

The Score

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The monthly review of the **O**berlin **P**roject for **U**nified **S**ystems for the staff and faculty of Oberlin College

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BANNER in action: Students arrive for Fall '99

The new school year at Oberlin has begun, and brings with it the familiar start-of-the-semester events for both new and returning students: enrollment, registration, advisor meetings, and getting their lives ready for the new academic year.

Those things will probably never change, but this year, the underlying structure of those routine tasks is almost completely different. Since many offices that guide students through the first few weeks of classes are now live on BANNER, the staff in those offices are dealing with an entirely new way of doing things this fall. With the exception of the new PRESTO registration system, these changes are largely transparent to students: they still have to stand in line at enrollment, meet with their advisors before registering for classes, and fill out plenty of forms for a number of different student-service offices. But underneath the surface, the Registrar's Office, the Student

Accounts Office, Academic Advising, the Deans' Offices are trying to manage major changes at the same time as they're trying to help students manage the beginning of the new semester.

enrollment: the point of contact

For most students, the first order of business when they arrive on campus is Enrollment: picking up their OCIDs, filling out forms for the Registrar, and getting financial aid matters straightened out. Enrollment is how the College figures out who's actually here and who's not coming back, but students are always exasperated at the amount of time they end up standing in line. This year was no different: the line snaked around the Root Room as the afternoon wore on. What was different, however, was how those students were recorded in the system: now, whenever the Registrar's staff needed to look up a student status or enroll someone in the system, they did it in BANNER.

In addition, many of the forms that students waited so long to fill out are brand-new, having been redesigned in order to correspond with the new system. The "New Student Information Sheet" has replaced the old enrollment card, and contains some new data for first-year students to report in order for it to be entered into BANNER. There are new procedures for hold cards, for assigning student mailboxes in the College mailroom, for changing student addresses, and a number of other processes.

Even the most basic tasks, such as looking up a student's name or phone number, are entirely new, since staff and faculty are using a new system

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*At right:
Registrar's Office
staff members Jan
Blanco, Sharon
Bartok, and Janet
Simonovich assist
newly-arrived
students during
the frenzy of
Enrollment*



...feature

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(either BANNER itself or the web-based PRESTO) or newly-designed reports to get at that information.

the advising angle

For first-time students who have just arrived, a meeting with the faculty advisor is required. Those meetings are pre-scheduled: one of the documents in a new student's enrollment packet lists the student's advisor and the time and place of the first advising appointment.

Sounds fairly simple, but since the data about new students (and their advisors) now lives in BANNER, the process for setting up every new student with a time and place for that first meeting had to be completely reengineered. Performed in the two Deans' offices (College and Conservatory), the new process involves downloading the data from BANNER into a file that can be put into an Excel spreadsheet and manipulated from there by Associate Dean of the Conservatory Ellen Sayles and her staff, and Associate Dean of Student Academic Affairs David Hershiser and his staff.

Faculty members have also had to get used to living on Planet BANNER for advising purposes. Many first-year students arrive at that first meeting with concerns about being able to get into the classes that they'd like to take, and for this, PRESTO comes in handy. A faculty member can log on to PRESTO during an advising session, use the Course Search function to find specific courses or subjects in which the student is interested, and produce a listing of courses that shows the available seats open in each course. Of course, students can also perform this function themselves when it comes time for the big cahuna of the first few days of the semester: Registration.

the big cahuna: registration

Much of the stress and frustration of the beginning of the semester is saved for New Student Registration and the first day of the Add/Drop period—the two days when first-years sign up for courses for the first time and returning students modify the schedules for which they registered in April.

Registration is the place where the implementation of BANNER

is most apparent to students, who are still getting used to PRESTO replacing the old REGISTER system. However, since first-year students have never used anything but PRESTO, for them the system was just one more thing to get used to about Oberlin.

On Monday, August 30, all first-years were advised to log on to PRESTO for the first time in the Biggs computer lab so that they could be assisted with registration if necessary. On hand in Biggs from 9 am to 9 pm during New Student Registration were Associate Registrar Ken Gilson and Administrative Assistants Sheila Harley and Carol Nitchman. Gilson, Harley, and Nitchman spent the day roaming around the lab, answering questions and pointing out features of PRESTO.

