Support for Highly Personalized Student Placements

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Introduction

Placement team uses Sonia to improve student placement operations.

- Piecemeal operations were streamlined
- Valuable data and communications hub
- Insights into site supervisors and placement sites

Support for Highly Personalized Social Work Field Placements

Leah Lazzaro, LSW, Director of Field & Professional Education and Sarah Brown, Assistant Director of Field Education for the School of Social Work at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey are members of a small administrative team. The duo manages placements for the School of Social Work, a school that prides itself on highly personalized placements for the Master's of Social Work and Bachelor's of Social Work programs.

Over the course of their many years as part of the Social Work program Ms. Lazzaro and the dean of the school had been cognizant of the piecemeal nature of their operations, and the issues related to having forms and surveys on paper and in various online tools. In addressing the situation, they first talked with the university about building a portal that would integrate with their university-wide learning management system, Desire 2 Learn.

Things changed course when they discovered a home-grown solution would not meet their needs. The team then set out looking for a solution that would be compatible with their student information system and import information to forms while also keeping track of field applications, field evaluations and learning agreements. After discussing and vetting a few different software solutions, they selected Sonia for its flexibility and ability to meet key requirements.

Through the use of a quality survey, the placement team has been able to gather detailed insights into site supervisors and placement sites and ensure top-quality placements for all their students.

Supporting a Range of Departmental Needs

Sonia supports personalized placements with forms and by using criteria to provide a short list of placement sites that students might be interested in. Students are also able to easily access the contact information for all the sites. Efficiencies and time savings are realized when mass email messages need to be sent to placement groups, and when copying placement groups and the associated timelines for the following year.

During implementation Sonia was configured according to the program's timelines and workflows. Now four years into the implementation, they are utilizing the product to streamline and improve departmental operations. Teachers, field supervisors and students benefit from having one central access point for sharing information.

Growing the Use of Sonia Beyond the School of Social Work

Leah and Sarah support the administrative team in outreach to and collaboration with other schools and departments, and Sarah has been a huge advocate for Sonia across the university. She conducts demos for other departments and shows the various ways Sonia can be set up to meet their specific program needs. The team looks forward to rolling Sonia out to other schools and departments.

"We use Sonia to support all our processes. It has freed up more time to focus on quality placements."

— Leah Lazzaro, LSW, Director of Field & Professional Education