

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS
CASE STUDY



NBCCD Achieves Academic Process Efficiencies with RIO Education

NEW BRUNSWICK COLLEGE OF CRAFT & DESIGN

New Brunswick College of Craft & Design (NBCCD) is a public art college in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. The school was founded in 1950 and has evolved its handicraft and art training offerings over time. In 1985, business courses became a mandatory component of the NBCCD curriculum to advance the College's mission of empowering learners to forge sustainable creative careers. NBCCD's curriculum encourages students to develop their art, craft, and design skills while learning to display, photograph, write about, market, price, and sell their work.

NBCCD serves approximately 250 students with diploma and certificate programs that provide a firm foundation for professional practice. First-year students earn a one-year

Foundation Visual Arts certificate, exploring cross-disciplinary art principles and gaining experience in NBCCD's studios. Graduates of Foundation Visual Arts (or applicants who demonstrate equivalent qualifications) enter a diploma program in their studio of choice.

NBCCD SELECTS RIO EDUCATION STUDENT SYSTEM

As NBCCD approached the end of its contract with its legacy student system vendor, College stakeholders took the opportunity to reassess their options. The legacy system's lack of flexibility and inability to integrate with other campus systems had given rise to many manual processes. For example, instructors took attendance and issued grades in a separate browser-based solution, and NBCCD administrators regularly imported the information into the student system. When faculty did not submit grades on time, staff manually entered them individually. The legacy system's reporting functionality was also clunky and inflexible, and NBCCD staff were often unable to deliver the data and reports their colleagues requested.

In 2021, NBCCD began to explore the student system market, launching a procurement process in alignment with the Government of New Brunswick's central IT group to gather the College's requirements and publish an RFP for a modern student system. WDCi Group's RIO Education student system proposal stood out as the team evaluated vendor submissions. The RIO platform fulfilled NBCCD's needs as a fully integrated, comprehensive student lifecycle solution built on Salesforce CRM. Some of the Registrar's Office team had leveraged Salesforce at previous institutions and were familiar with the CRM's flexible structure and capabilities. Since RIO integrates with other products in the Salesforce ecosystem, the NBCCD team was confident that the extensible platform could support the College into the future. NBCCD signed a contract with WDCi Group at the end of 2021 to implement RIO Education.

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NBCCD IMPLEMENTS RIO IN FOUR MONTHS

NBCCD Registrar Candace Hare joined the College in April 2022, taking on the previous Registrar's role as project manager for the RIO implementation. She was supported by a team of leaders from NBCCD's administrative departments and an IT project manager from the Government of New Brunswick's IT group. The team met with WDCi developers weekly to outline the College's requirements for program administration, admissions, enrollment,



finance, and data migration. RIO is a flexible system with many configuration options, and to streamline the implementation, the NBCCD team initially focused on standing up the platform with basic out-of-the-box functionality, limiting configurations.

NBCCD started the RIO student system implementation at the beginning of April 2022 and planned to go live before the beginning of the academic year in September, just before the College's legacy student system contract ended. In spring 2022, the College migrated its student and course schedule information from the legacy system to RIO and set up a sandbox environment to test the functionality. NBCCD tested RIO with end-users in June and went live at the end of summer 2022. Throughout the implementation, WDCi trained the College project team on the functionality available in each RIO module.

RIO ROLLOUT

Before NBCCD launched RIO, Hare created short screencast video tutorials to support student and faculty onboarding. The tutorials walked learners through each step of using the RIO portals. The Registrar's Office sent emails introducing the new RIO student portal with links to the demonstration videos. The WDCi team committed to supporting NBCCD's first course enrollment in RIO by being available on call to support the fall 2022 enrollment period.

Hare notes that there was a slight learning curve for existing students who were accustomed to the previous course enrollment process, and staff and instructors took time during the first enrollment period to review student lists and confirm that students had enrolled correctly in their desired courses. Hare says that user issues were easy to resolve, and after leveraging the new RIO process for fall enrollment, instructors remarked that the winter term course enrollment process was smooth.

SUMMER 2023 PROJECT STATUS

Overall, the NBCCD team was pleased with the streamlined implementation process and their ability to agilely implement and launch RIO in time for students to self-enroll in courses for the fall 2022 term. Hare says it would have been nice to have a longer implementation timeline to explore configuration options before going live, but it was more important to the College to launch the new solution at the beginning of the school year, when students were fresh and more open to a new enrollment process.

As of summer 2023, NBCCD has completed an entire admissions cycle in RIO, and the project team is configuring the system to better align with their specific operations. Hare says that she has enjoyed learning about RIO's functionality through the wealth of self-service



information and training materials WDCi provides to its customers. She also reports that when she has needed further support, WDCi has been highly responsive. Recently, Hare worked with colleagues to set up new program maps for the 2023/2024 academic year. She has also configured the course offerings to include integrated fees that automatically post to a student's account when they enroll.

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Leveraging RIO requires licensing the underlying Salesforce CRM, and WDCi offers different licenses for administrators, faculty, and students. NBCCD has purchased approximately 25 Administrator licenses for administrative staff in the Registrar's and Admissions Offices. NBCCD also purchased Faculty Community licenses for all instructors, which grant faculty access to student records and contact information. Students have Student Community licenses that give them student portal access. Hare notes that NBCCD has shifted the Administrator licenses around to ensure staff have adequate information access. Some staff found they would rather access information through routinely run reports and did not need their licenses, while others were more eager to leverage the system's self-service functionality.

While NBCCD primarily works with WDCi for RIO support, the College also has Salesforce contacts for Salesforce-specific questions or requests. The Government of New Brunswick has also assigned an IT systems administrator (SA) who completed a Salesforce training series covering reporting structures and back-end operational and administrative functions in the Salesforce CRM to support NBCCD. As NBCCD's RIO superuser, Hare works with the SA to explore new functionality and implement configurations in RIO. Hare says that the benefit of implementing a solution native to Salesforce is that she can often figure out how to resolve issues using the online resources Salesforce offers or other free resources from the Salesforce user community.

RIO ENABLES ACADEMIC PROCESS EFFICIENCIES

NBCCD faculty, staff, and students appreciate the convenience of RIO's self-service portal functionality, real-time information access, and academic process automation. Instructors use the RIO instructor portal to enter attendance and grades. Academic advisors use the RIO advising portal to see their assigned advisees and supporting information like students' grades, attendance, and schedules.

When the Admissions team approves an applicant's college application, RIO automatically enrolls the student in their selected program and generates a list of required courses for them. When students log in to the RIO student portal during enrollment, they see what courses are available in real time and self-register for courses. After completing their first-year certificates, students apply to diploma programs through the same student portal. In the past, approving student program enrollment, providing student course lists, and enrolling each student in their courses were manual, time-consuming processes performed by College staff.

Hare says that the self-service portals and process efficiencies RIO affords have come at a critical time for NBCCD. As the College is growing, it is increasingly vital for administrative staff to have student information at their fingertips and the availability to respond to student inquiries and requests. Now that more academic processes occur in a central system, student information is captured and readily available to support student services. Hare has found RIO's reporting structure to be very flexible, and since learning it, she has been able to run reports on a wide variety of data points to fulfill her colleagues' information requests.

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REFERENCES

Tambellini interviewed New Brunswick College of Craft & Design Registrar Candace Hare for this research. Tambellini also used publicly available information.

Photo Credits

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The purpose of this report is to provide higher education institutions with information about the objectives, solutions, and outcomes related to the utilization of technology in colleges and universities across the US.

The Tambellini Group thanks New Brunswick College of Craft & Design for approving this report and the quotes herein.

We thank everyone who has participated in making this report available.

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