

SFU Press Releases Collection

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Web-based information management comes to SFU

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A million-dollar computer system made by PeopleSoft will usher in a new era of information management at Simon Fraser University. The state-of-the-art system will replace the university's aging and increasingly obsolete student information management system. For students it will mean easier access to their records and services, such as paying fees. For staff it'll mean more comprehensive and better information management. For faculty it'll mean compiling class lists and grade reports with interactive media rather than on paper.

A user-centred system with technology that supports a variety of administrative functions, PeopleSoft will be web-based and provide students with many self-serve options over the Internet. "They'll be able to log in on any browser-based computer from anywhere in the world to access different SFU databases," says Jim Cranston, SFU's chief information officer. "Students will be able to register, add and drop courses, review their financial status and perform a multitude of other functions that usually require lining up or calling in to talk to someone." The first phase of the transition to PeopleSoft will involve student administrative services, such as admissions, registration and tuition payment. "We hope to have PeopleSoft handling registration by fall 2003," says Cranston. Eventually, university services, such as human resources, payroll and finances will be added.

It will cost several million dollars to put the new system in place. A 20-member team is working on data conversion, modification of business practices and making sure academic rules, pre-requisites and security measures are in place. Nick Heath, formerly SFU's director of admissions, is the functional team lead. He says, "The more that SFU's business practices are tailored to complement the new system the lower the cost of implementation will be." PeopleSoft, a California-based company, is one of the world's leading higher education software providers. Its student administration package is one of the newest of its kind but is already in use at many universities worldwide. Cranston says, "PeopleSoft was chosen because it offered the broadest range of functions for our various users and the most modern technology." Ciber, an international company, and Sierra Systems, which has its head office in Vancouver, will handle implementation.