Paragon Provides Florida International University Program Management Software

Paragon

FIU | FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Just 10 miles west of downtown Miami, Florida International University (FIU) is in the middle of a building boom. A dozen or more building projects have been initiated on the 350-acre campus within the last two years.

When Pollyanne Johnson joined the FIU Facilities Management Department as senior project manager, she was surprised to find a lack of a computer-based program management system. And with so much construction underway, she realized the school needed a much better method of keeping track of the myriad projects in order to provide more accurate, timely reporting to the university administration.

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"For me, the process that was in place was a nightmare. We were totally paper-based and there was no readily accessible method of record keeping," she recalled. "Project managers entered all of their data by hand onto hard copies of spreadsheets, some of which were filed into binders. If anyone wanted to track a budget or pull data for a report, he would have to go into the main filing room, search through filing cabinets, and make photocopies for report preparation and distribution."

Through her previous work with the Miami International Airport, Johnson had knowledge of database management software, and looked to see what was on the market related to construction. After extensive research on her part, she selected Paragon Program Management System. "A lot of the systems I looked at were contractor-oriented," Johnson recalled, "and did not have the functionality we required to effectively roll up and manage the data from the numerous construction projects underway on our campus. Paragon was the best among several program management software products that provided the data management, reporting and communication capabilities we needed to better manage our campus-wide construction program."

She quickly found out that Paragon was able to link all cost, schedules, and documents to provide both university administrators and her program management colleagues with instant access to comprehensive project information. Paragon provides visibility to issues, trends and communications that affect costs and schedules at all points of the construction process, from individual bids and work items up through the project and program levels.

"I use Paragon to its fullest extent," Johnson said. "I don't even type letters in my word processor any more. I compose them in Paragon along with all my other correspondence and reports. I paste all e-mails from contractors or architects into the system along with meeting minutes, letters or daily reports." Johnson said she especially likes the Paragon "binder" system

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of filing documents. "I like the ease of the system. When I make a phone call, I log it in the Correspondence binder under Records of Conversations. This is a listing of who you talked to, what time you talked to them, what action is required, when it is due, when it was given to you and what you received."

Because data is so well organized within the Paragon system, pulling together reports is simple. Johnson said that if a program manager isn't available and one of the program team members needs an update, it is very easy to drill down to the record level of any cost or corresponding program document.

Johnson added that over the past year of integrating Paragon into the FIU construction management process, The Paragon consultants have been a tremendous help whenever she or other project managers need assistance. "The consulting staff has been particularly helpful," she said, "especially while I was learning the system and learning how to create Paragon reports. When they say they are only a phone call away, they mean it," she said.

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