ERP Implementation in Higher Education:
An Account of Pre-Implementation and Implementation Phases

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems long have been known as systems that bring integration to numerous business activities within complex organizations. However, in today’s contemporary organizations, ERP systems are becoming a standard information system, irrespective of size and nature of the business. This case focuses on the implementation of an ERP system in higher education. The case covers the key stages of implementation. Particular emphasis is placed on the selection of the ERP system and the organizational dynamics involved. The implementation of the first two modules and the views of users are discussed. The depth of the case can enable managers to understand the complexity of an ERP system selection and the organizational issues involved. The analysis of the case sheds light on the activities involved in ERP projects and what to expect during the implementation stage.

Keywords: academic administration IS; business process re-engineering; enterprise resource planning; higher education; process improvement; IS project selection; IS/IT planning; system selection

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Agora University

This case is about an ERP implementation effort at Agora University, a private co-educational university in the midwest USA (see Table 1). While the following school statistics might seem impressive, they only reflect the challenges facing the university in order to maintain high standards and to remain competitive. There must be continuous efforts to ensure that the univer-
sity remains in the league of best universities without putting undue financial burden on the students. As with any organization, the most viable solution is to improve efficiency and to lower cost through an improvement of internal operations.

The University is headed by a president and supported by seven vice presidents:

- The Academic Vice President and Provost heads up all academic and faculty affairs.
- The Senior Vice President for Financial Administration heads up the human resources and financial affairs areas.
- The Vice President for Mission and Ministry is responsible for mission and ministry and promotion of the Jesuit tradition of the university.
- The Administrative Vice President is responsible for government and community relations.
- The Vice President for University Relations is responsible for the office of marketing and public relations, all phases of Agora’s development efforts, alumni relations, and special events.
- The Vice President for Student Development supervises campus dining, discipline, security, student development assessment, and student activities.
- The Vice President for Information Resources heads up the division of information resources (see Figure 1) and provides leadership to enable the university to progress in the use of technology and information resources in order to enhance the teaching and learning environment, supports scholarly activity, and improves service and productivity.

Information Systems and Services Division

The Information Systems and Services (ISS) division is responsible for the management and administration of information technology at Agora University. The division is headed by an