In addition, Nitchman also spent some time involved in a new BANNER process: entering CAL labels into BANNER. As the new students arrived in Biggs, many of them were clutching CAL labels given to them by professors as proof of entry into classes requiring instructor consent. Nitchman took the CALs, logged into BANNER, and entered the consent into the system as students were registering in Biggs. This allowed the students to see online the classes for which they had already been given consent.

Two days later, on Wednesday, September 1, it was the returning students' turn to confront PRESTO during the infamous Add/Drop period. Add/Drop is a difficult time for students, the Registrar's Office, and for the techies supporting PRESTO, since students are incredibly anxious to get the courses that they need before classes start the next day. The result is a tremendous load on the system, and although most students had no problems with their sessions on PRESTO, some of the same problems that surfaced in April registration also reared their heads during Add/Drop. The system could be very slow during the afternoon hours—historically the time of day with the heaviest registration traffic—and Analyst/Programmer Dave Waldron again spent most of his day carefully monitoring the system to resolve any load problems. Some course enrollment counts were off by the end of the day as well, meaning that Registrar Lori Gumpf and Analyst/Programmer Katie Styer spent a good deal of time finding and fixing the incorrect counts. And of course, there were the typical registration problems: forgotten user ID's and PINs, confusion over exactly how to do something in PRESTO, or frustration when a class was full or required consent.

Despite these problems, Planet Oberlin keeps spinning along as usual. Classes have begun, students are registered for them, and all seems well with the world—until November registration comes along, that is. ■

opus notes

New OCIDs: beware the extra zero

During the enrollment period this fall, all students (both new and continuing) received new OCID cards. The new cards show the BANNER ID, otherwise known as the "T number," which has replaced the old 900-number used in the legacy system.

Campus offices should be aware, however, that the T numbers as they appear on the OCID contain one extra zero right after the T. This does not affect how the cards are read when swiped, but it does mean that staff should be sure to eliminate the extra zero when entering T numbers into BANNER.

The inconsistency is due to the ways in which BANNER and the new AT&T system, which processes and stores the information for OCIDs, handle data differently. ■

Associate Reg. search underway

With the departure of Ken Gilson, a search is currently underway for a new Associate Registrar. The new Associate Registrar will hold a three-year term appointment in order to assist Registrar Lori Gumpf with the remainder of the BANNER implementation and the post-conversion work. ■

BANNER documentation online

BANNER users looking for College-specific system documentation should look to the "Documentation" section of the OPUS web site, which contains the most current materials relating to a number of BANNER functions. This includes basic navigation, key functions, changing your password, searching the system, and the most up-to-date data entry standards. PRESTO documentation for both students and faculty is also online.

If you need SCT documentation rather than College materials, please contact opus@oberlin.edu. ■

BANNER Banter: Searching the system

It's been beaten into everyone's head by now that BANNER is an "integrated system." Okay. But what does that really mean? Well, for all practical purposes it means that everyone who uses BANNER uses the same information stored in one central place; specifically, that every person (students, employees, retirees, etc.) and every non-person (vendors, schools, banks, etc.) has ONE core record in the system. All the processes performed in BANNER work off of that single record, so that when someone in the Registrar's Office, say, looks up Joe Schmo's address or phone number, it's the exact same address or phone number that the Student Accounts Office is looking at next door, since they're essentially looking at the same record.

So as you can imagine, being able to *find* that one record in BANNER is critically important, and sometimes finding the record you want is not as easy as it sounds. BANNER is a huge system and contains a ton of person and non-person records, including all current students, all

current employees (and all their beneficiaries), all retirees, every vendor with which the College does business, and eventually (come October when Admissions goes live) every prospective student that expresses interest in applying to Oberlin. That's thousands and thousands of individual records—you get the picture. So being able to search the system quickly and effectively is important, and there are a number of tools to help you do just that.

