

Industry

- Higher Education

Customer Spotlight

- University of Minnesota

Industry Challenges

- System scalability and reliability
- Satisfying user expectations for availability and performance
- Enable reliable self-service

Oracle's PeopleSoft Enterprise Applications Suite

- Campus Solutions
- Financial Management
- Human Capital Management

Sun Solution

- Solaris™ 9 & 10 Operating Systems
- Sun Fire™ V240 Servers
- Sun Fire V890 Servers
- Sun Fire E25K Servers
- Sun Fire T2000 Servers

Solution Results

- One-stop self-service environment improves student satisfaction, retention, and graduation rates
- Administration of time-intensive HR and payroll systems simplified through self-service tools
- Systems scale easily to support a variety of applications across platforms
- Sun™ Update Connection performs Solaris software patches automatically, keeping system current and freeing staff for other assignments

"The Sun environment is extremely scalable and predictable, exactly what we needed to support our dynamic Oracle databases and PeopleSoft applications. We have not seen this level of performance and reliability with other systems, or this level of support from other vendors. Personally, I sleep better knowing that Sun is there."

Steve Cawley

Vice President, Office of Information Technology
University of Minnesota

Overview

The University of Minnesota is one of the most comprehensive public universities in the United States and ranks among the most prestigious. Together, the University's Twin Cities, Duluth, Crookston, Rochester, and Morris campuses comprise a \$3 billion organization that serves 65,000 students.

The University's enterprise systems are the responsibility of the Central Computing Operations group in the Office of Information Technology organization. "We measure return on investment (ROI) by our ability to drive the University's IT strategy, which supports the entire student experience, from recruitment through graduation," said Steve Cawley. "By running Oracle's PeopleSoft Enterprise Applications Suite on the Sun Solaris™ platform, we have been able to transform our entire enterprise computing infrastructure into a powerful and efficient self-service environment for our students and faculty."

Oracle's PeopleSoft Enterprise Applications on Campus

The University deployed Oracle's PeopleSoft Campus Solutions Suite to streamline the administration of critical and time-intensive services. Campus Solutions applications support student recruitment and admissions, financial aid services, and a self-service environment that lets students

research and select courses, schedule advisory sessions, and monitor their progress toward graduation. Oracle's PeopleSoft Enterprise Human Capital Management (HCM) Suite enables the University to manage its own healthcare and benefits system, providing a similar self-service experience for faculty and staff and greatly simplifying system administration.

With the addition of Oracle's PeopleSoft Enterprise Financial Management Applications in mid-2008, the University expects to increase control over all financial systems (i.e., receivables, billings, and grants management), providing access to higher quality data for strategic decision-making and a more robust reporting capability.

Sun Technology—Growing Along with University Operations

In 1996, the University replaced its aging mainframe architecture and searched for a vendor to help support emerging Web-based capabilities such as PeopleSoft's applications. Sun technology was chosen over competing platforms based largely on an existing Sun relationship with the University's academic research community. The University's IT staff also perceived Sun as a vendor that could ensure continuity of operations over time.

Since that time, the University of Minnesota has grown in stages, and now has a wide array of Sun servers, ranging from single-CPU systems like the Sun Fire™ V240 server to mainframe-like Sun Fire E25K enterprise servers running databases and other enterprise applications. The University has expanded its processing capacity in stages, by first installing a four- or eight-processor system frame and then adding system boards as required, thereby growing to hundreds of processors within the same frame. This staged approach has ensured adequate capacity to support a variety of applications during each stage of expansion.

Currently, four Sun Fire V890 servers support the Campus Solutions and HCM systems. According to Jim Hall, Systems Administration Manager for Central Computing Operations, the performance of the V890 servers has exceeded expectations. “We were initially running on three Sun Fire V890 servers, when one day we took one of the application servers out of production to do testing, then a second server needed to be taken down just before a period of queued registration. We were still able to complete the semester’s queued registration process, in one day, on one server, without a hitch. This would be the equivalent of a Fortune 500 corporation having 65,000 employees go online to change their health insurance options all in one day.”

To run the PeopleSoft Financial Management systems next year, the University will replace its more expensive mainframe environment with an existing Sun Fire E25K enterprise server to handle production financials and Sun Fire T2000 servers to run financial applications. A key benefit of the Sun Fire T2000 server is its

low power consumption and heat footprint, which allows for installation of additional Sun Fire T2000 servers without burdening the datacenter with additional overhead.

The Value of Sun Support

The University of Minnesota appreciates not only Sun’s ability to provide highly scalable, reliable platforms, but the availability of tools to help manage resources dynamically in complex environments. For example, Sun’s Update Connection automatically updates Solaris OS patches so the system stays current while IT staff focuses on higher level responsibilities—like driving the university’s IT strategy. “The level of expertise and RAS solutions Sun provides to support the customer and work with the other vendors has been invaluable,” said Steve Cawley. “There is no finger pointing with Sun—issues are resolved quickly and efficiently.”

Looking Ahead

The University of Minnesota staff looks forward to taking advantage of the new Solaris 10 OS capabilities such as ZFS and Zones and Containers. The University’s storage infrastructure is currently an EMC SAN environment running Veritas File System and Veritas Volume Manager. The IT staff sees ZFS as a means to achieve good or better functionality out of the Solaris OS for its SAN-connected systems, used primarily for databases.

The staff also anticipates the ability to replace existing VMware applications with Zones and Containers to run multiple virtual machines on a smaller set of physical hardware. The servers can still run independently as virtual servers, and by setting up multiple Zones and

Containers on a single machine, the University can save on power requirements as well as rack space and floor space.

Learn More

To learn more about Sun Microsystems and Oracle, please visit sun.com/oracle and oracle.com.

For more information on the University of Minnesota, visit umn.edu.

Collier Computing Company Supports Systems Implementation

The University enlisted Sun Education Partner (EMAP) Collier Computing to provide advice on system design and implementation. Collier Computing is a local Sun partner qualified to support Sun Fire E25K servers, is an Authorized Sun Education Center, and has extensive experience working with Sun’s Oracle Application Testing Center (SOATC). Working closely with the University’s IT Teams and PeopleSoft teams as well as the SOATC, Collier provided project management of the design, installation, implementation, test, and application readiness of the new systems. The University’s foresight in acquiring a campus-wide database license greatly facilitated the systems selection process by allowing an architecture decision to be made without the influence of licensing costs.