IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUES . . .

By Erick Keating, Project Manager

In February we sent out the first TALONS newsletter as an insert in the Now & Next. That newsletter explained TALONS is the project name for implementation of a new enterprise system for the University, starting first with a new Student Information System called Banner. The first newsletter, and other pertinent information, is available at www.ewu.edu/talons. You can also subscribe to a project update (weekly email) at this site for detailed and current information. To get a glimpse of what’s happening next, check out the following time line:

TALONS Milestones from the Faculty Perspective

Summer 2005 – EWU project staff receives Banner system education regarding Faculty and Advising features. Faculty training plans in development

September/October 2005 – Information sessions/presentations held to acquaint faculty with Banner and the implementation events that will occur in the coming year

October 2005 – Identify faculty members who are willing to participate in “prototype” testing of the new system

November/December 2005 – Training for faculty prototype testing team members

January/February 2006 – Conduct system prototype testing and develop faculty training materials

February/April 2006 – Train faculty members to support students registering for fall term 2006 using the Banner web based Faculty, Advisor and Student features

May 2006 – Students register for fall term 2006 using Banner

May/August 2006 – Additional faculty training and informational sessions

September 2006 – Banner Student System fully operational. New faculty training and refresher training sessions

November 2006 – Faculty training for web based grading on Banner.

December 2006 – Final grading for fall term 2006 on Banner using the Web

If you have questions, want to send feedback, or have suggestions, drop a note to talons@mail.ewu.edu. To discover what Banner has in store for us, read on.

Banner Benefits: What’s In It For Faculty?

By Mary Jane Brukardt

If the most frightening sentence in the world is “Hello, I’m from the IRS and I’d like to talk to you about your taxes” the second-most frightening surely is “You are going to love our new campus computer information system.”

For those of us who have a hard time telling a terabyte from a troglodyte, the good news about the upcoming launch of Eastern’s new Student Information System, Banner, is that there is no need to worry. Honest. If you can surf the Web or use e-mail, using Banner will be no problem. In fact, Banner promises to make life a whole lot easier for Eastern faculty and students once the implementation phase is completed. Here are just a few benefits to look forward to that Banner offers:

Anywhere Flexibility—No more being chained to your desk during registration or grading. Wherever you can access the Web, you can log on to Banner and connect to your students’ records. If you want to check class registration or enter grades in your pajamas or on the beach, you can.

One-way In—When you log on to Banner you’ll enter through a single personalized portal configured with the information you need at the click of a mouse. Down the road, we hope to also integrate student information with calendar and e-mail. You’ll decide what you need to see and what updates you want to receive. And rest easy, it’s secure.

Super Powers—Well, not really. But you can be a hero to your students. With Banner you can quickly find the information that students need—help them register, review progress, check grades. So student advising can be spent helping students, not chasing down information.

Time for What’s Important—Banner’s flexible, easy-to-use information system reduces the possibility of errors, eliminates clumsy paper systems and frees faculty time to do what’s important: scholarship, teaching and service.

And those are just the faculty benefits. Next newsletter we’ll talk more about what Banner will mean for students. Right now, you need to know that the EWU TALONS Team is working through the system to determine how to integrate it with our existing procedures. This fall we’ll also begin testing registration tools. Through it all, faculty and staff will be involved in testing, trouble-shooting and validating the implementation. We’ll keep you posted. In the meantime, check out the web site at www.ewu.edu/talons or e-mail talons@mail.ewu.edu. There is a real person there who will answer all your questions.
BPAs: A Matter of Perspective

By Michael L. Childress

As we forge ahead in examining the processes and procedures used in the operation of the university, we are discovering new things about those processes and what they mean to us. Gaining perspective and preparing for the approaching system transition is key in identifying where we are and where we are going.

