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Applicant test scores decoded for CU Denver Admissions office [1]

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Student recruitment is a critical cornerstone of university operations. Standardized tests are an important component of the student admissions application process and until recently, processing the many scores that come into the CU Denver admissions office every week was manual and cumbersome. Lennie Damrauer, Information Technology Coordinator in the CU Denver Admissions office, used to spend many hours each week processing test scores. A new automated process has alleviated much of this workload, freeing Damrauer to focus on other tasks.

Score notifications are sent throughout the week to each campus from the agencies that process the SAT, GRE, GMAT, ACT and TOEFL tests. Each campus has a set schedule per week when they can load their score files into Campus Solutions [3] to avoid creating multiple records for the same student. CU Denver's processing day is each Monday. In the past, on Denver's assigned day, Damrauer would sit at her desk, download her files, manually decrypt DecryptDecode [4] each file, load the records into Campus Solutions and then check for records requiring additional intervention.

Damrauer reached out to UIS for assistance with finding a way to automate the parts of this cumbersome manual process that could be automated. UIS's Mike Esposito, Production Services Professional, stepped up to assist. After learning Damrauer's requirements and consulting with Matthew Glover, UIS's CU-SIS [5] Admissions Application Manager on the Campus Solutions process, Esposito developed several jobs that run on the Campus Solutions application server that make the test score process more efficient.

With the new process, Damrauer loads the decrypted test score file into the Campus Solutions application server where it waits for CU Denver's Monday processing time. At 2 a.m., the automation begins. First, a job runs that concatenatesConcatenateLinks together words and/or numbers in a chain or series [6] the five test score file types. The concatenated files are then loaded into Campus Solutions, where a jobJobTask performed by a computer system [7] runs that analyzes biographic information about the student in the test records to unequivocally determine if that particular student already exists in Campus Solutions. If the job can't unequivocally determine if the student exists, it flags that record for human review. That's where the automation stops and the human effort comes into play.

“We needed help to automate what could be automated and without Mike’s persistence and attention to detail, we never would have gotten off the ground,” says Damrauer. “There will always be a need for a human to make decisions. Mike helped us automate everything possible that does not require human judgment except getting the files from the agency servers and that step is planned for the future.”

The automation to automatically pull test scores from the agencies manually is planned for the near future. Viet Phan, Server Administrator with UIS’s Enterprise Cloud Services team, has already written a script fully automating pulling the GMAT file down from the agency and loading it to Campus Solutions, showing it could be done. Automating the remaining five test files is the next goal.

UIS is excited to partner with our campus customers to develop efficiencies that improve productivity for students, faculty and staff. Thank you, Lennie, for the opportunity to collaborate on this innovation!

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