University of Virginia Alumni Association Maximizes Efficiencies with Serenic® Navigator

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  ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT AND ACCOUNTING

Headquartered on the main campus in historic Charlottesville, the University of Virginia (UVA) Alumni Association is comprised of a staff of over 50 and is governed by the board of managers. The board's primary responsibility is to administer the more than $50 million donated each year to the university's various foundations, scholarship programs, and trusts.

In serving as the primary communications channel between alumni and their alma mater, the Alumni Association pays tribute to the University's long and proud history, while keeping its members and friends abreast of the present. No matter how far away (either in time or location) alumni have traveled from Charlottesville, their views on the governance of the University are represented through the Alumni Association.

Through active involvement with the Alumni Association while still at school, students are cultivated to assume the mantle of "university caretaker" when they become alumni. In partnership with the University of Virginia, and through its own mission and goals, the Alumni Association plays an active role in the institution's future success.

"By doing our job well today," explained Jennifer Bonenfant, the Alumni Association's associate director of audit and accounting, "we make it much easier for the University to call on its beloved sons and daughters for help tomorrow."

Reducing Staff Burden Through Better Technology

A fact of life for almost all non-for-profit (NFP) organizations is the need to do more with less—to maximize efficiencies and eliminate redundancies. The UVA Alumni Association is no different.

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"We operate as a traditional student alumni association," Bonenfant said. "As such, it is imperative that we squeeze every penny out of every dollar. Our members and donors deserve no less."

To help achieve that lofty goal, Bonenfant and her colleagues wanted to upgrade the accounting software they were using to run the Association. They had been using software from FundWare, but they found that product to have limited functionality. "We wanted a robust accounting system that would streamline many everyday activities," she said.

"The bottom-line," Bonenfant added, "is that we needed to reduce the burden on our staff and we believed it could be done through better technology."

After a thorough review of the marketplace, the UVA Alumni Association selected Serenic Navigator as its new accounting system. "Serenic provides a high-level of NFP accounting knowledge and technical expertise," Bonenfant said. "All of which is reflected in a superior product."

Data Import Eliminates Duplication of Effort and Mistakes

"Serenic Navigator is playing a major role in the efficient operation of the Association," Bonenfant said. She cited several specific and compelling business needs that have been successfully addressed by the implementation of Serenic Navigator. "Perhaps the most important functionality we gained with Serenic Navigator is the ability to import data directly from the university donor system. This saves 10 – 15 man-hours each week by eliminating duplication of effort and mistakes that were routinely made because of manual data input," she said.

Other valued functionality, according to Bonenfant, is Serenic Navigator's automated e-mail distribution of monthly management reports, which saves report reproduction costs and postage; limited user access, which provides high security by restricting access to program-specific financial information; and allocation tools, which eliminate calculation mistakes by allocating exact income, spend rates and administration fees across multiple departments.

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An Unbeatable Package

Bonenfant also said Serenic Navigator's drill-down capabilities, audit trail functionality, and alpha numeric chart of accounts were important considerations when the Association was deciding on a new accounting system.

"From a technological standpoint, Serenic Navigator had everything we were looking for in an accounting system," Bonenfant said. "When combined with Serenic's professional and timely response to our requirements and the fact that full implementation was achieved within our budget, the overall package is unbeatable."

About Serenic Software

Serenic Software develops and delivers mission-critical ERP software solutions for public service organizations including: K-12 school districts/boards, public sector, nonprofits (NPOs), and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Serenic is a Gold ERP and ISV vendor and a development partner for Microsoft. Serenic public service solutions are trusted by over 1,000 organizations around the globe. You can learn more about Serenic Software at www.serenic.com.