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UCCS Wins Innovation Award for New VA Module [1]

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The University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) recently won a $1,000 cash prize at the CU Innovation & Efficiency Award for integrating their Veterans Benefit Module with OnBase.

The annual CU Innovation & Efficiency Award highlights the innovations and creative problem solving of CU employees. This project was nominated for efficiency, time saving and subsequent cost savings.

Prior to this implementation, UCCS and the Department of Veteran's Affairs had some difficulties tracking the campus' more than 1,400 veteran students. A new OnBase form integrated into Campus Solutions resolved this issue – eliminating manual entry, establishing a workflow and reducing errors that kept qualified students from receiving benefits in a timely manner.

UCCS receives over $5 million per term from VA funding, so it is critical that it adheres to VA standards.

Prior to the implementation, the campus administered veterans' benefits via paper forms or a Google doc turned into the Office of Veterans and Military Student Affairs and Student Financial Services. While 2014 OnBase update included a delivered module, it was unusable out of the box due as UCCS would have had to manually populate the Veteran Benefit Summary page for each student, each term.

UCCS teamed up with University Information Systems (UIS) to automate this process.

Now, students request benefits through an OnBase form in the student portal (Campus Solutions).

A nightly process pulls the data directly from the submitted form, and ties it to student records. This new process provides greater customer service and support to the veteran student population, aligns with VA and UCCS regulations, and requires less time and effort.

Program award submission details:

Who?

UIS Student System and Enterprise Content Services teams worked with the UCCS Office of Veteran and Military Student Affairs and UCCS Student Financials on this project, totaling over 175 hours of work, with the majority at UCCS.

When?

The Veterans Benefits Module enhancement began in 2015 and went live in October 2017, before spring term registration began.

What?

The enhancement uses an OnBase form submitted by each student, which integrates with Campus Solutions and automatically updates the module's fields. This allows UCCS to generate reports and easily track students using VA benefits. Before, the paper-focused, manual process sometimes delayed student benefits and created a financial burden.

Now, students can easily find the form in their student portal, which directly ties it to their SID and student email. UCCS also created an OnBase workflow to track students through the benefits process and send automatic emails, as needed. This change has saved time, increased accuracy and allowed UCCS to provide better customer service and more timely benefit processing.

Why?

The OnBase form cannot get lost, and it pre-populates some fields so the information is accurate. In addition, new query capabilities have increased accuracy and reduced time spent compiling data for reporting requirements.

Where?

The Veterans Benefits Module with the OnBase integration is currently only in use at UCCS. CU Denver and CU Boulder are looking to adopt the new process in the future.

This project sparked other initiatives between the student system and Enterprise Content Services, including other ad-hoc automated integrations. Watch a short video and see the CU Innovation & Efficiency Award official submission here [3].

See the full list of winners here [4].

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