

## **UIS assists CU Boulder in successful Buff Portal launch** <sup>[1]</sup>

February 21, 2020 by [UIS Communications](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

The Buff Portal, the new University of Colorado Boulder online student portal experience, went live in December 2019. UIS assisted in developing this new, modern platform for delivering student information.

Buff Portal's comprehensive, one-stop-shop experience enhances how CU Boulder students find the resources they need to succeed and thrive.

Buff Portal is the first major deliverable in a campus-wide effort to create a more seamless online and in-person experience for CU Boulder students. Through an iterative in-house design process, the CU Boulder project team closely collaborated with students and staff to quickly respond to feedback about the campus's ever-changing needs. The result: A positive student response to Buff Portal, with students describing it as an intuitive tool that simplifies CU processes.

As the project team received feedback, UIS diligently collaborated with the CU Boulder project team to make student requests a reality.

"We're so grateful to our colleagues at UIS for their incredible help getting this ambitious project off the ground, and we look forward to much more collaboration in the months and years ahead as we continue to unify the student experience on Boulder campus," said Paul O'Brian, program manager for Student Services at the CU Boulder.

The UIS Integrations team partnered with the CU Boulder team to design and build application programming interfaces (APIs), which deliver enterprise data to the new Buff Portal every time a student logs in. These APIs were developed iteratively, and the two teams worked together to rapidly fix bugs and add new data and functionality as needed. Over 3 million separate data requests were processed through these APIs during spring startup.

The UIS Portal team created a new PeopleSoft portal. They worked with the CU Boulder team to design its branding so they had a clean, elegant way to display Campus Solutions self-service components as seamlessly as possible: Campus Solutions components would open in a new browser window, wrapped in the minimal branding of the new portal, so it looked like an extension of the Buff Portal.

The UIS Portal team also provided analysis, development and implementation support for the PeopleSoft iScript functions and deep links that were integrated into the Buff Portal to maintain backward compatibility to the previous Boulder student portal, MyCUInfo, including OnBase forms that are pre-populated with student info upon opening. They also facilitated crucial single-sign-on (SSO) experiences to provide access to student payment and research conflict of interest reporting tools.

The CU-SIS development team provided analysis and support throughout the project, initially exploring embedding Campus Solutions content in the Buff Portal window, and later supporting the separate new window approach. The team created a new framework for targeting deep links into Campus Solutions components, bypassing the initial pages such as term selection or aid year selection. Additionally, development created a specific landing page for student profile data and Law school bidding and modified the Appsian PeopleUX interface to customize behavior for the Buff Portal. During the production release phase, the CU-SIS development team helped debug critical issues related to SSO between Buff Portal and Campus Solutions and corrected problematic sign-out behavior.

The Identity Management team provided analysis, development and implementation support for firewall changes, SSO and integrations. The Identity Management team also helped the CU Boulder team work through the intricacies of ensuring smooth interactions between Boulder and UIS Ping authentication services, as well as proper PeopleSoft role and security settings, ensuring users saw the materials they should see.

The Quality Assurance (QA) team provided load testing services and support. This included scheduling load testing along with the coordination of the QA test environment and scripting tools.

The Infrastructure team provided performance and load balancing support during the load testing cycles. They also upgraded the Front Range GigaPop (FRGP) network to increase UIS processing site bandwidth to campus customers and internet services that enhanced the throughput performance of the Buff Portal integrations with Campus Solutions.

