

“As a small school, we are highly dependent on our own resources. We believe that, for example, with PeopleSoft Contributor Relations, we can triple our donations in the first year.”

Ahmed El-Haggan, Chief Information Officer, Coppin College

## Coppin State College Turns Students into “Web Citizens”

As an urban campus, Coppin State College faces some unique challenges and opportunities. One of Coppin’s most significant challenges is the financial crunch that has swept through many state university systems, forcing colleges to find ways to accomplish more with the same or fewer resources. Compounding the problem is a growing need to make administrative and student services more cost-effective, convenient, and accessible.

“One of our goals is to immerse students in a technology-rich environment,” explained Ahmed El-Haggan, Coppin’s chief information officer. “We want them to utilize computers and the internet in every aspect of campus life.” Therefore, El-Haggan started looking for a web-centric system that would reflect the critical role the internet plays in education, commerce, and other aspects of everyday life. He found the solution in PeopleSoft Enterprise.

### “No Clients to Worry About”

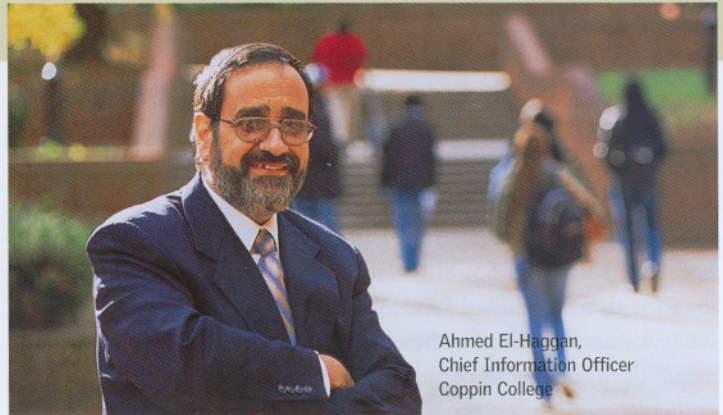
Though El-Haggan chose PeopleSoft for a number of reasons, its internet architecture was one of its strongest advantages. “With PeopleSoft, students and faculty members don’t need a special client in order to stay in touch and utilize our online services. It makes it much easier to stay connected when all you need is an internet browser. This is also an important benefit for support—as we roll out new features, there is no need to update hundreds of clients. Changes don’t create an administrative nightmare.”

Another big plus was the flexibility PeopleSoft gave El-Haggan when it came to Coppin’s computing environment. Every other solution under consideration would have forced a shift from Windows to UNIX, a move that he says the college just couldn’t afford. By running PeopleSoft on Microsoft Windows 2000 and SQL Server, Coppin can roll out valuable new applications and services at a price that is in line with budgetary realities.

A third important part of the decision was the skill and experience of Cedar Enterprise Solutions. As a PeopleSoft Gold Services Partner, Cedar has a dedicated practice that addresses the special business needs of higher education institutions. This experience, along with Cedar’s expertise, has been a critical factor in the ongoing success of Coppin’s PeopleSoft implementation. According to El-Haggan, “When Cedar says they are dedicated to real client success, they deliver it by providing resources who understand higher education. Cedar enabled positive change throughout the project.”

### Taking a Multiphased Approach

Once PeopleSoft was chosen, the next decision was to roll out human resources and payroll first, including time sheets, hiring workflow, and self-service management of emergency contact



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information. El-Haggan explains, “We knew that once faculty saw the benefits of taking a web-centric approach to these functions, it would create a high level of confidence in the system. The key was to pave the road for early success.”

It turned out to be such a successful implementation that Coppin quickly followed it up with PeopleSoft Enterprise Financial Management. Within a week, El-Haggan says, they were able to implement budget inquiry and report inquiry out of the box. Next came an online purchase order system that has streamlined the purchasing process and pushed decision making and expense approval down to the departmental level. The changes have been extremely popular with cost center managers, including El-Haggan. “I’m seeing things I’ve never been able to see before,” he says. “PeopleSoft’s drill-down capabilities are enabling us to see new levels of detail, and the web interface makes it possible to manage budgets at any time, from anywhere.”

### Next Steps: Student Administration and Contributor Relations

With PeopleSoft Enterprise HRMS 8.1, Financial Management, and Admissions in deployment, work is well under way on a number of other student systems, including registration, financial aid, gradebook, contributor relations, and more. The goal is to make Coppin student services as accessible as possible, an important capability at a school where many students work off-campus and often can’t make it to offices during regular hours. This convenience, in turn, further promotes the use of technology among the student population.

El-Haggan looks forward to the future with PeopleSoft with a mixture of anticipation and satisfaction. “Not only do these applications allow us to provide new services without increasing costs—in some cases, they have enabled us to greatly reduce them,” he says. Without PeopleSoft, El-Haggan estimates that the cost of providing some of these services would be several times higher. With PeopleSoft, they are easily within reach.

by Jamie Williams