracle system deployment, Roeschenthaler discussed the J-Curve effect with staff, explaining that there would likely be an initial decline in productivity as users learn the system and adapt their processes, followed by a rise in productivity that continues over time.

To facilitate this transformation, EGCC documented all process changes for each department in Microsoft SharePoint, including both reference materials and video recordings. EGCC found video training to be an extremely effective method for rolling out new processes for departments.

Roeschenthaler shared that it is essential to manage expectations and understand that not everything will function smoothly out of the gate when newly deploying an enterprise system. This lesson dovetails with change management. Since EGCC was experiencing significant growth during implementation and time was of the essence, the College did a rapid implementation with limited configurations. After going live on the Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications, EGCC is implementing changes and adapting the systems to better meet their needs. As a result, Roeschenthaler recommends that institutions take as much time as needed to fully implement the applications to meet their specific requirements. EGCC’s rapid rollout has led to ongoing solution configurations while the system is live. Roeschenthaler reports that while they tried to accommodate some nuances in the implementation, EGCC has several exceptions, especially in the payroll area, and EGCC is going back and fine-tuning.
BENEFITS

EGCC has found going to cloud to be incredibly beneficial. Instead of managing hardware and software and performing backups, the IT staff has been able to shift its focus to supporting the departments using each of the cloud systems. This shift is resulting in increased departmental productivity. The transition to the cloud also allows EGCC to have a strong focus on support by allowing staff to have more student interactions. Despite the College’s massive growth, EGCC has been able to keep its administrative staff lean by focusing on automating as many of the previously manual processes as possible. EGCC is also anticipating benefits with the deployment of Oracle SFP by being able to handle an increasing student population without having to increase staff.

Overall, EGCC staff have adapted quickly and are seeing the benefits of the enterprise system. The College’s cloud shift has laid the foundation to implement a fully online delivery model in early 2020 to keep the EGCC community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Roeschenthaler also cites that another key benefit of moving to the cloud is cybersecurity and disaster recovery. Roeschenthaler also reports that the enterprise systems have also allowed the College to conform to GLBA standards.

REFERENCES

As part of this research, Tambellini briefed with Michael Geoghegan, President of Eastern Gateway Community College, and Bob Roeschenthaler, Senior Vice President and Chief Operations Officer of Eastern Gateway Community College. Those briefings helped inform this case study. Tambellini also used publicly available information for this study.

Photo Credits
Page 1: Eastern Gateway Community College Steubenville Campus, ©Eastern Gateway Community College, egcc.edu.

Benefits of cloud deployment for EGCC:

- Increased departmental productivity
- Stronger student interactions
- Manual processes now automated
- Student population growth without increasing staff
- Safer environment through pandemic
- Better cybersecurity and disaster recovery
- Conform to GLBA standards
TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS CASE STUDY

ABOUT TAMBElliNI GROUP

The Tambellini Group is the leading independent technology research and advisory firm dedicated exclusively to higher education. Tambellini Group members benefit from more than 100 unbiased research reports every year that provide insight and analysis on the changing higher ed technology landscape. With over 20,100 global institutions and more than 84,000 technology selections, the Tambellini Group’s proprietary Education Institution Technology Profile Database® is unparalleled in the industry. Founded in 2001, Tambellini Group is a woman-owned business and a certified Great Places to Work® company for 2021-2022.

LinkedIn
Twitter
Facebook

Top of Mind with Tambellini Group, a weekly resource series: thetambellinigroup.com/topofmind

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The purpose of this report is to provide higher education institutions with information about the objectives, solutions, and outcomes related to the utilization of technology in colleges and universities across the US.

The Tambellini Group thanks Eastern Gateway Community College for approving this report and the quotes herein.

We thank everyone who has participated in making this report available.

TERMS OF USE

This report contains confidential, proprietary and trade secret information by The Tambellini Group, LLC. Unauthorized distribution is strictly prohibited. All rights reserved. No portion of this report and strategic analysis may be reproduced, given, lent, resold or disclosed in whole or in part without the written permission of and attribution to The Tambellini Group, LLC. Only the person, institution, school, company or organization that has licensed this report may access and use the report. You may print and use this report inside your institution, school, organization or company as part of an institution, school, organization or company license. You may not distribute this report, in whole or in part, to others outside of your institution, school, organization, or company unless you have specifically licensed the rights to distribute the report for external use. The Tambellini Group offers no specific guarantee regarding the accuracy or completeness of the information presented, but The Tambellini Group makes every reasonable effort to present the most reliable information available. The Tambellini Group assumes no liability for errors, omissions or discrepancies in the information contained in this report.

The research for this report is not sponsored, and The Tambellini Group relies on fees from its Peertelligent® and Market InsightsSM subscription services for publication. As such, The Tambellini Group issues each copy of the report to the institution, school, organization or company that licenses it. Trade secret and other violations are therefore enforced to the fullest extent.

The Tambellini Group and The Tambellini Group logo are trademarks or service marks of The Tambellini Group, and may be registered in the U.S., other countries or both. Other third-party trademarks or service marks are property of their respective owners.

DISCLAIMER

The Tambellini Group does not recommend or endorse any vendor solutions for higher education. The Tambellini Group is an independent research firm without sponsors or ties to vendors. The Tambellini Group provides selected information about vendors based on research. The Tambellini Group makes every effort to validate all of the information presented in this report and performs all research in good faith. The Tambellini Group relies on publicly available information, interviews with higher education institutions and vendor feedback in order to prepare and publish reports which contain timely and helpful points of interest. By using information in this report, you acknowledge that you do so at your own risk. No information contained in this report shall create any warranty or liability. You should obtain any additional information necessary to make an informed decision prior to taking any actions related to the material in this report.

You assume all responsibility in connection with selecting a vendor solution, whether or not you obtained information about such solution through this report. The Tambellini Group and its officers, contractors and affiliates assume no (and hereby disclaims all) responsibility of any kind, for any advice, treatment or other services rendered by any vendor or for any other claims that may arise directly or indirectly from such advice or other services.

THIS REPORT IS PROVIDED ON AN “AS IS” AND “AS AVAILABLE” BASIS, AND IS INTENDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. WHILE WE STRIVE TO PROVIDE THE MOST UP TO DATE INFORMATION AVAILABLE, THE REPORT MAY CONTAIN TECHNICAL OR OTHER INACCURACIES OR TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS, AND MAY BE CHANGED OR UPDATED WITHOUT NOTICE.

WAIVER OF WARRANTIES. THE TAMBElliNI GROUP MAKES NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE REPORT AND ANY AND ALL THE TAMBElliNI GROUP SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOU. THE TAMBElliNI GROUP HEREBY EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS ANY AND ALL WARRANTIES, WHETHER EXPRESS, IMPLIED, OR STATUTORY, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION, ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, NON-INFRINGEMENT, AND ANY WARRANTIES CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY, RELIABILITY, COMPLETENESS, AND/OR QUALITY WITH REGARD TO THE REPORT AND ANY AND ALL THE TAMBElliNI GROUP SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOU.

The terms in this report will be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, without regard to the conflict of laws and rules thereof, and may be amended only in writing signed by The Tambellini Group. You agree any violation of the trade secret provisions herein may cause irreparable harm and damage to The Tambellini Group. For this reason, you agree The Tambellini Group may seek injunctive relief for your breach, in addition to other remedies at law or in equity, without having to prove damages or post bond. In all court proceedings brought in connection with this report and/or The Tambellini Group’s services provided to you, the parties hereto irrevocably consent to exclusive personal jurisdiction by, and venue in, the courts of the City of Richmond, Virginia and the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.