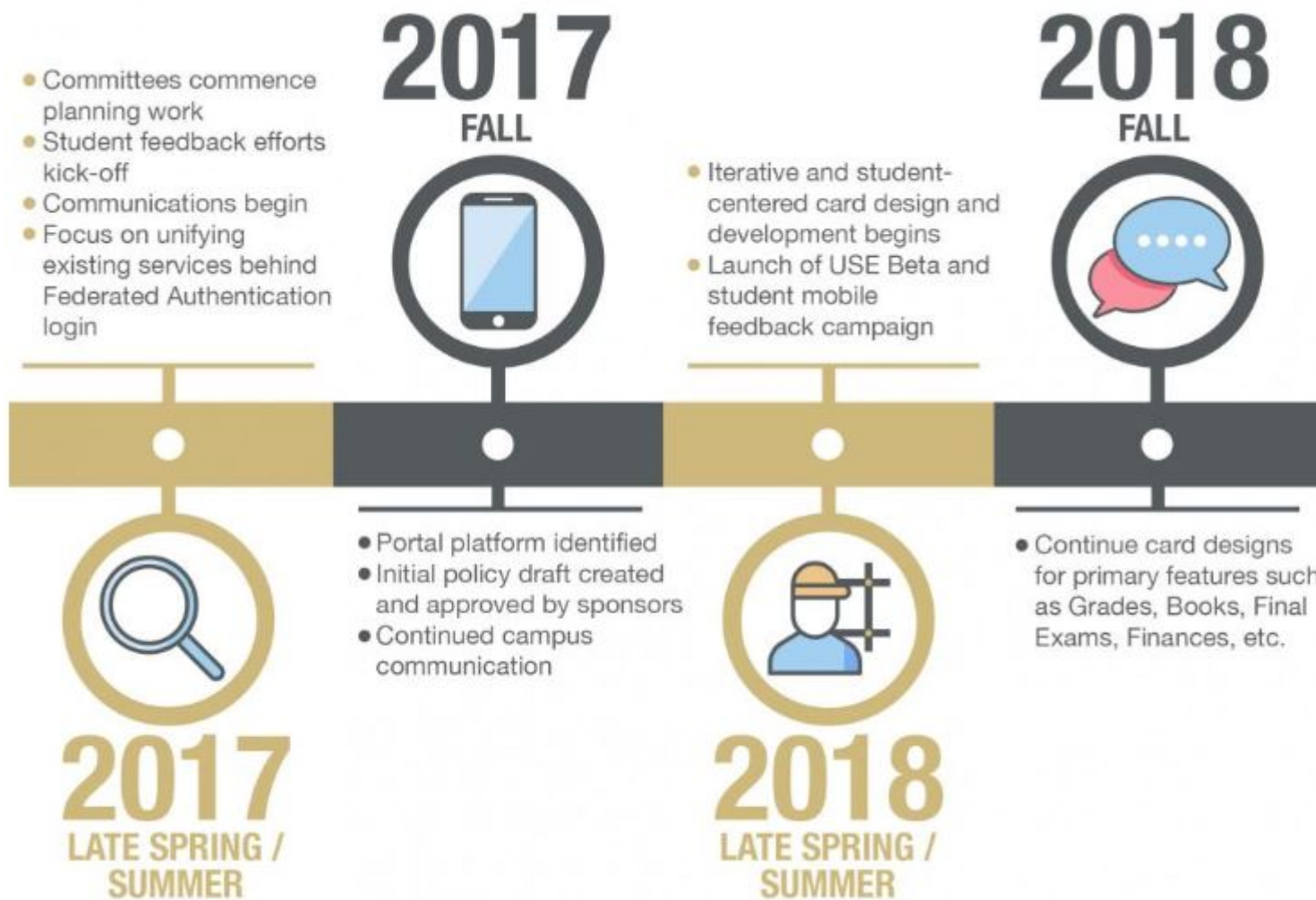
The Project Management Office served as a touchpoint through which issues on either side could be routed, which greatly simplified complicated interactions. In addition, they advised the UIS leadership team during biweekly status meetings, escalated risks and issues to the project sponsor and coordinated development activities with the Office of Information Technology project manager at CU Boulder.

Executive and director-level support for this project from UIS was described as “staunch and dependable” by CU Boulder. They provided risk and issue mitigation escalation support, UIS technology decisions, and strategic planning and coordination with CU Boulder leadership team.

The launch of Buff Portal was free of crises, thanks in part to the support CU Boulder received from UIS.

## **Overall timeline**

Below is a timeline of the Buff Portal project provided by CU Boulder <sup>[3]</sup>:



Buff Portal <sup>[4]</sup>

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