

# The Successful Registrar

## Managing Records, Systems and Staff

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### San Diego State University goes with the Singularity workflow

Some tools are worth their weight in gold. Most, unfortunately, are not. So when a registrar finds a tool that comes close to paying for itself in one year by dramatically streamlining workflow, the rest of us

should be thankful they're willing to share their experience.

#### A host of options

Here's a breakdown of some of what's available to registrars through **Hershey Systems Inc.'s Singularity Suite**:

→ **Archive.** Remote scanning, annotations, document retention, load balanced storage, multi-server scalability, and operating system and database independence.

→ **Workflow.** Automate current paper based and data based processes.

→ **Forms.** Hosts fillable PDF forms, collects data, and images the completed form.

→ **Integration.** Brings Singularity together with your student information system at user interface and database levels.

→ **Transcripts.** Automates capture and processes the data distribution of hard copy and incoming Electronic Data Interchange student transcripts for transfer articulation. ■

compasses the areas of the registrar, admissions, advising and enrollment, managing the mounds of documents that must be sorted, reviewed, scanned and digitally archived throughout the admissions process and beyond, can be an overwhelming task.

In fact, by December 2006, SDSU had accepted more than 52,000 applications that, through an extensive

review process, must be whittled down to around 8,000 actual Fall 2006 admissions.

And with an increasing application pool causing a growing need for temporary staff to handle the work of printing hard copies, collating, alphabetizing and setting up a file folder for each applicant, the need for a stable workflow management tool was mounting.

**Rita Gajoli**, associate executive director of enrollment services at **San Diego State University**, says she has found such a tool in **Hershey Systems, Inc.'s** product **Singularity**.

Singularity provides a secure, stable and efficient image and archive system for storing documents associated with student records, which is good news for any registrar.

For Gajoli's office, which en-

#### Let performance foot the bill

According to **Mike Floback**, vice president of **Hershey Systems Inc.**, which produces **Singularity**, the workflow product's project costs run between \$45,000 and \$75,000, depending on the individual institution's exact needs.

But the savings to universities that implement the product, counted in time saved and overall productivity, are significant.

"It has been our experience that it requires 15-20 minutes to data entry a transcript into the student information system. Hershey's Singularity transcript module has reduced this to 5-7 minutes," Floback said.

Associate Executive Director of Enrollment Services **Rita Gajoli** confirms that productivity improvements helped **San Diego State University** pay 90 percent of their project costs with Singularity in the first year.

So just how does Singularity improve workflow? Most universities evaluate transcripts after students are enrolled. This affects students' ability to transfer and enroll in upper division courses when prerequisites have been taken at other colleges, Floback said.

The Singularity transfer articulation workflow product helps colleges reduce the amount of this transfer transcript backlog.

Also, he said Singularity helps streamline data entry so campus staff can focus on building more rules in the degree audit system. ■

After a Hershey representative demonstrated workflow, data-to-image, data integration and transcript processing tools, “we saw an opportunity to automate several processes related to admission and transcript evaluation and made the decision to purchase the Singularity package,” Gajoli said.

Previously, SDSU had to hire 12 temporary staff each October through January to help with application processing, printing hard copies, collating, alphabetizing and setting up a file folder for each applicant. Hard copies of transcripts and test scores were added to the files as they were received.

“Singularity’s data-to-image technology was used to load images of the applications and transcripts directly from the data files, giving admissions staff access to the document images using a standard Web browser,” Gajoli

said. “This eliminated the need to print hard copies and maintain file folders.”

Gajoli estimates that the elimination of temporary staff and the costs associated with paper and ink cartridges used to print applications covered approximately 90 percent of the cost of Singularity in the first year.

Despite all its benefits, there are details of the Singularity product Gajoli and her team would like to see changed. “We would like to see Singularity utilize the database more by having the option to store the images in the database or on the file system,” she said.

Finally, Gajoli leaves prospective Singularity users with this advice: “Be prepared to allocate time to examine your internal processes and assess opportunities to streamline or automate existing processes.” ■