Banner transition poses short-term problems, long-term solutions

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The beginning of priority registration for the fall semester marked the first run of a new online database for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Students had their first taste of Banner ERP — the replacement to systems such as ISIS and ULink — and will get their next helping through changes to payroll and finance. Students were issued ULIIDs, which will slowly replace CLIDs through the transition process.

During the first week of scheduling, advisers struggled with lifting holds, and some students had issues navigating the new system. Students registering for the summer semester have to use ISIS; students registering for the fall semester have to use the new system.

Brooke Dugas, a sophomore majoring in general science, said these factors made the transition difficult for her.

“When you’re trying to look at all the classes available, it brings up, like, just multiples of every single class,” she said. “You have to scroll forever and ever and ever just to see what’s available.”

Priority registration began March 21, and students and advisers took to Lee and Stephens halls for help regarding the new registration process. The new system enforces prerequisites and corequisites for courses.

“On the old system, prerequisites and corequisites were not enforced, and so students would get a warning, but they could just bypass it and go register for the class,” said Mickey Diez, university registrar. “That was one of the things we wanted to implement was true enforcement of prerequisites.”

With that change, students who are fulfilling their prerequisites may not be able to register for certain classes because

Registration help for the new Banner system is available in Stephens Hall as well as Lee Hall and the Registrar’s Office

ISIS won’t interact with Banner. Officials responded with updated help desks and a satellite help desk in the College of Engineering.

“Engineering had a lot of students who needed a prerequisite override,” said Diez. “So when we identified that, rather than making the students walk over to the registration assistance center, we put a satellite office of the registrar’s office temporarily.”

All of these measures, university Chief Informations Officer Gene Fields said, were set up to proactively aid students and faculty in the transitions.

“We revamped the training labs, we revamped the service and help desks,” he said.

According to Diez, Banner will cover more systems for a more cohesive online experience.

“All of that is part of one big system, and the advantage of that is now, instead of having all those systems ... that don’t necessarily talk to each other very easily,” said Diez. “Now that it’s integrated, it’s gonna make our systems much more official, and it’ll allow us to conduct business in a more active and efficient manner.”

According to Diez, the program was scheduled to close for spring break — during which faculty members received Banner training.

“Over the spring break, the Banner team and the consultants got together and sort of did a debriefing of those couple of days,” he said. “We identified an action plan of what are the things we could tackle

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during spring break while students weren’t here and ... resolved those issues.

“When students’ registration started back up this week, many of those issues weren’t accounted at that point,” Diez continued.

The system has been placed in effect for admissions, finance and payroll, in addition to a degree auditing program.

Banner implementation began in August 2014 with the project kickoff, and is slated to finish in April 2017 with the launch of Ellucian Degree Works. According to the website, EDW is a “degree audit solution that aligns students, advisors and institutions to a common goal: helping students graduate on time.”

The transition, Fields said, came with its challenges such as inconsistent information and integrating different forms of data.

“The institution prior was data rich but information poor, and there’s a big difference between data and information,” said Fields. “What we needed was a mechanism to share information with our decision makers (and) faculty.”

Once the new system is in place, Banner will provide a one-login process for all UL Lafayette resources.

“The most exciting (thing) that students are going to see is access to more information and more resources through their mobile devices,” said Fields. “I think that’s going to be one of the big wins for the students.”

Aimee Bullinger, associate director of web communications, agreed.

“We’re connecting other systems on campus that we have to keep separate,” said Bullinger. “We’re connecting them with this new ULID so that you log in once and you’re connected instead of having to log in here and then log in there.”