

Case Study: King's University College

A robust content management system for higher education benefits students and enables remote work

About our customer

King's University College, an affiliate of Western University Canada, has always leveraged technology to navigate shifts in learning, culture, technology, and student expectations, relying on student success as its guide.

Founded in 1954, King's University College prides itself on maintaining internationally recognized academic programming, comprehensive student services, and outstanding faculty, all while keeping class sizes small so that students receive the best possible education.

Challenge

- Limited collaboration across departments
- Slow service response times for students
- Insufficient processes and workflows due to a lack of automation
- Low number of scholarship applications due to repetitive paper processes

More than a decade ago, King's University College turned to Ricoh to start digitally transforming student files, giving the departments a better way to manage student information.

More recently, the college recognized a need to become more digitally driven to improve collaboration across departments and provide more responsive services to students. "The initial idea was to have files stored electronically," said King's University College Associate Registrar Tracy Cunningham. "Although our campus is fairly compact, many of the student service departments are spread throughout different buildings. There were a lot of singular paper files moving between one office or another, making it sometimes difficult to keep track."

Ricoh recommended using Laserfiche, a leading content management system for higher education, to digitize student forms and automate business processes in various departments. The solution enabled King's University College to completely change the way departments communicate with each other and with students.

"We are constantly looking to support students in a way that's more efficient so we can focus on program planning or retention work. We can use our time more wisely and do more meaningful work to create an enriching experience for all of our community — students, staff and faculty."

— Thomas Gray, Academic Data and Operations
Coordinator, King's University College

Solution

- Implemented Laserfiche enrollment services
- Streamlined digital document management, electronic forms, and process automation
- Replaced paper admissions forms with an online system and established automated workflows

With the ongoing support of Ricoh Canada, one of the college's digital workplace technology solution providers, King's University College implemented Laserfiche for its enrollment services. The first step was to digitize all the files.

With the success of content management for the college and centralized electronic access, they recognized efficiencies and reduced the risk of lost documents while en route to other buildings or departments. With institutional records newly digitized, the staff looked for more ways to deliver a modern, streamlined experience to students.

“Laserfiche has helped us function faster and more collaboratively, and has positively affected our student retention. It helps us communicate as a campus in real time.”

— Tracy Cunningham, Associate Registrar,
King's University College

Next, Ricoh implemented all electronic admissions forms and automated workflows in Laserfiche, eliminating all manual and repetitive tasks.

“Everything is managed electronically in Laserfiche,” said Liaison Robin Ellis, Admissions Coordinator. “Admissions letters are automatically sent out to the student and all documents are archived in Laserfiche. We're also able to go back and audit the workflows, to see what actions were taken and when.”

Today, the college continues to monetize its investment as a key pillar of its digital transformation and resilience strategy.

Results

- Efficiently managed a 49% increase in applications, a 15% increase in enrollment, and an increase in student retention
- Centralized solution for data and records with reduced errors from manual data entry
- Secured authentication and password distribution with Ricoh IT Services
- Added Laserfiche Forms to streamline scholarship applications
- Dashboards and reporting enabled faster response times to student inquiries

Building a future-ready institution

Having a content management system for higher education helped to prioritize student needs over time-intensive paperwork and manual processes. With the increased efficiency, King's University College continued to provide excellent service to its applicants while managing a 49% increase in applications.

Since the shift to remote work in recent years, King's has found further value in Laserfiche and its ongoing partnership with Ricoh. “I honestly don't know how we could have managed admissions through a pandemic — with everyone working from home — without Laserfiche,” said Ellis. “We couldn't have timed it better.”

Online orientation improves the student experience

“In March 2020, our whole world changed — we were at the peak of our admissions cycle when we suddenly had to do everything online,” added Cunningham. “Fortunately, we put our summer academic orientation online. We created one-on-one course counseling sessions allowing new students to meet with a counselor and follow along on a Laserfiche form. Copies were automatically emailed to students and routed to their folders. Having all these Laserfiche processes in place helped us provide a user-friendly experience for students — and the feedback was excellent.”

Ricoh IT Services authenticates users and increases security

King staff have continued to find new uses for Laserfiche that benefit employees, faculty, and students. For example, Ricoh’s IT Services used a Laserfiche form to securely distribute account information for a recently rolled-out VoIP-based phone system, to avoid having to email individual passwords to staff. In addition, the ITS team deployed a form giving instructors a central place to sign up for webinars on pedagogy and curriculum. Pulling from the college’s authentication system, users are verified before they get access to these forms.

“Being able to authenticate makes a big difference that has saved IT Services a lot of time,” said Sheldon Lopes, Systems Analyst.

More students receive financial aid with streamlined scholarship applications

The scholarship application process has also been transformed through Laserfiche. While students were previously required to gather research from different databases and submit duplicate paperwork to apply, integration with Western University’s PeopleSoft ERP has helped eliminate duplicate tasks by pre-populating Laserfiche Forms with existing student data.

“This form is phenomenal, and really easy for students and staff,” said Ellis. “Laserfiche automatically sends scholarship information to the student finance office, and students can be automatically emailed if they receive a scholarship. It’s been a win-win for everyone.”

Automated inquiry forms improve response times and staff workload

“We had students emailing our team with academic questions — and oftentimes they would email many members of our team with the same question,” said Thomas Gray, Academic Data and Operations Coordinator. “As a result, response times were slow and inquiries were difficult to track.”

The academic counseling team worked with Ricoh to develop an inquiry form in Laserfiche. Now, students submit their questions, and based on student data that is automatically populated in Laserfiche Forms, the inquiry is automatically triaged to the right team member.

“This enabled us to manage the workload and improve our student service,” Gray added. “King’s has students from across Canada and around the world. We found that international students can connect to us and communicate seamlessly through Laserfiche Forms.”

The academic counseling department also analyzed Laserfiche Forms data from process flows and reporting dashboards to inform smarter decision-making. They were able to identify certain inquiries as more common than others, enabling them to better allocate resources toward responding to them. The team also noticed the times during which students preferred to contact them, and adjusted the department’s hours to better accommodate student schedules.

Planning for what's next

King's use of Laserfiche's content management for college and Ricoh's IT Services and support has facilitated a campus-wide digital transformation, helping King's to adapt and respond to change, facilitate ongoing improvement, and enhance communication.

"Digital transformation is letting people break down the digital siloes that they didn't know existed," said David Thuss, Manager of Infrastructure and Digital Pedagogies. "We know that we have one true data source, and we can easily share information. We've seen a reduction in error rates that comes with data entry, and don't have to worry about the risk of accessing outdated information."



To learn more about [content management system for higher education](#), digital document management, electronic forms, and process automation, contact a Ricoh representative today.

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