



## CASE STUDY HIGHER EDUCATION

# University of Michigan-Flint

Financial Aid  
Undergraduate Admissions  
Graduate Admissions  
Registrar's Office  
Human Resources  
Cashier's Office  
Accessibility Services  
Academic Advising and Career Center  
School of Education and Human Services  
School of Health Professions  
Purchasing

✱ “It took forever to serve students at the front desk, but now that’s history. ImageNow puts all the documents you need to serve students at your fingertips, and we cleared out the file rooms to make two brand new offices for our support staff.”

Jay Gandhi  
Senior Systems Analyst, Student Services

▶ An overgrown filing system and slow student service were once sources of concern for staff at the University of Michigan-Flint. In order to answer students’ questions, student services staff shuffled through mountains of paper in file rooms and went from desk to desk to track down missing files. Students often waited up to 10 minutes for answers to simple questions.

Jay Gandhi, student services senior systems analyst, says it was not just student service that suffered from this inefficient process; morale suffered as well. “It was disheartening to see staff members put such effort into tracking down paper files,” Gandhi says.

Gandhi knew a document management, imaging and workflow solution could alleviate the inefficiencies of the paper-based system. The university selected ImageNow enterprise document management, imaging and workflow software from Perceptive Software for its ease of use, ability to integrate with the university’s Banner system and positive references from other universities.

Patented LearnMode™ technology allowed ImageNow to integrate easily and rapidly with SCT Banner. Integration provides a seamless connection between the two systems, making all documents related to a student available with a single click from the student’s record in Banner. UM-Flint’s ImageNow implementation was complete in just a few days on site.

“We had very limited IT resources,” Gandhi says, “but Perceptive Software held our hands through the implementation and it went very smoothly.”

### Faster Service, Quicker Decisions

Before implementing ImageNow, the start of a new semester brought lines of 100 students to the financial aid department. When a student finally reached the desk, he would have to wait several more minutes while a clerk looked for his file. The file room contained several large, rotating file cabinets with scores of folders, but too often the needed file was checked out, causing the clerk to continue the search by going to each financial aid officer’s desk.

“It took forever to serve students at the front desk, but now that’s history,” Gandhi says. “ImageNow puts all the documents you need to serve students at your fingertips, and we cleared out the file rooms to make two brand new offices for our support staff.”

Using ImageNow, financial aid officers and admissions counselors make decisions more quickly. With critical information readily available, employees never need to leave their desks to complete a file. ImageNow Workflow streamlines the process, allowing staff to immediately see any student’s precise status in the admissions and financial aid process. “Our admissions turnaround time is very quick because of ImageNow,” Gandhi says.

Gandhi believes ImageNow is well suited for higher education because it makes information instantly available to those who need it. “Higher education involves a lot of collective decision making,” Gandhi says. “ImageNow gives all parties instant access to the same document so we can make quicker decisions based on accurate information.”

## Time and Cost Savings

The use of ImageNow has resulted in both time and cost savings in the admissions office. Previously, admissions staff made copies of student files and sent them to various academic and non-academic departments through campus mail, making it difficult to know where documents were at any given time, and making it easy to lose track of documents altogether. ImageNow Workflow automatically routes incoming applications to admissions counselors and allows staff to electronically route each file to the individuals who provide input on admitting decisions.

"Admissions has saved a lot of money using ImageNow, in part because they don't have to make copies anymore," Gandhi says.

In addition to cost savings, the admissions office offers better service—including the ability to answer questions immediately over the phone rather than call the student back after a time-consuming search. Departmental efficiencies have increased as well, as directors look at workflow queues to help balance workload and gauge staff performance. ImageNow security features help keep confidential information secure, a boon to regulatory compliance efforts.

## Supporting FERPA Compliance

To find old transcripts that predated the Banner system, employees in the registrar's office went to the basement to sort through boxes of old mylar transcripts dating back to the 1950s. The task was not a favorite among the staff, who referred to the locked basement room as "the dungeon." Now the basement is empty and transcripts are instantly available with a quick search in ImageNow.

With ImageNow security features, student documents are available only to authorized users. Gandhi follows strict guidelines for granting access privileges in ImageNow, ensuring security is much tighter than that of a locked basement room.

"FERPA requires that we protect students' sensitive information. The security features in ImageNow let us accomplish that easily by restricting access to authorized users," Gandhi says.

## Making Life Easier

In addition to facilitating improved student service, increased security and better compliance with federal regulations, Gandhi says ImageNow has had a tremendous impact on employee morale.

"The ease of retrieving documents with ImageNow has improved our productivity immensely," Gandhi says. "As a result, the staff's frustration level has gone down because they can find things so easily."

"Originally, staff members were reluctant to give up paper, but now none of them would go back," adds Lori Vedder, director of financial aid.

Though there are nearly 300 ImageNow users across the UM-Flint campus, Gandhi finds the task of managing ImageNow relatively easy. UM-Flint rolled out ImageNow slowly to each department, employing a train-the-trainer approach.

"ImageNow is so easy to use that I taught super users in each department to train end users," Gandhi says. "ImageNow is exactly what we were looking for. It's easy to implement, easy to use, easy to maintain, and the support we get from Perceptive Software is wonderful."

Since implementing ImageNow in the financial aid office in 1999, UM-Flint has expanded the solution to 10 other student services and business departments. The benefits ImageNow has provided make it a popular IT request from departments that still work with paper files, causing a whole new problem for Gandhi—managing the demand for ImageNow.

"At first, we wanted to keep ImageNow a secret because we didn't have a support staff to maintain it, but it is so popular among users that the word is spreading like wildfire. Every other day I get a request for access," Gandhi says.

With the secret out, the university plans to continue expanding ImageNow to areas that can benefit most. Plans are already underway to bring ImageNow to more academic departments and housing. As the ImageNow solution continues to provide time and cost savings across campus, improve compliance with federal regulations and enable excellent student service, UM-Flint's return on its ImageNow investment will continue to grow.



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Jay Gandhi  
Senior Systems Analyst, Student Services

# University of Michigan-Flint

## Quick Stats

- Documents in ImageNow: More than 700,000
- Number of Students: 6,883
- Integration: SCT Banner, PeopleSoft

## The Challenges

- Slow document retrieval results in slow student service
- Filing, photocopying and searching for documents waste employees' time
- Paperwork presents document security and storage issues
- Find a solution that integrates with existing SCT Banner and PeopleSoft software

## The Results

- Instant access to documents improves student service
- Reduction in manual tasks allows staff to be more productive
- ImageNow security supports compliance initiatives
- Seamless integration links documents to relevant records in Banner and PeopleSoft

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