

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing adopts content collaboration to successfully comply with new legislation.

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) is the licensing agency for all teacher training programs in the state of California. With the powerful goal of ensuring that those who educate the children of California are academically and professionally prepared, the Commission is charged with implementing state standards across teacher preparation and subject matter preparation in over 85 colleges and universities as well as 150 induction programs in school districts across the state.



The Challenge

In 1998 the California legislature passed Senate Bill No. 2042, establishing broad new standards for the training and preparation of teachers. Adopted by the CCTC in 2001, this radical series of reforms required compliance by every teacher preparation program in the state in just 32 months. This posed an enormous challenge for the Commission because demonstrating compliance required each program to respond with a large volume of supporting documentation such as course descriptions, syllabi, and training handbooks. Traditionally, the Commission's document review process included extensive peer review meetings and feedback to program sponsors for each and every program prior to formal approval. The CCTC recognized that a project of this magnitude required an efficient document review process if they were to meet the December 2003 transition date for all programs to comply with the new SB 2042 program standards.

Why DocuShare Interact?

Luckily, the solution to the CCTC's need for a streamlined review process was close at hand. The CCTC consultant heading up the SB 2042 implementation, Phyllis Jacobson, had been a part of an earlier program that allowed her to see first-hand the collaborative capabilities of DocuShare's Interact module, then known as Sparrow Web™. Originally developed by Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), Sparrow Web was the first iteration of a powerful collaboration application that allows multiple users to contribute content to the same online document or Web page via a simple Web interface. When the Commission was charged with ensuring compliance with the new legislation, Jacobson realized that putting the volumes of required documentation provided by each teacher preparation and/or induction program into Interact could rapidly speed the process of peer review and comment.

While time was a critical pressure the CCTC faced, Jacobson also realized that the Commission's budget would likely not be able to accommodate multiple review sessions as had previously been the norm for the peer review process. However, using DocuShare Interact would enable Jacobson to reduce costs by moving a majority of the peer reviews to a collaborative online environment. And because Interact was Web-based and easy to use, it didn't require extensive IT resources to implement, manage, or train users—a critical component as the CCTC's IT staff had other time-critical projects to manage. Plus Interact was platform-agnostic and the Web-based interface eliminated security or firewall issues that might prevent users from easily accessing it. It seemed the ideal solution.

"Interact was perfect for us because it required no special skills to use, no software download, no problems with different platforms or firewalls, and just minimal training to use."

—Phyllis Jacobson
Consultant, California Commission
on Teacher Credentialing



The Results

The Commission's pilot of Sparrow Web, followed later by a full implementation of Interact, was a significant success. With the extensive support of the programmers and technical team at PARC, and later from Xerox reseller partner WaterWare Internet Services, Inc., not only did the CCTC achieve 100% compliance with the SB 2042 program standards for the hundreds of teacher credentialing programs they approve, they were able to create a streamlined methodology for review that met with universal praise for its ease of use and time savings.

Building Applications with the DocuShare Interact SDK

In upgrading CCTC from the Sparrow Web pilot to DocuShare Interact, the Xerox Value-added Reseller WaterWare Internet Services, Inc. (www.waterware.com) took advantage of the Interact Software Development Kit (SDK) to customize the collaborative environment the Commission required. WaterWare was charged with migrating the Commission's vast existing program document file system into the Interact application, customizing the application, and hosting the Interact Web site. This relationship effectively provided the CCTC staff with dedicated the IT support they needed to successfully manage their legislative compliance.

For more information on the capabilities of the DocuShare Interact SDK, go online to http://docushare.xerox.com/ds30/ds30_interact.html

Previous peer reviews required several weeks to complete. The process would begin with the initial submission of hard copy documentation from the teacher preparation programs, followed by document review by live peer review teams, during which requests for clarification would be appended to the documents. These requests would then be collected by CCTC staff, transcribed, and mailed to the teacher programs so they might have the opportunity to respond to the committee's requests. Updated documentation would be sent back for yet another live peer review, with the process repeating itself until compliance with all program standards was achieved.

The CCTC's new process began with a request for documentation in both hardcopy and in a digital format, allowing for a quick upload into Interact's collaborative environment and enabling almost instant access for the peer reviewers. This refined process enabled the reviewers and program administrators to work with the materials at their convenience and from any geographical location or operating system. Once the peer review was complete, the teacher preparation and/or induction program sponsors were able to rapidly view comments from reviewers, and respond electronically. CCTC staff were then able to upload the new documentation directly into Interact, and provide clarifying information as necessary. In this way, the Commission was able to efficiently communicate with large teams of people in a standard format, and give them a standard way to respond. Jacobson

estimates that the review process for material resubmitted in response to peer review feedback was reduced from several weeks to a matter of days, and the number of people accessing Interact for document review and networking reached over 500.

Interact also required very little training for the reviewers or program administrators to use. Jacobson estimates that an average of 15 minutes of training either in person or over the phone got most users up and running with no problems. And keeping the peer review program intact, without requiring a large budget for travel to and from meetings, meant that each program was reviewed with the appropriate expertise, ensuring the best possible teacher preparation and/or induction programs statewide to meet all CCTC-adopted standards under SB 2042.

The efficiency and time-savings made possible by Interact rapidly spread to other activities within the Professional Services Division of the Commission, encouraging its adoption for similar review and response processes, such as new school administrator preparation standards and other programs.

The Future

The process improvements were so significant that the CCTC has implemented Interact as a communication medium for networking with those programs and institutions that are currently testing the CCTC's Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA), an assessment tool intended for use with teacher candidates in teacher preparation programs. Interact enables network members to share issues, documents and practices in a secure format.

The Commission may next utilize DocuShare's document management capabilities to capture and manage the voluminous records it's required to maintain, taking advantage of DocuShare's seamless integration with Interact to manage hard copy and digital information more rapidly and with greater control. The Commission staff members are pleased with the results already achieved and are ready to continue to bring greater efficiency and productivity to internal processes in the future.

About DocuShare

DocuShare® 3, a highly intuitive and secure, Web-based document management application, enables clients in document-intensive environments to dynamically capture, manage, and share information. Easy to use, deploy, and administer, DocuShare is the only cross-platform, document management solution to significantly reduce IT requirements resulting in lower TCO (total cost of ownership) and fast ROI (return on investment).

For more information on DocuShare, contact a Sales Representative at 1-800-735-7749, or visit us online at <http://docushare.xerox.com>.