The search forms in BANNER are called FOIIDEN and SOAIDEN—the Finance module uses FOIIDEN, and everyone else uses SOAIDEN. You can use either form to search on ID (the T-number or the SSN) or on the name (or parts of the name if you don't have or can't read the full name). If your module uses SOAIDEN to search, you also have the option of using SOAIDNS, the search detail form, to look for records. Below are a few tips on searching the system successfully. ■

In SOAIDEN, shown at left, you can search for records using the BANNER T number, the Social Security Number, the name, or pieces of the name (see "Wildcarding Tips," below).

- Remember that **BANNER is case-sensitive** when you're searching on names. If you're searching for "Big Dawg" but enter "big dawg" into the name fields, you won't find the record you're looking for.
- Use your Tab key to move between the fields in each row. Use the down arrow key to move between rows.
- If you're searching on a T number, remember to capitalize the T. If you're searching on the SSN, you do **not** need to enter dashes.
- When you have entered your search criteria, you can use the mouse to click the **Search** button at the bottom of the screen, or you can use the Apple + F11 keystroke to execute the query.

In all the modules except the Finance module, clicking the **Detail** button at the bottom of SOAIDEN will take you to SOAIDNS, the Search Detail form, shown at right. SOAIDNS allows you to see more detailed information about records, including address information. This can help make sure that the record you've found is actually the record you want.

- In the top part of SOAIDNS, the search row will show you the ID number and name as well as the person's birthdate and gender.
- The bottom part of SOAIDNS will show you address information for any address types entered into BANNER so far.

Tips on wildcarding

BANNER is very picky about the way you query for information in the database, especially names. The query feature called wildcarding is useful, because it allows you to search on pieces of the name rather than the entire name. This is especially helpful if you're not sure how the name is spelled.

The two wildcard symbols are % and _ . Both stand for any character; the difference is that % stands for any amount of characters, whereas _ can only stand for one character. You can use wildcards in a number of ways. You can also use the symbols as many times as you want in a query. For example:

- All entries that begin with "Ab" = **Ab%**

- All entries that contain "ab" = **%ab%**
- All entries that have "ab" as the final two characters = **%ab**
- All entries that have "b" as the second character = **_b%**
- All entries that begin with "A" and have a "b" somewhere in them: **A%b%**

Two years of knowing *The Score*

Believe it or not, this issue marks the second anniversary of *The Score*. Because of the amount of information about OPUS that the newsletter contains, we're providing an index of articles that have appeared in *The Score* over the past two years. Use this index to locate past articles that you're interested in or would like more information about. And keep in mind that you can always contact opus@oberlin.edu for information about any aspect of the project, or to suggest a story idea for a future issue of *The Score*.

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- Introduction to OPUS
- OPUS timeline
- OPUS Glossary
- Introduction to FAMIS

October 1997

- Human Resources tackles BANNER
- OPUS Glossary
- BANNER trainer tells all

November 1997

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- A sneak preview of BANNER
- Finance's "great adventure"

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- Welcome to your new paycheck
- The team that made it happen
- Dear OPUS: Frequently Asked Questions
- Buying new machines for BANNER

March 1998

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- Hanging out with the Analyst/Programmers

April 1998

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- Data in, data out: Reporting tools
- Upgrading to BANNER 3.0

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- FAMIS goes live on work order system
- Welcome to BANNER 3.0
- Financial Aid takes on BANNER

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- BANNER in action at Oberlin
- The new look of computing at Oberlin
- Archiving electronic documents

November 1998

- Admissions prepares for BANNER
- BANNER conference in Terre Haute
- BANNER pays off in Payroll
- *The Score* reader survey

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- BANNER and Y2K: open letter from SCT
- Keeping Oberlin's systems secure

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- After OCCAM: producing the course catalog

March 1999

- Mock registration a success
- Keeping up with BANNER security
- OPUS timeline

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- Student Accounts and BANNER
- Reporting tools and BANNER
- Residential Life prepares for CBORD

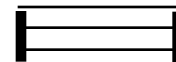
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- Student Records goes live on BANNER
- The future of SR

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The
Score



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