

## Send e-transcripts to save money, speed delivery

If you've put off implementing e-transcripts because you are concerned about costs, IT headaches, or lack of a common data format among institutions, it might be time to reconsider.

And if your institution is part of a larger system or network of colleges, contracting for services as a group could make the process easier and less costly.

Besides advantages to your institution, e-transcripts provide convenience and fast delivery for students. In the current competitive job market, getting a transcript into the hands of a potential employer quickly could make the difference for students seeking jobs, said Milissa Becker. She's network director for academic services for the Globe Education Network.

Officials at the Minnesota School of Business, Globe University and Utah Career College, the three institutions in the Globe network, are implementing Docufide's e-transcript exchange program for their 20 campuses. As members of the Career College Association, they are taking advantage of the member discount the association worked out with Docufide.

Globe officials were exploring e-transcript options when the agreement was made, Becker said. Docufide provided the convenience, price and security officials wanted, she said. The CCA agreement helped them

make the decision, Becker said. Career college students have unique needs, and Docufide understood them, she added.

The Globe colleges already received transcripts through Docufide because Minnesota's high schools use the vendor. That end of the process had gone well, giving Globe officials confidence that sending transcripts through Docufide would also be a smooth process, Becker said.

Communication, both with Docufide and within the Globe network, has been critical to making sure the implementation goes smoothly, Becker said. It was important for Docufide officials to understand Globe's three-tiered organization, she said.

And internal communication helped officials at the three institutions understand how the system would work and what the benefits were. E-mails, conference calls and Webinar-type sessions reminded them that the system was being implemented and kept them posted on the progress.

The deans of students at each campus received regular updates through conference calls every other week. Those deans, who oversee functions including the registrar, passed the information on to staff members on their campuses who would be sending and receiving e-transcripts.

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### Coordinated effort provides technology boost

Officials at individual colleges don't have much bargaining power when it comes to implementing new technology. But the Career College Association made sending transcripts electronically a more practical option for its 1,400 member institutions. CCA officials made an agreement with Docufide that provided members with a discount on sending electronic transcripts.

The response among CCA institutions has been enthusiastic, said John O'Connell, senior vice president of business development at Docufide. He attributes the initiative's success to its timing. E-transcripts use has become common enough that institutions that do not use the technology are at a disadvantage, he said. A similar phenomenon occurred with electronic applications a few years ago, he added.

E-transcripts are more secure than printed ones sent through the mail. And they cost less, O'Connell said.

Under the arrangement, e-transcripts cost CCA member institutions \$850 for a three-year contract. That includes implementation, training and support. The students pay \$2.55 to send a transcript electronically and \$4.25 to use the Docufide system to print

and mail a transcript.

The Docufide system captures information directly from the institution's student information system, O'Connell said. Docufide staff members create any needed crosswalks to put the data in the format.

Once the preparations are complete, the software takes about 20 minutes to install. Institution staff members then see a Docufide printer option.

That option delivers transcripts to Docufide's secure server for delivery. Data can be transmitted using EDI, XML or PDF formats. Transcripts that need to be mailed are printed on watermarked security paper. Next-day delivery is available.

Docufide can also e-mail links to third parties so that they can view transcripts. This function can be used to send the documents to employers, O'Connell said.

About 1,000 institutions are registered to receive Docufide e-transcripts, O'Connell said. There is no cost to register to receive them. Particularly for institutions that use document imaging and maintain admissions files electronically, having the transcripts in an electronic format is a huge time and money saver, he added. ■