

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR CLOUD DEPLOYMENT

With enthusiastic assistance from students, an innovative internship program modernizes the university by introducing undergrads to cloud technology and real-world business skills.

In 2016, the University of Wyoming (UW) launched WyoCloud, a pioneering project to modernize strategic systems through implementation of an extensive enterprise resource planning (ERP) cloud suite.

In collaboration with the university, Huron implemented a student internship program designed to deliver numerous benefits while helping the university creatively finance and staff the cloud project. In addition to being a scalable and sustainable program, the internship has enabled students to enrich their career skills and learn real-world business and management lessons. Using student interns to produce deliverables and add other value to the project has made deployment of the new software applications more cost-effective.

“WyoCloud is a groundbreaking project for the university, bringing a huge transformation to our systems and the way we perform so many processes. It’s really exciting to be a part of it.”

MCKAY MCCAULEY, UW STUDENT INTERN,
MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING MAJOR

The University of Wyoming and the WyoCloud project have gained vocal advocates in the campus user community, in part because of the interns’ communication and marketing activities. As for those students, their training and experience in the cloud have created attractive candidates for full-time employment by the university, Huron and similar organizations that need their skills.

CHALLENGE

Like many of its peers, UW needed more-reliable, real-time data for reporting purposes, as well as for updated business processes and systems to support the increased utilization demands of students, faculty and staff. University management recognized a timely opportunity to modernize systems and processes and, in response, created the WyoCloud project.

As former university President Laurie Nichols described it, “We’re living with a system that is very old and outdated. But on the flip side, we’re ready to adopt a new system that is truly cutting edge. In fact, there are many people not only across the region, but the nation, who are watching the University of Wyoming because this is such a comprehensive implementation of a cloud-based system.”

APPROACH

In 2016, the University of Wyoming made the decision to implement the cloud. The cloud solution addresses several strategic areas for the university, including financial management, procurement, reporting and analytics, planning and budgeting, research and grants management, and technical systems.

“What I like most about the WyoCloud project internship is that I’m a little out of my element. I’ve had to do a lot of learning on my own, including new tools and resources I wasn’t even aware of before the internship.”

MARK GRANT, UW STUDENT INTERN,
ACCOUNTING MAJOR

As a key implementation strategy to help the university creatively finance and staff the WyoCloud project, Huron helped launch a student internship program in March of 2017 to augment the dedicated project staff. The small team of student interns, interviewed and managed by Huron, specialized in several WyoCloud project areas, from financials and procurement to reporting and analytics to research and grants management and technical systems, as well as organizational transformation. These interns added a significant value for the university, including:

- Helping to promote the organizational transformation by expanding the number of UW constituents involved in and aware of the project.
- Alleviating some of the workload for the dedicated WyoCloud implementation team.
- Providing a source of potential new employees for both the university and Huron.
- Enabling Huron to give back to the university and the Laramie community.

But another benefit may outshine the rest. Participating in the project is enabling the student interns to acquire skills and experiences that will help them become more valuable to future employers.

RESULTS

The results of the WyoCloud project student internship program have met and even exceeded the anticipated benefits.

The university, together with Huron, has provided an opportunity for the student interns to learn new skills and be exposed to new experiences that will enhance their value to future employers. According to Dr. Nick Prince, assistant professor of management at UW, few internships are available “that give students the opportunity to consult, and yet that’s something many of our interns are excited about.” He added that having a foot in the door to “being hired by a respected consulting firm like Huron is a great experience for any of our students.”

The WyoCloud project team has been able to offload some of its activities to the interns, helping to keep the schedule and budget on track. The interns have actively promoted the WyoCloud project and its benefits to an extended audience, fueling a growing appreciation of WyoCloud and its farreaching implications.



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