

Training and Technology Support

The Banner human resources module is designed to store and track personal information and work assignments for all college employees and includes a payroll function that is designed to calculate and pay all employees. These systems are complex and require a complete understanding of how they interact with each other and the student and finance modules. Information Technology, HR, and Finance department staff members lack the training necessary to use Banner to design the business processes that would allow the college to process its own payroll. A complete redesign of business processes will be necessary to implement payroll and take the steps necessary to become either fiscally accountable or fiscally independent. Many college staff members perceive that the Banner training provided when the system was launched was inadequate. Training and assistance were abruptly interrupted, and many staff members have unanswered questions regarding the new applications.

The district's Information Technology Department staff members have not received adequate training and lack the experience required to respond to all user questions on Banner applications. IT staff members' ability to respond to user support questions will require them to be informed on the use of the applications. This has created a concern among staff members that payroll production would be at risk if adequate support resources are unavailable.

For reliable payroll production to occur over time, the respective Banner servers must be properly sized and regularly maintained. Server, operating system, and application software patches should be routinely tested and applied. Adequate power and cooling should be available in the data center, and backups of data should be maintained and tested. Test Banner environments should be available for users and IT staff to test new software and processes before being moved into production.

The college will need to provide ongoing professional development, training, proper system security protocols and standard reporting functionality to meet the full implementation standards for Banner.

The college will also need to devote resources to completing the training that is lacking in Banner, and in some cases, may need to change business processes or even reimplement Banner where certain ledgers have not been maintained.

Operational Data Store

One of the information assets the college has acquired but not fully implemented is the Operational Data Store (ODS), a data warehouse designed to be used with Banner. ODS is an effective system that needs to be installed, configured and continuously maintained. The staff has the ability to install, configure, and maintain the ODS. To create reports for end users, the college's Argos reporting tool will be needed. Training in the use of ODS and Argos will be necessary to enable comprehensive reporting of Banner data.

Because payroll is processed by the county office, the college has limited access to detailed payroll data. The ODS is an Oracle database and therefore not limited to hosting Banner data. The college should work with county office administrators to explore the possibility of downloading detailed payroll data from the county-office-hosted systems to the ODS. Availability of detailed payroll data in the ODS would improve the college's access to data for budgeting, making decisions, reconciling data, and reporting.