



Bow Valley College

Bow Valley College is a post-secondary institution that serves more than 10,000 students annually in Calgary and throughout southern Alberta. With an emphasis on career training, English as a Second Language, and academic upgrading, the College offers a wide variety of full time and part time certificate programs in the health, business, and industry sectors.

The Challenge

In 1997 Bow Valley College moved out from under the auspices of the provincial government to become a board-governed institution. With this evolution came the opportunity to build a whole new infrastructure. The College began by selecting AGRESSO Financials to help manage the financial side of the business. "It was an excellent choice," says Bernard Benning, Vice President of Corporate Services and Development. "But investing in a financial system was just the beginning."

"We also needed a system that would track student information—from the first phone call through applications, scheduling, payment processing, and more. And we wanted a system that would integrate with our financials." As it turned out, that was a tall order. Not many systems fit the bill. In fact, not one product had the range, flexibility, and sophistication that the College required. Agresso Americas,

recognizing the void in the market, stepped in and, working with a consortium of seven Canadian universities and colleges, developed the AGRESSO Student Information System designed specifically for mid-size colleges and universities.

The Solution

In January 2000 the College began implementation of the AGRESSO Student Information System and since then they have never looked back. "AGRESSO does more and does it better than we ever dreamed possible," says Benning. Today, virtually all three hundred staff members rely on some portion of the AGRESSO system to get the job done.

"AGRESSO is a very strong system—robust, flexible, and very user friendly. It's an excellent product."

When it comes to AGRESSO, accessibility is key, says Carlos Arenas, Manager of Financial Services. "Today we can access data that we never had before. College deans and project coordinators can view detailed information about each individual program—information such as revenue and expenses, travel costs, and profitability—instantaneously. It's right there at their fingertips. And they can use that information to make sound business decisions. It saves time, money, and makes us all much more efficient than ever before."

College staff relies heavily on AGRESSO's flexible reporting capabilities. "These are educators without financial backgrounds," explains Arenas. "But AGRESSO is very easy to use. We prepare specific and detailed reports on a monthly basis but they also have online access anytime they need it. It's a tool they are using and finding very, very efficient."

AGRESSO Student provides the College with a permanent record all student activities: inquiries, applications, marks, enrollment, payments, and withdrawals. "Without this kind of database, a post-secondary institution can't function," says Debbie Bruckner, Registrar. "AGRESSO Student produces letters, certificates, transcripts, and more. And we have a special database that collects information from our student counselors." Previously, academic staff had to put in requests for the information they needed, then wait for the results. Now they can access the information they need when they need it.

The Result

Today virtually every employee at Bow Valley College relies heavily on the AGRESSO system. Arenas credits the application with much of the organization's success. "AGRESSO has moved us to the top of the list in terms of customer service. It's enabled us to increase our efficiencies many times over." Provincial auditors agree. When the Office of the Attorney General of Alberta came to audit the College's books, they were very impressed. "Thanks to AGRESSO they found it very easy to drill down and get exactly the information they needed—so much so that they were able to complete the audit much quicker than usual with-



out interfering with our day-to-day operations."

Benning argues it is Agresso Americas' belief in the 'super user' that has made the product such a success. "The whole idea is that you don't need a battery of Information Technology (IT) professionals to help you make every transaction work. You don't have to run to the IT department every time you need a report or need to do something in the system. Instead, your line people are controlling and using the system all on their own. That's very, very critical."

In short, says Benning, "I'd highly recommend that any other mid-sized college considering a new financial management or student management system take a serious look at AGRESSO. It's a very strong system—robust, flexible, and very user friendly. It's an excellent product."

ABOUT AGRESSO Agresso Americas delivers end-to-end specialized solutions that solve real business problems for professional service firms, higher education institutions and government agencies.

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