Case Study

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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In 2013, the University of Arizona was looking for new tools and strategies to manage their annual reviews online. The university was collecting information about faculty credentials, activities and accomplishments as part of annual reviews, but the information on publications, mentoring and outreach was filed away in departments. The university needed a central, coordinated system to save faculty and administrators time, leverage data to document the university's impact, and avoid spending excessive time gather-ing CV info for accreditation and program reviews.

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>
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Lack of a central system: identifying the challenges

University of Arizona's challenges centered around two issues:

1. First, there was no comprehensive strategy for managing faculty data from annual reviews over all academic units. The university had collected faculty information for annual faculty reviews in different systems, different formats, and different locations. For example, four colleges had independent online systems (built in-house) that collected field-based data, while other colleges collected non-parsed data in the form of hardcopy CVs. The various systems existed because solutions were compartmentalized within the academic organizational structure instead of being organized centrally.

2. Second, there was no comprehensive strategy that dictated the scope of faculty data collected. Faculty received independent data requests that focused on a single issue at a time. Data requests lacked coordination because the university had not comprehensively determined the faculty data needed to serve all internal and external stakeholders.

Identifying these challenges, the university established a plan to collect faculty data from internal and external sources in a central repository to support comprehensive usage. Most notably, UA focused on data to support annual faculty review processes and other performance evaluations (like promotion and tenure), as well as being able to report on the impact of faculty contributions to business, state, and community partners.

Getting off the ground

The significant component to implementation was UA's selection of Interfolio's faculty activity reporting solution, Faculty180, for all faculty members to collect and report aspects of faculty teaching, research and service contributions. Once collected, this information could support faculty review processes and provide a searchable database of faculty collaborations. Key features of the system were its comprehensive scope (covering all the faculty in the university), and central coordination by an executive sponsorship team and an implementation team with broad representation across the institution. Dr. Tom Miller, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs at the University of Arizona and executive sponsor of the project, indicated numerous benefits from the partnership.

"We are working to build a comprehensive faculty information system that is being fed by faculty members' annual reports," Dr. Miller said. "As is inevitable in such complex projects, we faced challenges in mapping the information and displaying it in an intuitive manner. Interfolio has been a very responsive and innovative collaborator in addressing those challenges."

Spelling out the benefits

Dr. Miller also communicated to stakeholders a clear return on investment for the University of Arizona after implementing Interfolio Faculty180, including:

1. Assessments of Economic and Community Impact: Before implementation, the university did not have a comprehensive source to document the impact of faculty service, outreach, and commercialization activities. Faculty180 provides information on the work of faculty with NFPs, businesses, and schools and other federal and state agencies that is not currently available. This information provides a comprehensive accounting of the economic and social impacts of the university.

2. Program Reviews and Strategic Investments: Interfolio Faculty180 fills the gaps in the publication data provided through other sources, which do not fully cover the range of scholarly and creative contributions in liberal arts and fine arts disciplines. Faculty180 also documents the service, economic and community impact of units and provides a vehicle for archiving related presentations, data sets, and reports. Faculty members' contributions can be indexed to identify them with specific geographic areas and strategic priorities to provide metrics for assessments and investments.

3. Verification of Teaching and Institutional Data: The integration of data systems through Faculty180 has already made significant contributions to helping to make the attribution of courses to instructors more consistent and reliable, in part by providing a unique and consistent opportunity for faculty to review their instructional assignments, which in the case of lecture, break out and lab courses were sometimes done in an arbitrary manner depending on local customs.

4. Improved documentation on the impact of research, teaching and engagement activities: Interfolio Faculty180 can be used to document how many students are supported by and contributing to research and outreach activities. When combined with information on the economic and community impact of faculty, this information provides a comprehensive accounting of the financial and institutional impact of research activities.

5. Strengthened partnerships through a university-wide directory: Faculty180 provides a unique and comprehensive source for faculty statements of research and teaching interests, and up-to-date information on scholarly, research and creative contributions. It can also be used to pro.vide other vital information that is not currently available on faculty service as directors of graduate and undergraduate programs and interdisciplinary affiliations with other departments and institutes.

6. Performance metrics for assessments: By serving as a vehicle to generate and integrate data on faculty members' service, teaching and research activities, Interfolio Faculty180 provides a transparent and comprehensive means to increase accountability, not only for faculty but also for administrators. Progress on achieving identified goals for productivity can be used to guide workload assignments, coaching, and reappointments.

The University of Arizona and Interfolio continue to work together to plan for expanding use of Faculty180 in hopes of providing additional benefits in the future.

About Interfolio

Founded in 1999, Interfolio is an education technology company based in Washington, DC that supports the full lifecycle of faculty careers, from hiring through tenure. Interfolio offers institutions increased transparency and insight into faculty decisions and data to help achieve their strategic initiatives. Faculty are the group most central to the success of higher education: they are the drivers of institutional revenue, cost, prestige, and student success. All of Interfolio's products center on faculty: a consumer product provides individual faculty with portable, private dossier that integrates with their institution for job applications and reviews. Shared governance support software assists with faculty hiring, review, and tenure. Since 2017, Interfolio has offered a solution for faculty activity reporting that provides institutions with a central hub of faculty data for accreditation and other reporting needs.