With 1500 staff effective communication is essential to the University's culture.

GCU has three schools operating across two major campuses. The university undertook a requirements gathering exercise for a new staff portal in early 2012. This exercise was extended to consider the technical options. The recommendation from the activity was a solution using Oracle WebCenter.

Ether Solutions as leading Oracle WebCenter specialists were selected to implement the solution. The staff portal has been constructed using WebCenter Portal and WebCenter Content to provide a mixture of functionality encompassing:

- portal pages which contain information and news
- document management for holding policies and general university material
- discussion facilities to support dialogue between staff
- a calendar for university activity
- access to management information, including reports from OBIEE.

Implementation of the staff portal allows for the separation of the university web site from the operational material required by staff, freeing the web site to focus upon marketing and communications. This was identified as a key requirement for the project. Historically all material was on the web site.

To ensure adoption both during the pilot and the subsequent roll-out, GCU managed a separate stream of activities for the organisation change management aspects of the implementation.

"Leading software that provides a scalable, supportable platform for the future has been key"

said Matt Alexander
Head of Enterprise Information Services.

Oracle Products:

- WebCenter Portal
- WebCenter Content
- Secure Enterprise Search
- WebLogic
- Database

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"Ether Solutions worked collaboratively with GCU staff to share the challenges as well as the successes of the project"

"This approach has been essential"

said Nigel Williamson GCU Project Manager.

The Oracle WebCenter Composer tool is used by the portal content managers, as well as by the content contributors in each school and department of the university, to create / maintain the structure of the portal. The content of the pages is maintained with a WYSIWYG editor by content authors.

WebCenter Content facilities are used to deliver a virtual folder structure for the handling of documents both through the portal pages as well as through the use of Oracle DIS. Making "Drag & Drop" available from the desktop has encouraged adoption of the solution. This centralised document management is expected to reduce the use of shared network drives, avoid large attachments to emails and encourage sharing within as well as across departments.

Technically the solution is implemented using:

- a clustered pair of application servers running WebLogic with a centralised Oracle database
- Oracle Secure Enterprise Search (SES) delivers the portal search facility and provides the capability for including other University repositories in the future
- Oracle WebCenter Pagelet Producer is used to draw together information from other applications; For the first phase, this has included management information, delivering access to OBIEE and the integration of an Open Source calendar application "Bedework".

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