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**INTRODUCING CENTRAL
UNIVERSITY'S NEW
APPLICATION PROGRAM**

IST 352 Final Project
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Executive Summary

Admissions are in charge of ensuring that all prospective students get their applications in and that new students are accepted to the school based on the criteria they present. There must be admissions counselors because they help students through the application process and review the submitted applications. The admissions team's goal is to admit new students to the school and to do this. They need to create a system that helps organize student applications. The system has to be able to filter the applicants based on their resume and whether or not the criteria they provide fits the school, and they should also get back to students about their acceptance to the school promptly.

All systems must be linked strategically to company goals. The admissions systems' goal is to increase the university's enrollment by providing a system to review and accept students that align with its objectives. In terms of tactical approach for the organization, the university would use the top-down planning approach. This form of planning tries to gain a broad understanding of the needs of the admissions system. Some of the advantages of using a top-down planning approach are that the organization gets a broader perspective, improved integration, improved management support, and planners can better understand the admissions system's role. The process conducts an extensive analysis of the university's mission, objectives, and strategy to determine each purpose's requirements. The university must understand its objectives related to its mission and goals to create conditions for admission properly.

From this system, the investment return is expected to be a net positive for our academic institution. Among tangible benefits, the university will experience financial gain from the admissions process. Despite the investment involved in its creation and maintenance, the application fees from prospective students and the potential tuition paid by accepted students

give financial returns. Our system's intangible benefits include advertising and publicity of the university. It gains recognition and likely popularity for an efficient, unbiased, and progressive admissions team, leading to potential gains in future prospective students and donors.

The significant features of this admissions system include, above all, providing an accessible platform for students to understand how the application process works and how to apply to the university. Prospective students will also be given information on scholarships and financial aid if necessary. The system also must include a database of applicants' information and acceptance process statuses. There must also be a categorical organization of applications based on acceptance criteria, and then a filtering process based on these criteria and standards in a time-sensitive manner. An unbiased and critically trained review team will review the remaining applications to determine the overall acceptance status.

Mission Statement

Central University seeks to provide a safe learning environment for its students, faculty members, staff, and stakeholders. Our goal is to be a diverse and inclusive University where students can excel in their studies to prepare them for success in a wide range of career opportunities for the future. Through our improved application system, these goals are maintained by allowing for a wide range of prospective students to quickly and efficiently showcase their achievements in their application to this university.

Problem Identification

There are a few problems that Central University has identified. For this project, we will focus on just one: analyzing current admissions processes to determine the system's flaws to make improvements. Central University believes that the process of applying should be easy for prospective students. As a result, we want to ensure that our admissions team can easily navigate

the system so that the admissions process is efficient and effective for all parties.

Sponsor

Our sponsor for this system will be the Central University alumni base. We have selected the university's alumni as a sponsor because we believe that they are passionate about their alma mater, so it would be natural for them to want to invest in the future of prospective students of Central University. Since the alumni have a strong connection to the school, we will reach out to them about investing in improving the new students' application process.

Start and Completion Date

Start Date: January 1st, 2021

Completion Date: December 31st, 2021

Planning and developing this system must start well before the desired implementation date, which ideally would be the fall 2022 academic semester. It is ideal for an institution to have a structured and usable application platform before university application deadlines, typically occurring throughout the winter and spring seasons. By starting the implementation for the beginning of the next spring semester, prospective students will have access to our improved system right in time to begin their application process.

The system needs to be developed by the latest December 31st, 2021. When students start applying to schools, the entire system needs to be created before making sure they run. Ensuring the system runs before the completion date is important so that any errors encountered within the system can be corrected before the application is sent out to new students.

Although the system will be completed by the end of 2021, it will be implemented for the future class of 2026 students. The system needs to be started and finished ahead of the projected date that students would be using the system to ensure that there is ample time for faculty and department members to learn the new system. Students usually begin the application process in the fall semester of their senior year, so our completion date will allow for

Project Evaluation

For the system to be effective, it must align with the goals and mission statement of Central University. As aforementioned, it is imperative that our system is efficient and can effectively manage thousands of prospective student applications. To ensure that our system can be used and managed correctly, we have to ensure that our department has the resources readily available to solve any issues that may arise and know how to manage risks as they come.

This system will require a full team working closely with the system for its building, implementation, and maintenance. This team will work from the start of the system preparation date to the very end and be responsible for carrying out its primary responsibilities.

Our department must understand how to run the system and understand the system's inner workings to be a resource for department members who will learn how to use it once it is completed. For accurate data input, department members have to understand how to use the system, and everyone has to know how to manage the potential risks involved with said system. We are hopeful that our department members will find our system easy to manage to ensure the system's longevity.

