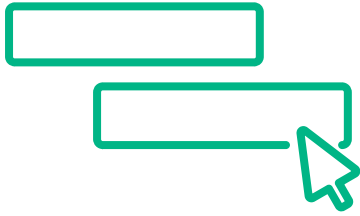# DAVIDSON COLLEGE

SUMMARY

Davidson College needed a better way to create sustainable, strategically driven change. In 2019, they implemented the Digital Transformation Team. This agile team of tech-savvy generalists has completed 8 projects, eliminating tech debt, digitizing paper processes, and supporting COVID-19 initiatives along the way.

PROBLEM

Higher education leaders across the nation are investing time and money into digital transformation. But many face a common problem: How do we create sustainable, strategically driven change?

In 2018, Davidson College faced this issue head-on. The institution already had an innovation team, but its purpose lacked clarity; other parties on campus didn't understand when to request help, or how the team's work synched with strategic objectives. The college's leadership gathered in a visioning retreat to create a solution.

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TRANSFORM PROCESSES.
ELEVATE IMPACT.

SOLUTION: A FORMS AUTOMATION SOLUTION

Davidson College appointed a new Digital Transformation Team in early 2019. This dedicated change team tackles specific tasks selected and prioritized by leaders, and each initiative is directly related to the multi-year strategic plan.

This small DX team is made up of tech generalists with skillsets in UX design, data management, and complex problem-solving. These individuals have zero operational responsibility, such as fixing network issues and installing software; they eat, sleep, and breathe digital transformation every day. They can move from one strategic technology project to the next and use skill and creativity to bring about results like operational relief through automation, training, and collaboration.

RESULTS: FAST AND SCALABLE AUTOMATED FORMS

So, how has Davidson benefited from this team so far?

The Digital Transformation Team has successfully accomplished 8 projects since March 2019. One of their biggest successes to date includes digitizing paper processes for the first time with the help of Kuali Build. Using Kuali's software, they were able to address approximately 90% of Davidson's forms needs and turn over the management of forms to the business users.

With each new project the DX team completes, their success is further propagated throughout the institution, giving other departments the confidence and motivation to utilize their services.

"It is so important to connect the daily work that people do to department and college-wide strategy. We can trace that line back to a strategic initiative from the college we're working with to get buy-in."

JD MILLS
MANAGER, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, DAVIDSON COLLEGE

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Davidson College provided the following recommendations for other institutions interested in implementing a similar digital transformation initiative on their campus.

1. IT should have a seat at the table when it comes to institutional strategy and creating business processes. Process optimization isn't achieved by buying a product, but by examining and reengineering a process. At Davidson, CIO Kevin Davis sits at the executive table. He is an essential advocate for the DX team.
2. Make time for a discovery period. IT should be user-centric, which only comes after spending time with the users to understand their needs. The discovery period should be one of the longest phases of the project. After completing user consultations for a recent project, Davidson was able to put off a pricey purchase after understanding what users needed.
3. Get outside opinions when you can. Sometimes this means hiring a consultant, but oftentimes the DX team is able to act in this role for Davidson. With their generalist experience doing projects across the institution, the DX team often has a fresh perspective to see opportunities for optimization when a department approaches them with a problem.
4. See frustrations as an opportunity! Know that frustration comes just before a breakthrough.
5. Engage with business users. Ideally, IT managers can participate in larger governing councils to bring the technology perspective to business discussions.

> "Because we're technologists, we know how to use the systems that are in play across campus but we also take a very user-centered approach. We can be in play with a department and with IT."
>
> **LUKE AESCHLEMAN**
> DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ANALYST

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