



# VIEW FROM THE Edge.

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# CAMPUSWORKS

PROVIDES

**INSIGHT,  
INGENUITY,  
AND IMPACT**

FOR HIGHER  
EDUCATION

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For over 20 years, the ongoing mission for CampusWorks has been to transform the institutional environment of higher education. The two-fold mission aims to help students, faculty, and staff thrive and to help colleges and universities achieve their goals. To accomplish their mission, CampusWorks has combined strategic insight with technological advances, tools, and solutions, helping guide institutions of higher education through major system projects, while improving institutional operations and reducing costs.

"CampusWorks all began two decades ago as a company designed to provide unique assistance to community colleges in the Information Technology (IT) space," said Liz Murphy, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board, CampusWorks. Murphy joined the organization eight years ago and expanded the CampusWorks services to include strategic planning for colleges and universities, business process redesign, administration system implementations, and staff augmentation for senior level positions.

### Assisting Higher Education Clients

CampusWorks provides each client with a structured approach focused on minimal disruptions, allowing institution staff to concentrate on initiatives where student success is fully supported. "Similar to other industries, there are times when higher education believes they don't have enough time to engage all of their constituents in major projects and processes when, in fact, they would save more time, money, and human capital when all of the constituents are engaged from the very beginning of the project," she explained. "Taking this approach ensures all parties have a shared understanding and shared vision for the outcomes they're trying to create."

Technology can only be as responsive as the context in which the tools are placed. CampusWorks guides the client into making sure their technological investment is aligned with the institution's needs and,

subsequently, integrated with the tools and systems they already have in place. The team also verifies the selected tools and/or technology are built upon a clearly defined experience in advance, whether the experience is from an employee, student, or a donor perspective. "During the process, we sometimes find institutions tend to have a knee-jerk reaction to a problem they may be having," Murphy said. "The institution hears or reads about a possible solution for their problem. They make the purchase, and the tool gets implemented by a particular office. Suddenly, and not surprisingly, the institution and their related constituents are disappointed because the group wasn't able to achieve the outcomes advertised."

One example of how CampusWorks assists the institution is through a workshop called *"Defining the Student or Employee or Donor Experience."* Murphy said the workshop often becomes a galvanizing event where constituents become enlightened on their expected outcome. During the student workshop, students are invited along with administration, faculty, and staff to the conversations. "This process begins the whole change management exercise at an institution, which is the exciting part of the work of helping people through a transition," Murphy said. "There are ups and downs in the process, with pain points often encountered throughout the transition, but nine times out of ten, the organization is happy and satisfied at the conclusion of the process."

### Modernizing an Institution

By working with CampusWorks, institutions can become digitally transformed and business modernized. As expected, any modernization of an institution takes considerable planning, as changing out enterprise-wide technologies has the potential to cause disruptions and require extra work from people within the broader organization to make the implementation successful. Murphy suggests an organization begin

their process by knowing their final outcome. "We believe this process is incredibly important so the context is set for change and everybody is clear about what is wanted once everything has been implemented," she said.

Institutions must understand and pinpoint their long-range vision and goals and ask how modernization enables these goals. Generally, higher education relies on technology to meet these needs, whether the institution uses artificial intelligence, business intelligence, or automation. Murphy also noted that higher education is making a concerted effort to ensure every experience is more personal while simultaneously facing a barrage of financial pressures. "If this context is established within the organization, planning ahead will position them for good implementation of whatever technology is used down the road."

For example, in the past, many higher education institutions have encountered failed enterprise resource planning (ERP) migration experiences. Murphy said part of the frustration behind past, failed attempts resides in the fact that some of the systems have been in place for decades. When new technology is introduced and implemented, the institution has new challenges to address, which weren't around 15-30 years ago. "We need to go back to the outcome-based view and ask what is needed from the solution. Then we must look at what the institution has today and determine if the organization is ready for the change," she said.

The cornerstone of this review is to look at business processes at the beginning, including student redesign and employee experiences, while also looking at policies, procedures, people, and technology. Technology requirements and features have to be thread through all constituent groups so faux policies aren't inadvertently put into play. "We've completely construed our processes around these faux policies because maybe they were convenient at the time or somebody

"If an institution skips those early steps, the entire organization pays for that oversight later. I've seen the issue take place time and time again," she explained. "Folks don't want to make the investment up front because they feel like the change is a huge investment of time and money, but in the end, they add the time and a lot more from a financial perspective at the backend when there wasn't a clear path for what they're trying to achieve rather than starting at the beginning of the modernization process."



**LIZ MURPHY**  
Chief Executive Officer  
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Board, CampusWorks

thought the procedure was a good idea, but as it turns out, the old policy was truly something we could adapt and change to make the processes more relevant for today," Murphy added.

After the context for change has been developed, business processes can be re-imagined and re-designed. At this point, Murphy said the organization is in a great position to evaluate choices for technology solutions and solve outlying problems. "If an institution skips those early steps, the entire organization pays for that oversight later. I've seen the issue take place time and time again," she explained. "Folks don't want to make the investment up front because they feel like the change is a huge investment of time and money, but in the end, they add the time and a lot more from a financial perspective at the backend when there wasn't a clear path for what they're trying to achieve rather than starting at the beginning of the modernization process."

