

From TALON to WINGS

PeopleSoft-developed system prepares to make its debut

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Since 2003, students at UWL have relied on TALON for everything from registering for their first classes to filling out their graduation applications. But according to Student Information Systems Project Manager Deborah Veglahn, TALON's hardware is getting old, the software is outdated, and the annual licensing fees are high. These factors combined with a mandate from the University of Wisconsin Common Systems Review Group to switch to a uniform upgraded system have brought about the upcoming change to WINGS.

WINGS is a student information system created by PeopleSoft Enterprise Campus Solutions. UW campuses throughout the state have been changing their student information systems to the PeopleSoft System. The new uniform system facilitates more efficient sharing and comparing of student information and progress throughout the UW system.

Veglahn said each campus is able to tweak their individual program's appearance to make it unique to their campus but the capabilities and information reporting systems will be the same throughout the state.

This is important for students who decide to transfer within the UW system. WINGS will offer information about transfer credits and an online application process reduces the paperwork involved and eases the process of transferring within the UW system. Also when students arrive at their new campus they will not have to learn an entirely new student information system.

A transition team consisting of personnel from the offices of Admissions, Student Records, Student Financials, Financial Aid, and Academic Advising along with information technology consultants have transferred all student information from TALON to WINGS.

The WINGS project is moving along on schedule and has already begun to phase out the aging TALON system. Freshmen students began using WINGS in September of last year and all new student applicants are currently using WINGS. "It has started out very smoothly with a little bit of tweaking here and there but no show stoppers," reported Veglahn.

She and Communications Assistant Jenna Klinner pointed out that any new system like this will require some minor work along the way and asked that students remain patient with ITS support staff while WINGS gets up and running. There is going to be a period of time during the transition when support staff will have their workload doubled while working with both the TALON and WINGS systems.

Klinner said WINGS will bring to the table all of the capabilities of TALON plus some helpful interactive new tools for students. All Registration and Financial Aid for summer and fall 2009 courses will be done in WINGS. The program offers a financial aid "to do" checklist so students can monitor their application process and be certain that they are on the right track towards receiving their financial aid.



Klinner offered some insight into the WINGS registration section. Students will be able to view the course catalog descriptions on site so the days of searching for several course descriptions while being timed out of your TALON session will be a distant memory. Klinner said interactive features like this should help to ease students' stress levels during registration.

Klinner and Veglahn said more information about the registration process and some new SNAP report features will be available at a later date. The team is working on a plan of communication with the student body to make the transition go as smoothly as possible.

For now, informational updates will be sent to the student body via e-mail sent from wings@uwlax.edu.