Project Scope

This project's scope is significant due to the extent of its impact within Central University's admission system and affects the university's overall operations. It is crucial for an

efficient admissions system because that is directly related to the institution's perpetuity. This project's scope looks at the process of admitting students to Central University holistically. The course will be created, so the application is easily accessible for prospective students and admissions officers.

It will also help manage applications and keep information of accepted, declined, and waitlisted students organized. People working in all areas of the admissions system will be trained on the updated system to access and view data.

The admissions scope ranges from building a system and making sure that it is manageable and runs for an extended period of time without any significant issues.

Problem Solution

The goal of the Central University Admissions Department is to improve the functionality and accessibility of our application system for our applicants and department members. To achieve our goal, we must ensure that we create an application system that does not cause significant issues within the application process and remain Central University's primary application system. With that being said, all parts of Central University's Admissions Department, from application reviewers to IT Managers, must work together to make sure that the system they propose functions correctly.

The new application system will be made through the system developers. Once they have their proposed application system done, they will introduce it to the other system departments. IT managers will be essential aspects of the system because they will need to be trained on how the system functions and then teach the application reviewers how the system works. People working with this system must be able to troubleshoot and fix the minor issues they encounter.

The application system's primary focuses include application development and

maintenance, IT management, and employee management. Focusing on these areas will allow our system to be created and implemented within Central University while ensuring that all parts of the system function correctly.

Estimated Cost

Our system's cost is not estimated to be cheap, and the organization is estimated to spend a fair amount of money on improving the applications system. With improvements in these systems, it will make the application process more efficient for both students applying to the school and workers who work in the admissions office. When choosing how to spend money, the team needs to work together to determine if they want to purchase in-house software or not. Within our system, we also know that both tangible and intangible costs come with it. It is also essential to keep an eye on the intangible costs within our system that we might face since they could rack up.

In terms of tangible costs, the first cost we will be dealing with is getting our system set up and running. After the procedure is developed and implemented, we need to keep in mind that there will be maintenance costs that we have to deal with. Within most systems, maintenance is essential in ensuring that the system continues to run, so keeping up with the maintenance cost is vital for our system to succeed. Another tangible cost that we know, we will have to pay for no matter what is employees' training. First, we need to ensure that all of our IT employees and project developers have the proper training to create the new admissions system that we need. To ensure that they stay with us, they will need to be offered a salary appealing to them and other benefits. Along with IT employees and project developers' training, it is vital to train the application reviewers and educate them on how the system works and show them how to fix minor issues that they might encounter.

Intangible costs are also something that our system suspects that we will have to deal with. We must try to get our employees engaged and excited about the system they are working for and their purpose. There is no direct money being spent on this; however, it is still imperative to keep our system successful. Getting managers comfortable with the system is essential, being that they might not know how to utilize the system at first is very important. Another intangible cost, which is very important, is time. Central University needs to keep in mind the time and schedule of their application system to meet the deadline for everything.

Estimated Benefits

Our enhanced application system has both tangible and intangible benefits. Financially, due to the likely influx of applications, the university will receive economic gain from each application fee. There is also an opportunity for tuition growth, as more students are likely to apply to the university with our system, and thus more may be accepted. Another crucial benefit includes publicity as our university gets recognized for having a diverse and efficient application process. With our new system being put into place, time will also become a benefit. Time will now be necessary because our system managers will analyze problems or other areas within the system more efficiently. Designing a new system will also be beneficial because it will be in a centralized system that allows for the information put into the system to be more organized and accurate. Also, without a centralized system, it takes much longer to get all of the data together. Updating and enhancing the admissions system will allow Central University to benefit from financial benefits to communication benefits.

Feasibility

Our system's feasibility will be assessed in different ways, including scheduling, economics, operational and technical support. In terms of scheduling feasibility, this is important

to ensure that the project is done before the deadline. Most importantly, setting up the application and designing it needs to be done well before it is sent out to students. This way, the application can be tested, and any errors found within the system can be fixed before the application is made open to the public. Different staff members, including application reviewers and IT managers, need to be trained on the system before sending them out to the students. Ensuring the application design is due before the deadline is critical in making sure that it runs smoothly.

Economics feasibility is also crucial because it will help the project managers ensure they stay within their proposed budget. For our project, the cost is not a significant factor, but it is still essential to keep in mind designing the application system.

Operational feasibility is also one of the most important factors within our system because we want to make sure that our network runs. If there are any problems within the system, we want to ensure that they can be fixed right away. Along with that, it is vital to keep improving our system in terms of technological advancements. If something will make our system easier to use, it is important to update that. All admissions team members must communicate with one another to ensure that the system is running and everything is under control.

