Case Study

Kwantlen Polytechnic Manages Its Printed Course Catalog in OU Campus™

Key Takeaways:

- Course catalogs can be managed solely in OU Campus or by exporting data from student information systems
- OU Campus customizable templates give users an easy-to-follow guide for adding content to a structured catalog layout
- OU Campus' Multi-Channel Output feature keeps all versions (e.g., web and print) of a course catalog consistent

Kwantlen got its start as a 2-year community college and later became Kwantlen University College, established by the government of British Columbia in 1981. Now as Canada's newest and most innovative polytechnic institution, Kwantlen Polytechnic University is committed to serving its communities by developing degree programs and other applied credentials that will benefit its students as well as contribute to the existing employment market. The university's dedication to instruction, research, and innovation spans its four high-tech campuses located in Surrey, Richmond, Cloverdale, and Langley, where more than 17,500 students attend annually.

Lost in Transition

Along with the transformation into a polytechnic university, Kwantlen had the major task of changing how its course catalog (known as its "Academic Calendar") was regulated. Over the years, the catalog found its way under the jurisdiction of the Marketing department, where it functioned as a web-based document. Its maintenance made for wasted efforts and inconsistencies.

In addition, Kwantlen's web content management system (CMS) was unstructured, slow, and did not support multi-channels for the catalog, such as print. As a result, recruitment staff would pull numerous pages from the Marketing department's web publication of the catalog, convert them into a Word document, format the document, and send it off to the printer. Changes made to the online catalog rarely made it into the print version. Thus, the print version was often inaccurate and unreliable.

> *Kwantlen's old web CMS was unstructured, slow, and did not support multi-channels, such as print.*

Warren Stokes, the university's Director of Registration and Student Information Systems, was challenged with convincing the university administration that they needed a new course catalog — a static, PDF-based document — under the charge of the registrar and managed through an efficient CMS. Administration agreed that a new CMS was needed to properly manage the course catalog, so the hunt for a new system began.

Program Building from the Ground Up

It was imperative to Kwantlen that the new CMS easily output the catalog to PDF for printing. During the search, CMS providers would each struggle with Warren's question: "How do I get the catalog to print?" That's until he was introduced to OmniUpdate's OU Campus™ CMS solution at the 2011 SunGard Summit.

OmniUpdate®
Empower Web Excellence

OU Campus had everything Warren needed to manage Kwantlen's catalog. He provided the catalog requirements to the implementation team at OmniUpdate, who then developed three templates in OU Campus for managing the catalog:

Template 1: Unstructured for regulatory content (e.g., parking, IT, and tuition rates)
Template 2: Moderately structured for defined program content (e.g., program admission and graduation requirements)
Template 3: Highly structured for course content (e.g., course rubrics, titles, descriptions, and prerequisites)

The templates offer simple and uniform options that maintain a consistent look and feel when the catalog is rendered. The OmniUpdate team also created an editing environment for Kwantlen using the OU Campus MultiEdit™ feature, which allows Warren to create highly structured data. Using MultiEdit, Warren can extend the ability to edit specific sections of a page to a broader audience for which that page is associated.

Once the templates were created, Warren's staff was set to start managing pages in OU Campus that could be exported to a PDF for printing using the OU Campus Multi-Channel Output feature. However, before they could move forward, a new challenge was uncovered.

Re-Inventing the Data Wheel

During the new catalog implementation process, Kwantlen discovered there were no existing descriptions in their student information system (SIS), Ellucian's Banner®, from which they could easily pull and import into OU Campus. What's more, course data could not be converted with a script and, therefore, had to be copied and pasted or even rewritten in some cases. Furthermore, because the content was left unregulated for so long, it was essentially obsolete. No course was ever discontinued. Kwantlen had a total of 10,000 courses — some active, some not.

> *Students now have instant access to a full PDF of the catalog, an A–Z list of programs and courses, and an archive of previous years' catalogs, all rendered through OU Campus.*

After a lengthy process of manually inputting all the course data into OU Campus, Kwantlen was able to publish their new course catalog in late October 2011. It took all of 90 seconds to generate using OU Campus. Now, Warren and his team can go into the CMS and effortlessly make changes to the catalog. In addition, they can easily turn on and off courses or programs and run reports to show what courses are active for comparison with their SIS.

Kwantlen's students now have instant access to a full PDF of the current year's catalog, an A–Z list of programs and courses, and even an archive of previous years' catalogs, all rendered through OU Campus. They also are able to access a catalog for the upcoming academic year, which acts as a living document with changes being made as needed; thus, up-to-date information is available for recruits without compromising the current year's catalog. The new course catalog has received positive reactions from the faculty, who now have space for their ever-changing curriculum.
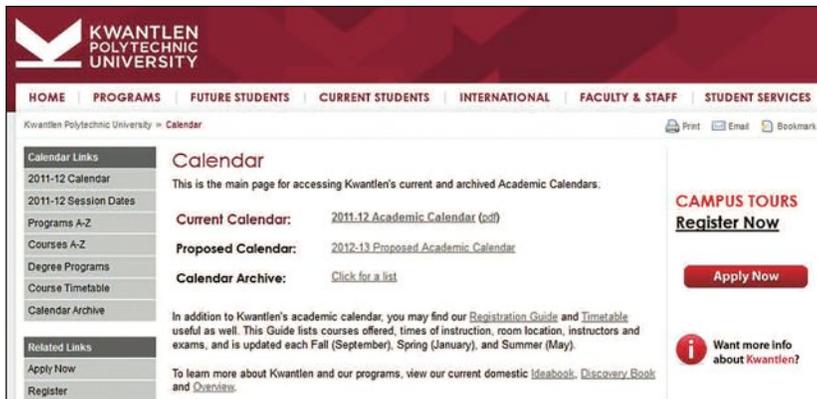
OU Campus Lays Foundation for Significant Change

With a fully functional course catalog using OU Campus, Kwantlen is able to focus on making their SIS the single authoritative source for all course content. In time, they will be able to seamlessly export the course XML data from Banner into OU Campus. Kwantlen is eager to rollout future course catalog endeavors with OmniUpdate, including output for mobile devices.