



How Huntingdon College Revolutionized Its **Registration & Admissions** Processes



About Huntingdon College

When it came time for a technology upgrade, Huntingdon College set out to find a true partner to help plan, launch and support its new [student information system](#). Located in Montgomery, Ala., Huntingdon College is a four-year college that offers liberal arts and pre-professional courses.

After a frustrating tenure on PowerCampus, Huntingdon College transitioned to Campus Cafe Software's integrated student information system in the summer of 2021.

Since activation, Huntingdon's users are submitting fewer requests for support and saving time using workflows, reporting tools and easy-to-navigate dashboards.

Key departments – including admissions, registration and financial aid – benefit from working from the same integrated data source and can share information campus-wide.

Location	Montgomery, Ala.
School Type	Non-Profit
Student Pop.	Approx 1,000
Accreditation	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
Credit Types	Undergraduate & Graduate
Old System	Ellucian PowerCampus
LMS Integration	Canvas
Go-Live Date	Summer 2021



By partnering with Campus Cafe Software, Huntingdon College created a **seamless flow of data** between **registration, admissions** and other **key departments**.

The Challenge

Find a cost-effective & customizable student information system.

To better serve its campus and growing student body, Huntingdon's leaders began the search for a more dynamic student information system. It needed to support operations campus-wide and be user-friendly for all stakeholders, from the IT pros to someone with no experience navigating student management software.

When Huntingdon was expanding and the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted in-person operations, school administrators began to feel the limitations of PowerCampus. The system was clunky to navigate; ill-equipped to store, manage and analyze data; and difficult to find and extract information.

Additionally, the onsite hosting and servers required maintenance and frequent upgrades, which became expensive and a drain on IT resources. It also limited Huntingdon's ability to offer seamless remote access to staff and students, and Ellucian's support team was unable to mitigate and manage the system's problems.

PowerCampus:

Challenges & Limitations

Not User-Friendly

The databases & functions were difficult to navigate

No Integrated CRM

Lacked the functionality to send communications to prospects or current students, & manage those contacts.

Limited Integrations

Inability to connect with preferred third-party software & apps.

Unreliable Service

The onsite system was vulnerable to disruptions during severe weather.

No Technical Support

Ellucian technical support would not log into the system or databases for support & troubleshooting.

Substandard Features

No ability to upload student schedules to coordinate & validate student registration.







Poor Remote Access

Challenging for students and employees to login and use the system when offsite.

Huntingdon College’s Wishlist

Anneliese Spaeth, Huntingdon College’s Vice President of Technology and a Professor of Math, spearheaded the project to source a new student information system. After meeting with stakeholders across campus, she developed a list of requirements to find Huntingdon’s best-fit student information system.

Huntingdon considered a few large vendors, including a newer version of PowerCampus, but Spaeth says they were all too expensive. Others vendors didn’t fit the needs of a single-campus college like Huntingdon, while another specialized in international schools. Other contenders offered an overwhelming amount of choices and customizations.

 Easy-to-Use	Prospects, students, parents, staff, faculty and administrators all needed an intuitive user interface.
 Integrated Software	The College needed data and information to flow between departments — like admissions, billing, registration and financial aid — without pulling from disparate systems.
 Scaleable	Customizable and able to meet the College’s future growth goals.
 Affordable	As a small college with less than 1,000 students, Huntingdon needed upfront and transparent pricing.
 Responsive Technology Partner	Quick turnaround for help tickets and one-on-one troubleshooting and support.
 Training	Help for staff, faculty and administrators learning to navigate a new software system.

“When you go with a company that’s **aligned** with your **values** and your **size**, they **pay the right amount of attention** to you.”

-Anneliese Spaeth
VP of Technology

The Solution

An integrated student information system built for a small college with a customer-service focus.

Spaeth expanded her search for a technology partner specializing in small and mid-sized colleges with a track record in higher education. She also needed a flexible system to scale with Huntingdon's current and future needs.

Campus Cafe, she says, checked all those boxes.

"The software hits that middle ground," she says. "It offers enough functionality that we can breathe a little bit, do what we need to do and also have some choices, but not too many where we'd have difficulty with some offices that wouldn't understand how the system works."

Here's how Huntingdon College's super-users are using the new student information system:

Registrar's Office

Scheduling workflows ensure students register for the right classes to satisfy the requirements of their major. Registrars can upload student schedules and sort data within the system. Spaeth says it has "revolutionized" registration and allowed the school to guarantee students they'll have a spot in classes they need.

Admissions

Spaeth and her team carefully configured the admissions workflows and databases. She says this was a critical feature because

admissions data flows into all other departments, including billing, financial aid and registration.