Lastly, technical feasibility is vital for an admissions system. This will be how the application will be administered to students. Having an excellent technical support team educated on our network is essential if students or other staff members come into any application problems. It is also crucial for the team to come up with a cost for the technical support they want to spend to keep continual support.

Overall Assessment

Thinking about the costs, benefits, and feasibility of an admissions system, we believe it is worth initiating this project. Implementing this system is important in terms of the future of the school. The cost of designing the admissions system might seem like a lot, but thinking about it, in the long run, is well worth it, and the benefits will outweigh the cost.

Overall this project all seems to be feasible. The most issues that people are most likely to encounter are technical issues; however, with a strong IT team, we should be able to keep those issues under control and stop them before they get worse. With a new admissions system in place, the school will have the chance to see a higher number of students applying to the school and encounter fewer issues in terms of the application process.

Interview Questions and Answers

_____ Creating our new system for the university was vital to conduct interviews with both team members and stakeholders. Anyone involved in the implementation and maintenance process was interviewed to develop a productive and efficient group that can withhold the system's needs. Listed below are individuals that we interviewed and their answers to our questions.

- Dean of Admissions
 - Q: How do you typically organize the pool of university applicants?
 - A: In most application systems, university administrators will use an extensive database to store applicant data and information. The pool's organization is conducted through application submission and the alphabetization of applicants' last names.
 - Q: What is looked for in prospective students?

- Desirable candidates likely have a respectable grade point average and standardized test scores for any university. In our institution, this standard is upheld alongside the desire for applicants to have diverse skills and extracurricular activities that make them well rounded and unique.
- Admission Committee Members
 - Q: What qualifications have the most considerable weight on a student's application?
 - A: Typically, quantified data is the most crucial aspect of an application's initial admissions process. This information (test scores and GPA) is used to filter out outstanding applications. From there, a student's statement and essay responses carry considerable weight in the decision-making process as they showcase a student's personality and unique characteristics.
- Vice-Chancellor
 - Q: What are the university's mission and vision?
 - A: Central University strives to be an institution that breeds success and innovation from both the faculty and students. We aim to accomplish these goals by having a diverse and ambitious student body that can learn from our esteemed faculty. By creating this environment, students are not only prepared for their future careers, but they also gain ample opportunities while studying here, through involvement in research, studying abroad, and campus organizations.
- Office of Strategic Planning and Budget
 - Q: What is the annual budget for the admissions process?

- A: The admissions system composes a large portion of the university's annual budget as they must accommodate for many faculty members and continual necessities.
- Q: What determines the application fee for applicants?
 - A: Most applicants must pay the one-time application fee of \$60.00 to apply to the university. These payments are used to fund the application platform that we use. Exceptions to this are allowed for veteran applications and needs-based applicants who indicate this information in the initial portion.
- IT Department
 - Q: How will the new application system be maintained?
 - A: Maintenance is one of the most crucial aspects of having a successful application system. Constant review and assessment of the online platform and in-house databases will ensure that everything is properly functioning. Consistent training plans will also be utilized always to handle any issues that could arise with the system.
 - Q: What attributes does a sound application system have?
 - A: On the applicant side of the process, an attractive and user-friendly application platform is desirable. It must serve as an efficient and functional interface to not dissuade anyone from using it. In the system, organized databases are a must, mainly since this system uses extensive personal information.
- Accepted Students

- Q: What made you interested in applying to Central University?
 - A's: The university's expansive fields of study were an attractive aspect that allowed me to choose multiple majors that suited my interests.
 - The university's diversity encouraged me to apply since it felt like an environment welcoming to all communities.
 - I applied to CU because of the outstanding alumni that have studied here as well. Because of this, I feel confident that my education will help me achieve a successful career.
- Student Veterans
 - Q: What made you decide to pursue higher education at Central University?
 - A's: Central University has a great program for Veterans that makes higher education a realistic and affordable opportunity.
 - Through campus organizations, Central University allows Veterans to connect with other students to encourage diverse discourse and community support.