In a typical 4-hour session using the Business Process Analysis (BPA) methodology, participants not only gain insight into the how but also the why of their processes. Eastern’s Financial Aid office personnel recently found this out by participating in a number of BPAs. “The BPAs helped us to gain a better perspective on exactly why our processes are so complicated,” commented Bruce DeFrates, director of the office, “They give us good, concrete documentation of our existing processes and allow us to more easily design new processes as we move through the conversion.”

The documentation is the culmination of a session resulting in what is called a process narrative where things such as participants, stakeholders, timeframes, areas for improvement as well as critical functionality to retain are described in detail. DeFrates continued, “I liked the methodology and thought it was effective in outlining our processes. We knew our processes were complicated and the visual diagrams were helpful in demonstrating that.”

When asked what surprised him most about the BPA process, DeFrates said that the Financial Aid office was hoping to see more areas for efficiency than were identified. “Since our processes are largely driven by federal and state regulations, the opportunities for process redesign are limited and we have driven out many of the inefficiencies already.” DeFrates did go on to say however that they did see a few areas where information handoffs between staff can be eliminated and that they will likely come across additional opportunities for improvement.

Getting the proper perspective in regards to existing university processes will help all of us move toward a smooth system transition and ensure Eastern’s success. At this time we are focusing on analyzing processes that are related to the Banner implementation. If you have a suggestion for a process to be analyzed, or feedback or questions about business process analysis, send an email to talons@mail.ewu.edu. We look forward to working with you.

The Academic Advising Work Group

By Mark Baldwin

Among the many benefits of the new students information system, Banner, is enhanced support for those who provide academic advising. A work group has been formed to review the information needs of advisors and ensure that Banner addresses those needs as completely as possible. The implementation of Banner presents opportunities for review of the information needs of many activities such as advising. By identifying the information advisors view while working with students Banner tables can be configured in a manner that best supports the advising activity. The work group’s effort will be directed toward identifying student populations, the unique characteristics of each population, and what information is needed by the advisor when seeing these students.

The work group is lead by Marti Brzoska, Director of General Undergraduate Academic Advising. Seven areas are targeted within the work group: Pre-Admission Advising (Shannon Carr, Admissions), Undeclared Students (Patty Rockwell), Major Advising (Mick Brzoska, Associate Dean and Director School of Computing and Engineering Sciences), Transfer Advising (Shannon Dineen-Setzer, Admissions), Special Populations (Aaron Brown, Student Success Center), Extended Program Advising (Lauri McLaughlin, DEO), and Graduate Advising (Jodi Strote, Graduate Studies). The final results will be communicated back to the Student Process Team by Mark Baldwin.

The work group met on Tuesday, April 12, and discussed the scope of the review, how to involve others in the review, and how to collect and communicate findings. Each member of the work group will lead an investigation in one of the target areas. Information from each target area will be drawn together in a single document and shared with the work group and ultimately the Student Process Team. The final document will help guide implementation decisions as Banner tables are developed over the summer.

Although every advising session can present its own unique needs, the work group will concentrate on general needs. However, the Banner system allows for adjustment as new needs are identified. These adjustments will be made on an ongoing basis. If there are particular concerns that should be communicated to the Student Process Team, please feel free to contact Mark Baldwin through the TALONS web site.

Confused? Attend the Introduction to Banner Operations (Banner 101) on Friday, April 29 from 1:15-2:45 or 3:15-4:45 or check out the TALONS Web site at www.ewu.edu/talons

Now is your chance to learn more about Eastern’s new Student Information System, Banner. Get a sneak preview of what’s to come, ask questions, and learn what’s currently happening on the implementation project. Recommended for staff members who work directly with the student records systems, but all faculty, staff and administrators are welcome. Banner 101 is Friday, April 29, Showalter 109, from 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. Second session from 3:15 to 4:45 p.m. Questions? Drop an email to talons@mail.ewu.edu or visit www.ewu.edu/talons.

Stay tuned for future announcements on Banner 102 – an introduction to Banner Student, Faculty and Advisor operations.

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