Additionally, Huntingdon's system administrators built custom workflows and activities so that information can be properly entered, stored, sorted and analyzed. Now Huntingdon's users, including faculty and departmental staff, can use the expansive search and sorting functionalities to quickly find information on students, courses and programs.

"The software-as-a-service side of Campus Cafe is something that cannot possibly be sold enough," says Spaeth.

IT Team

Huntingdon's IT staff work directly with Campus Cafe's technical support team to troubleshoot problems and quickly get answers to questions. Because the system is cloud-based, the technical team does not have to maintain servers, check security protocols, or upgrade software and hardware.

Back-Office Operations

Reliable data from the registration system helps the billing department manage student accounts. Staff can send alerts or communications from within the system and students or their parents can pay their bills directly from the self-service portal.

“The **service** side of Campus Cafe is something that cannot possibly be sold enough.”

-Anneliese Spaeth



A Customer-Service Approach

Spaeth describes Campus Cafe Software’s help desk and customer service team as “extremely responsive.”

When Huntingdon users submit tickets, she says the Campus Cafe support team responds quickly to remedy the situation. Spaeth says she frequently works with the same customer support representatives and that they’ve become familiar with Huntingdon’s system and its specific needs.

She also adds that Campus Cafe’s team often goes above and beyond what’s expected. When a staff member entered bad information into the system late on a Friday afternoon that caused problems, Campus Cafe’s technical support team jumped in to help, despite the late hour before a weekend.

But perhaps most importantly, says Spaeth, is that the two companies have a good cultural fit. Campus Cafe Software is large and experienced enough to have a proven track record and reliable product, but still small enough to be nimble and provide personalized, attentive service, she notes.

For example, Huntingdon’s leaders speak regularly with Campus Cafe Software’s senior management, and when they want new features added, the programming team is ready to help.

“When you go with a company that’s aligned with your values and your size, they pay the right amount of attention to you. Campus Cafe is the right fit for us,” says Spaeth.

The Results

A smooth implementation, high user adoption and less problems.

With Campus Cafe Software, Huntingdon is operating a system that pulls information from a single source of truth. Users save time with better data visibility, functionality, and and they're able to collaborate more efficiently with colleagues, students and faculty.

Huntingdon outlined a one-year-long plan for implementation, training and launch. It migrated most of its old data to Campus Cafe and Spaeth remarks that the process was smooth.

Huntingdon scheduled its transition during summer 2021, in part because fewer students were on campus and school administrators didn't need access to the enrollment system. In preparation, staff members participated in remote and on-site training. To maximize the sessions, Campus Cafe and Huntingdon tailored lessons for specific user groups, such as admissions, registration and IT.

"We would outline who they were going to work with and these are their challenges, the ways they understand things and how their minds work," Spaeth says. "It was excellent and effective."

Staff across departments, including admissions, registration, financial aid and billing, have adopted the system, as well as faculty and students. Eventually, Huntingdon plans to give parents access as well. The

“ If you do not get admissions right, nothing else is going to flow correctly [...]

We spent a lot of time creating activities and workflows and it was worth it.”

-Anneliese Spaeth



system is integrated with Huntingdon's Google services, so students can use one password across platforms.

So far, Spaeth says users have shared positive reviews of Campus Cafe's student information system. When Huntingdon used PowerCampus, she frequently fielded questions from users and had to help with technical support. Now, after migrating to Campus Cafe, she receives very few tickets. She says Campus Cafe's portal and navigation are much more user-friendly.

"The interface and what people see who are not technical is really important. You don't want it to be intimidating or too cluttered," Spaeth says. "Campus Cafe's user interface is very clean and easy to use."

Notably, since Campus Cafe is a [cloud-based student information system](#), the Huntingdon team doesn't have to worry about hosting and upgrading. Users can login remotely to the web-based Campus Cafe system from their desktops, tablets and mobile devices.

"I was spending so much time worrying about the old system. Would it break? Would people be able to connect to it?" Spaeth recalls. "Now I can be a system administrator solving problems for offices."

Advice for IT Staff & Administrators

With Campus Cafe Software up and running, Spaeth has some advice for IT staff and administrators.

- **Create standard data processes.** When every office defines their databases with different field terms, it's difficult to migrate the data to a new system in a uniform way.
- **Closely analyze data.** This helps identify inconsistencies in record keeping and information, such as majors and course lists so your team can avoid extra work.
- **Complete the training.** Make sure users across departments participate in and complete their training before the new system goes live.
- **Pay extra attention to admissions.** Since admissions is the lifeblood of any school, the information from prospective students and applicants will live on through a student's educational experience.



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