The problem is the fact that an incremental change in these areas isn't always enough to create the transformation needed in higher education. "Redesigning business processes is more than just about efficiency and effectiveness, but about transforming how the work is completed so the student experience is satisfying," Murphy added. "In the case of faculty and staff, more human capital is spent with people rather than with computers." The end goal of the process is to make the institution's business processes more efficient and effective, especially as student, faculty, and staff have demands for

more digital processes and personalized services.

### **Managing Organizational Changes**

CampusWorks works closely with higher education to implement organizational change, as well as business system modernization. Murphy has seen the difficulty an institution faces when trying to manage the relationship between both processes.

"I have yet to see a successful modernization program that hasn't been hand in glove with organizational changes," she said. "What's interesting is that most organizations first believe people are going to be laid off or every system and process is going to be automated. We aren't going to do either." Rather, Murphy said a program is oftentimes going to ask people to work differently and do different types of work, as some manual work will go away. The changes allow humans in the equation a chance to spend more time interacting with other humans, instead of only working with technology and systems.

The process can appear to be very frightening, but CampusWorks works alongside their clients to make the progression less scary and an easier overall transition. "When I work with presidents, I often talk about how they are going to need to manage the transition for others in the institution. We find the adjustments take an appreciation for change and you have to get people to the space where they're accepting of the end of an old way and the start of something new," Murphy explained. "Leadership has to be very knowledgeable and respectful of the re-training needed to take place so technology changes make the corresponding organizational changes work while leveraging the people, the processes, and the technology."

### **Helping Higher Education Leaders Stay Relevant**

Higher education is a fast-changing, highly-competitive world, requiring leaders to find ways to remain competitive and viable in a digital

world where modern technologies and organizational business practices are followed. Murphy suggests leaders make sure they stay current with their organization and the school's culture and offers the following guidance, "Really trust the DNA of your organization because unless you're honest about where your organization is in terms of readiness for change or transformation, you will struggle to position yourself well for the change," she said.

Additionally, she suggests not delaying the change, but rather to be bold and courageous. "There is no time for any institution in this country to be sitting back saying *I think we're going to be okay*, because they're not." The reason for Murphy's cautionary warning is the world continues to change at lightning-fast speed and ideas appear quickly on the horizon. For instance, Murphy believes there will be major changes in credentialing throughout the higher education industry over the next 5-10 years, which could turn the business model upside down.

Funding also needs to be looked at differently than how higher education currently operates. "Several associates at public institutions in the community college world, who rely on federal, state, and local money, are feeling this pain right now," she said. "They're also feeling the pain of what happens as the economy fluctuates which directly correlates to having fully-enrolled classes."

Private institutions are facing questions about whether private education is worth the time and effort, if there will be continued value, and whether or not there will be a return on investment. "First, I would say trust what you know, yet be brave and seek external perspectives so plans can be made that will actually accomplish your vision," Murphy said. "Technology should be part of this plan, but these tools shouldn't drive your plan. Most of all, don't change for the sake of change. Articulate your reason for change, for transformation,

or for modernization in terms of your vision. Modernize with the context of clear outcomes and get your people involved in the solution."

#### CampusWorks Partnering with Edge

CampusWorks was awarded a public bid by Edge in 2019 for readiness assessment and remediation as a part of a successful methodology for ERP migrations. The company will be assisting interested Edge members with the process of incorporating ERP within their respective administrations or systems. The process will involve asking questions about if the current system needs to be optimized or a new system is required. CampusWorks will manage everything from an IT assessment to the business process re-imagine and re-design, as well as going through all of the independent technology already in use.

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CampusWorks will also work with technology staff during the IT assessment to observe the institution's underlying infrastructure and overall knowledge, skills, and ability levels. Murphy said the staff needs to be able to handle the technology changes, and at times, staff will need additional education and training.

Once final decisions are made, CampusWorks presents the institution with strengths and weaknesses of the current situation and where opportunities lie to modernize the system. Murphy said CampusWorks collaborates with the cabinet, the president, and the president's cabinet

on all of these discussions, looking at all of the aspects of the institution, including culture and leadership. At the end of the diagnostic and readiness process, CampusWorks presents a scorecard outlining key metrics related to the organization's readiness. "The scorecard information informs the leadership as to whether or not they should make the move now or if they have some more work to be done before they make a move to either optimize or go in another direction," she said.

Another aspect of CampusWorks' relationship with Edge is the organization's ability to provide Edge members with project management services. CampusWorks' staff has decades of experience, as well as functional expertise to provide high levels of information whether there is a challenge in financial aid, workforce development, or human resources. "We have the professional expertise as well as the project management expertise to guide organizations through the process and provide a fresh perspective," Murphy said.

In the end, technology is essentially at the conclusion of the process. The courageous steps taken at the beginning of the process are what enable an organization to get true value from the technology so success happens in the long-term.

If an Edge member is interested in these services, the organization should reach out to Edge's Trish Connor, Executive Director for Business Development, who will then liaise with CampusWorks on next steps. Connor may be reached via email at [trish.connor@njedge.net](mailto:trish.connor@njedge.net).

