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UIS, campus collaboration fosters learning without borders [1]

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More than 12,000 international students and scholars study and work on the University of Colorado's four campuses each year. A collaborative project between UIS and campus international offices is helping to make studying or working aboard easier to arrange and manage.

The international student and scholar offices assist international students and employees in everything from initial visa issuance to compliance tracking throughout their time with CU. Their software helps to manage this complex process as well as strict reporting requirements to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

UIS partnered with these departments to replace the International Student & Scholar Management (ISSM) application. The new application, Sunapsis, will allow ISSS offices to report and track foreign national students and scholars while keeping them engaged with CU and increase efficiency using a robust workflow functionality.

Its implementation presented a higher degree of difficulty than most, as Sunapsis runs on a different architecture than most UIS-serviced products. UIS worked alongside campus partners to learn a new product that completely shifted the way these offices do business – for the better. In total, UIS teams logged over 1,400 hours to learn new skill sets and develop new integrations.

"A really important end result of this project is that the CU international student and scholar offices, UCD, UCB, UCCS, UIS and Boulder's International English Center (IEC) developed as a more cohesive, system wide team," said Maria Zellar Maxim, assistant director SEVIS Compliance ISSS at University of Colorado Boulder. "We've been colleagues for years but we are a team now."

When Sunapsis went live on February 5th, the new system's benefits were immediately apparent. It automatically prioritizes and guides offices to work that has been created, from new student applications to changes in personal student information, and navigates them through processing steps. It also updates government systems in real time, as opposed to nightly batch updates.

"It was vital that the campuses collaborated very closely with UIS for implementation of Sunapsis; not only for a smooth transition of business processes but for immigration compliance," said Nathanial Lynch, the senior international services specialist at the CU Denver | Anschutz International Affairs office. "Success in this project has already shown fruit within a month of our go-live. I look forward to continued collaboration and refinement of

Sunapsis with UIS as a partner.”

In the near future, UIS will activate the Sunapsis student portal to allow for the secure, streamlined communication between CU’s international population, hiring departments and ISSS offices. The portal also allows prospective and current students to quickly, securely provide necessary documentation, initiate requests and view their current status.

Additional enhancements are being examined now that Sunapsis is in place.

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