

Workday and Georgetown University: Unified Administrative Operations

Georgetown University, founded in 1789, is a major international research university that includes four undergraduate schools, graduate programs, a law school and a medical school. Based in Washington, DC, the university employs 7,000 staff and faculty members and uses hundreds of contractors. In July 2010, Georgetown University became Workday's first customer in higher education.

Following a competitive review, Georgetown determined that Workday, delivered through a software-as-a-service (SaaS) model, was the best system for meeting its human resources (HR), payroll, and financial systems requirements. Those requirements include employee and manager self-service, automated paperless processes, on-the-fly HR and financial reports, a modern and secure system architecture, and deep integrations between HR and financial systems.

By choosing Workday, Georgetown University also receives numerous benefits not available with traditional, on-premise software applications. Georgetown gets automatic system updates, easily configurable processes, freedom from constant upgrades and customizations, and avoidance of high up-front software and hardware implementation costs and ongoing maintenance fees.

Kevin Murphy, interim CIO at Georgetown, says Workday provides significant cost savings compared with the on-premise software the university evaluated, and will allow IT employees that were focused on maintenance and customization of legacy applications to work on other projects more directly tied to the university's core academic mission.

“Workday will let us redirect IT resources to systems that directly create value for the Georgetown community.”

Kevin Murphy
Interim CIO at Georgetown



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Georgetown University

Private Research Institution
15,000 workers based in Washington, DC

Workday Solutions

- Human Capital Management, Benefits, Payroll
- Talent and Faculty Management
- Core Accounting, Budgeting & Planning, Spend Management
- Initiatives, Grants, Effort Reporting, Endowment Accounting
- Cloud Connect

Project Drivers

- Consolidation of the administrative Human Resources, Payroll and Financial operations into a unified shared service environment

Legacy Systems

- Genesys Human Resource/Payroll System
- PeopleSoft Financial System



The Search for Unified HR and Financials

Two years ago, Georgetown began the search for modern, unified human resources and financial systems to replace end-of-life systems with limited integration capability and functionality. It considered offerings by major software vendors, higher-education niche providers, and open-source solutions.

During months of close evaluation, Georgetown learned that in addition to the cost benefits of SaaS, Workday would meet or exceed its functional requirements for modern, unified human capital management, benefits, absence, payroll, talent and faculty management, financials, budget and planning, sponsored research, endowment accounting, and spend management systems.

“We are excited that we’ll be able to do an HR transaction and have the financial and budget information about that position,” says David Rubenstein, Georgetown University vice president planning and financial analysis and CFO for the University’s Medical Center. “We anticipate that it will really streamline the decision making and approval process since we won’t have to look at two different systems to do one transaction. That should be an enormous savings in terms of time, and I think it will prevent errors.”

Workday is Easy to Use

Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Mary Anne Mahin’s staff has started putting job description data into the job profiles available in Workday. “With Workday, we’ll create templates based on industry standards and other data about what jobs look like and how they’re paid. That will make it easier to create new jobs and determine how they should be paid,” she says.

“Workday is easy to use and configure, which helps very much with innovation and creativity in our department. It’s already sparked new ideas and new ways of looking at how we do things.”

Mary Anne Mahin
Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer

Georgetown’s legacy HR system requires employees to write descriptions of every new job, with no simple way to pull up historical information about similar jobs. Workday, Mahin says, will let HR staff spend more time on research and analysis of job roles and descriptions, and far less time on data input.

“The system allows us to put information together in better ways, and is so much more logical than what we currently have,” she says. The self-service capabilities in Workday will provide managers with individual and team views of their employees without the assistance of HR. Mahin expects that this capability, along with the reduction in data input, is going to create more growth and development opportunities for the HR staff.

Workday Is Global at the Core

Workday will bring together all of Georgetown's HR and benefits data in one place, says Chief Benefits Officer DeSantis. "Current systems have very bifurcated lines. As a result, our administrative systems have stopped us from doing things we want to do," he says. "We will no longer have to say, 'Oh, we can't do that because the system doesn't allow it.'"

For the first time, employees will be able to sign up for benefits and make family status and benefits changes online, eliminating the current process of reading about benefits on the Web, then filling out and submitting required paper forms. In addition, Workday will make it easier for DeSantis and others to develop personnel and benefits reports for compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. He says, "Until now, I've had to call the IT group and ask, 'How quickly can I get this report?'"

The Workday system is well equipped to handle Georgetown's growth, DeSantis adds. Georgetown learned the challenges of setting up an international facility when it opened a campus in Doha, Qatar, in the Middle East. Workday's centralized SaaS architecture and configurability will ease the rollout of HR, benefits, and other systems to additional global sites.

Workday Security Is State of the Art

Interim CIO Murphy says Georgetown did have some concerns about security of the SaaS model—which was new to the university—since software is located offsite in Workday's data centers, but those concerns disappeared following a full investigation of Workday's architecture, policies, and processes.

"We spent a lot of time making sure the controls were in place to mitigate any risk and worked closely with legal counsel to make sure Workday was compliant with government regulations," Murphy says. Rubenstein says on the security front, Workday's modern architecture is superior to alternatives reviewed by the university.

“Academics is very different from the for-profit world. Our community expects to work with people to get answers and reach a consensus, and Workday will provide a single system for members of our community to participate in decisions.”

Charles DeSantis
Associate Vice President for Benefits and
Chief Benefits Officers

Workday Collaborates with Higher Education

Georgetown University will collaborate with Workday, as a strategic design partner, to specify and design functions and features that particularly address the needs of higher education. That knowledge and experience will benefit Workday's future customers.

"It's a true partnership with Workday, and feels very much like we are hand-in-hand on this," says Charles DeSantis, associate vice president for benefits and chief benefits officer at Georgetown University. "Our current systems have limited our ability to innovate. We're very excited because Workday offers the promise and potential we never had."

"Now we get to be at the very forefront of delivery of Workday SaaS in the academic arena," DeSantis says. "We'll have cutting-edge, current software in a configurable system that wasn't available three or four years ago."

Georgetown plans to go live with Workday HCM and Payroll in 2011, followed by Workday Financials at a later date. Already, Georgetown personnel are delighted by what they're discovering in their initial use of Workday.

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