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Cloud Transformation at San Bernardino Community College District

A TAILORED APPROACH FOR SMALL AND MIDSIZE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Higher education is undergoing massive change as institutions rethink their traditional business model and embrace new technology to meet evolving student, faculty and staff needs. As institutions plan for the future, many are going beyond systems upgrades and instead investing in technology that enables comprehensive growth.

Serving 18,000 students through two campuses in Inland Southern California, San Bernardino Community College District (SBCCD) is part of the largest higher education system in the United States. Nevertheless, its central district office is considered among a smaller, midsize peer group. Like most institutions of this size, SBCCD operates with staffing and budget resource constraints. Digital transformation is critical to the growth and sustainability of all institutions, regardless of size.

SBCCD engaged Huron to support an institution-wide cloud implementation, using a tailored approach that could be scaled for the district's unique time and budget needs.

Overcoming Unintended Hurdles. To demonstrate to San Bernardino County — SBCCD's financial and audit authority — that it could be independent and manage accounting at its central office, the institution focused its initial cloud transition on implementing Oracle Financials ERP.

“By deploying Oracle Cloud in partnership with Huron, we have brought our business practices into the 21st century and reaffirmed our mission to serve students well into the future.”

JOSE F. TORRES, EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR

“As a public higher education institution, there is nothing more important to us than empowering our students to achieve their goals,” said Jose F. Torres, executive vice chancellor at SBCCD. “Our partnerships with Huron and Oracle provide us with cutting-edge tools to help align our budget with our priorities while increasing our efficiency with limited taxpayer dollars.”

Due to limited budget and staff availability, the success of SBCCD's transformation depended on striking the right balance between implementation cost and technical knowledge. SBCCD experienced an additional

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hurdle in the fall of 2017, when it needed to replace its original implementation partner. Having depleted most of the project budget with nine months until the target go-live date, SBCCD needed the transition to be seamless to avoid further delays and additional costs.

“We had to move very quickly,” said Torres. “Resources were getting depleted; time was running out, and the team was growing increasingly concerned with the outcome. Stress had reached an unusually high level, and we all feared we would not achieve our objectives. The decision to transfer the project to Huron seemed very risky, but we needed to act.”



Regroup and Refocus. Understanding SBCCD's constraints, objectives and prior experience, Huron partnered with the college district to take advantage of a new delivery model for midsize higher education institutions. The solution was tailored to help SBCCD achieve its main goal: pass the county's audit and demonstrate the college's ability to proceed independently.

An on-site team of six dedicated Huron experts – including technical and reporting leads, a project manager and three functional leads – worked with SBCCD to accommodate the project's unique set of circumstances. The team's first priority was to develop the Oracle chart of accounts, the foundation of the infrastructure, so that the general ledger, procurement and accounts payable modules could be synced accordingly.

“It was critical to get the chart of accounts implemented first and promptly,” said Jessie Lum, senior director at Huron. “If we didn't get the chart of accounts finalized in time, we would delay the whole project.”

Huron provided the SBCCD team with the training and education they needed to complete the migration and rebuild their confidence in the transformation.

“Dedication and engagement are critical when undertaking a business transformation, and even more so when you've experienced delays and staff turnover,” says Lum. We had to bring the project to completion from a technical standpoint in a short period, while simultaneously rebuilding trust in the project to revive the troops, so to speak.”

Results

The migration went live in July 2018, on time and on budget. Through Huron's expertise, methodology, post-migration support and knowledge transfer — a crucial factor for small and midsize institutions — SBCCD has acquired the tools it needed to achieve several objectives:

- Compliance/Regulatory Enhancements
- Cost Savings
- Time Savings
- Administrative Efficiencies
- Growth Opportunities

“We are on the eve of celebrating our first 100 years providing affordable higher education and job training to our community,” said Torres. “By deploying Oracle Cloud in partnership with Huron, we have brought our business practices into the 21st century and reaffirmed our mission to serve students well into the future.”



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