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Connecting your campus systems

Seamless ERP integration is possible with the right payment technology provider

An institution's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system drives many of its core processes. ERP software allows students and faculty to access key information, and staff to automate previously manual tasks. It is critical for administrators to make their other programs, such as payment technology systems, integrate seamlessly with the software that governs so much on campus—the ERP.

Why is ERP integration growing as an area of focus for campus leaders?

As institutions increasingly move toward creating a connected campus, ERPs bring together formerly separate solutions. On the student service side, students expect to have one place to enroll, register and pay for their courses. In order for that to happen, an institution's other systems, such as payment technology, must be integrated with the ERP.

As administrators think about how their campus will look in the next five to 10 years, there will be a continued movement toward integration of all platforms. IT staff are already evaluating solutions that enable unified integration across multiple systems, instead of those that are tied to a specific system.

What are the top benefits of integrating your payment technology with your ERP?

Fewer touchpoints means fewer areas where security issues can crop up. Integration also helps create efficiencies. If a payment system and ERP are separate, someone must manually reconcile the two programs at the end of the day. But as we know, when students make a payment, they want to see the transaction immediately reflected in their account.

Integration means real-time connections. Payments are not only confirmed for students instantly, but sent to the right places on the back end, such as multiple business offices and general ledgers, as well. That all happens seamlessly within a Nelnet Business Solutions-ERP integration.

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As campus IT teams shrink, what resources should administrators take advantage of in order to compensate?

Payment technology providers want to automate processes to help institutions succeed in spite of decreasing budgets. So while on-campus IT teams may be getting smaller, NBS has increased our integration team by 70 percent in the past year. We have invested heavily in our integration team because we want to be forward-thinking and innovative for our institutions, and we do that by listening to what our customers are telling us they want.

Institutions should look for partners that are flexible in their offerings. NBS understands and respects the significant investment institutions have made in their ERP, which is why we support robust integration with whichever ERP the institution has decided is the best fit for their campus.

What are your thoughts about the future of ERP integration?

We all see the benefits of creating a more unified experience for both students and staff, but one of the biggest struggles with integration is that changes made to one system may have unintended consequences on another system. Finding ways to identify the impact of changes on integrated solutions will enable staff to proactively identify and address issues, rather than having to wait for an error to occur and then waiting while the cause is tracked down before it can be addressed. This will not only save institutions valuable staff hours, but will help ensure that payment processing is not adversely affected by unrelated system changes.



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