

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS CASE STUDY



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CCA and TouchNet Deploy Robust Payment and Access Control Infrastructure

CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

After emigrating from Germany to San Francisco, artisan and art teacher Frederick H. Meyer founded a “practical art school” in 1907 that has grown into a leading private, art college in the Bay Area known today as California College of the Arts (CCA). Serving approximately 1,600 students, CCA offers 23 undergraduate and 11 graduate programs that focus on the practice and critical study of art, architecture, design, and writing. In 2021 Payscale ranked CCA as the No. 1 Best Value Art College in the nation and third in Best Undergraduate Art Schools by Salary Potential. CCA tied for 10th in Best Fine Arts Programs in the most recent rankings from *U.S. News & World Report: Best Grad Schools*.

INITIAL CHALLENGES AND VENDOR SELECTION

In 2017 as California College of the Arts (CCA) began planning for its Workday Student deployment, the project team identified some unmet needs that required a solution outside of Workday's offerings. First, CCA did not have a way to collect online payments for goods and services outside of tuition payments. Students had to show up in person during office hours to make purchases from campus offices, including paying for books or fines at CCA libraries, buying art supplies from campus art studios, and paying to replace lost ID cards. The in-person transactions were inconvenient for both students and CCA staff. For example, if a student needed a replacement ID card, they faced a multistep process of going to the CCA business office to make a payment. After paying, they took their receipt to the CCA public safety department to get their replacement ID card. Nontraditional students especially needed online payment options since they were not often on campus. Further, CCA was consolidating two campuses into a single expanded campus in San Francisco and implementing new student housing and dining services for the first time. As part of the expansion, CCA required an access solution to enable students to enter dining halls and other buildings securely.

The CCA project team looked at both standalone best-of-breed solutions and comprehensive enterprise solutions that could address the multiple needs of cashiering, payment processing, and building access control.

Michelle Ziegmann, senior director of customer solutions in technology services at CCA, reports that she formed a team with CCA's at-the-time controller and VP for operations. They interviewed various departments and offices to gather an extensive list of payment and access control requirements. The project team looked at both standalone best-of-breed solutions and comprehensive enterprise solutions that could address the multiple needs of cashiering, payment processing, and building access control. The group narrowed its focus to two vendors that offered robust solutions covering CCA's broad spectrum of requirements. The CCA team sent its requirements list to the two vendors, inviting them on campus to perform demos for the various functional units at CCA. For example, the public safety team attended the ID card and access control demos, and CCA's student experience and business office staff joined payment functionality demos. The technology services team attended the technology infrastructure and integration-related demos.

The CCA community found TouchNet offered the most robust and well-integrated solutions and provided a modern user experience for students, enabling secure, mobile access to all services. Ziegmann notes that, as a small school with limited resources, it was important for

CCA to go beyond merely evaluating the vendor's technology and to also evaluate how the vendor planned to approach working with the college as a partner. The team was pleased to find that TouchNet prioritized understanding CCA's culture and requirements and committed to designing and building a robust integration between the TouchNet solutions and Workday Student. CCA signed a contract with TouchNet for TouchNet Bill+Payment, Marketplace, and Payment Plans in April 2018, and TouchNet OneCard VIP in November 2019.

IMPLEMENTATION

TouchNet immediately dedicated an integration lead who began working with CCA on the integration between the TouchNet solutions and Workday Student. After building the integration, TouchNet and CCA began deploying the three solutions in a tiered approach based on priority. TouchNet and CCA started with Bill+Payment, Marketplace, and Payment Plans in September 2018, which they launched together with Workday Student Financials in July 2019. Next, beginning in December 2019, the team deployed TouchNet OneCard VIP and set up the dining point of sale system, which went live in August 2020. TouchNet hosted user training alongside each deployment to ensure CCA staff were well-prepared to use the solutions by the go-live dates.

TouchNet solutions have drastically simplified payment processes for CCA students and staff by offering secure online payment options and centralizing all bills and payments in students' Workday Student accounts.

BENEFITS

Ziegmann reports that CCA is happy with how TouchNet built the Workday Student integration by reproducing the Workday Student accounts in TouchNet. The integration format has provided CCA the ability to use TouchNet Payment Plans. Vicki Breiting, director of student accounts, notes that TouchNet accommodated the college's existing financial policies in the new solution to enable a smooth transition for CCA business office staff. TouchNet also worked with CCA to thoroughly test all functionality before the go-live date, including charges, payments, and financial aid transactions. The team ensured the integration enabled students to view and pay their bills and create payment plans. TouchNet also ensured financial transactions were automatically posted to the general ledger and accounts receivable ledger. CCA's launch of the TouchNet solutions was successful due to the team's careful prep work. After launch, CCA only had one minor issue related to how estimated financial aid amounts in Workday Student Financial Aid appeared in the TouchNet platform, and TouchNet fixed the problem immediately.



Overall, the TouchNet solutions have drastically simplified payment processes for CCA students and staff by offering secure online payment options and centralizing all bills and payments in students' Workday Student accounts. Breiting reports that TouchNet's platform allows CCA to comply with audit requirements for different payment methods, automatically logging compliance-related details. Ian Pabellon, data analyst for student accounts, notes that the centralized payment system enables CCA offices to work together more efficiently. The college has configured the TouchNet solution to notify the appropriate CCA offices with confirmation emails when a student makes a payment.

Before deploying TouchNet, CCA issued refund payments to students by writing checks. The college now has more options for refunding students through direct deposit with ACH or a credit card if the student used the credit card originally to pay. CCA has run campaigns to encourage students to sign up for direct deposit, and staff now write significantly fewer refund checks. The college is also looking into companies that will integrate with TouchNet to provide better security measures around wire payments for its international students.

CCA previously leveraged a best-of-breed solution strategy before deploying its Workday and TouchNet solutions. The various best-of-breed standalone products required CCA's technology services team to build custom integrations, a resource-intensive process. The Workday and TouchNet deployments are part of CCA's new strategy to deploy cohesive, integrated enterprise systems that meet as many needs as possible. Ziegmann explains that with the best-of-breed product strategy, CCA bought specialized solutions with limited functionality to meet specific needs at the time. With its current enterprise solution strategy, CCA has reduced the number of different vendor products it uses. Instead, it has created a robust, well-integrated, and broad suite of tools with the Workday and TouchNet solutions that solve current problems and provide options for adapting to new undefined circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic was an example of a circumstance when the wide breadth of functionality in the Workday and TouchNet solutions provided the infrastructure for CCA to quickly adapt by moving as many student services online as possible, limiting face-to-face interactions. Ziegmann notes that the TouchNet Marketplace solution is especially helpful as CCA departments and offices come up with new e-commerce use cases. The TouchNet Marketplace supports a variety of functions, from selling school supplies to event registration.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an example of a circumstance when the wide breadth of functionality in the Workday and TouchNet solutions provided the infrastructure for CCA to quickly adapt by moving as many student services online as possible, limiting face-to-face interactions.



Amy Flaherty, associate director of administrative systems, works with CCA offices to deploy and configure TouchNet Marketplace payment tools to fit each use case.

REFERENCES

For this research, Tambellini interviewed Vicki Breiting, director of student accounts; Amy Flaherty, associate director of administrative systems; Ian Pabellon, data analyst for student accounts; and Michelle Ziegmann, senior director of customer solutions and technology services. Tambellini also used publicly available information.

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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.

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