Business Requirements/Rules

Requirements:

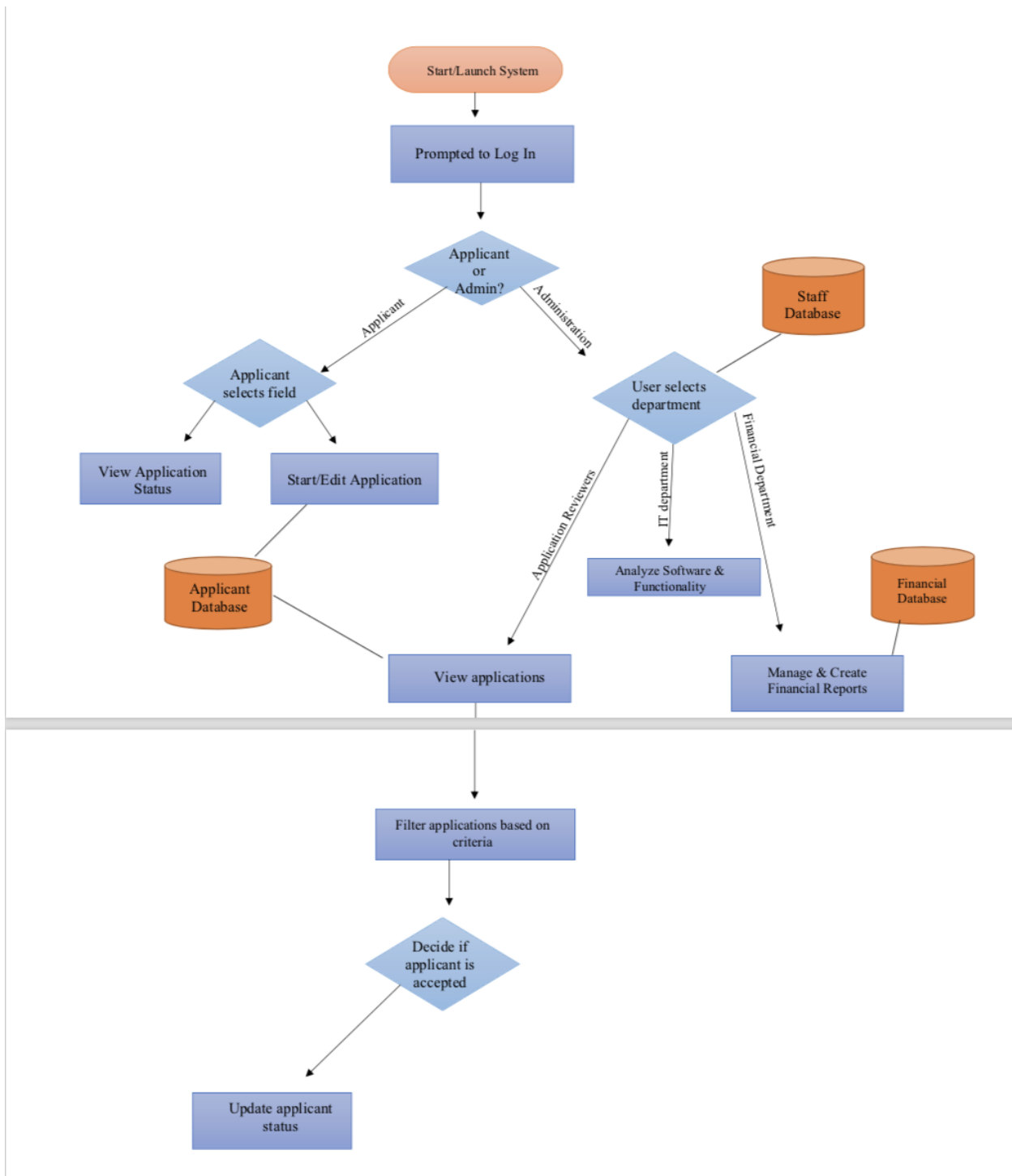
- Provide an accessible platform for students to understand how the application process works and to apply to the University
- Maintain a database of applicants information and acceptance process status
- Sort out all of the student applications into different categories based on the criteria
- Filter applications during the acceptance process based on different standards and achievements

- Give students the information on scholarship information and be able to direct them towards someone in the financial aid department if need be
- Contact the IT department to help create software that will help organize the applicants in a more timely manner.

Business Rules:

- Create a checklist for when the application is first looked at so that you can see if you should keep looking at the application or if it doesn't fit the school's criteria (ex: GPA or sat score)
- Ensure that application reviewers are unbiased and well aware of the necessary criteria and acceptance standards
- Review applications promptly to ensure they are completed on time.

Design Process Model



System Input Form

Below is an example of one of our input forms, precisely the applicant account form. Our input forms include applicants creating their accounts to our platform, entering their information for applications, and application reviewers entering their applications' feedback.

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY	
CREATE ACCOUNT/LOG IN	
Name:	
Email:	
Password:	
Confirm Password:	

System Output Form

Below is an example of one of our output forms. Our forms of output include acceptance/denial notifications to applicants and resources for accepted students.

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY	
Congratulations! Jane Doe, we as the admissions committee are excited to announce that you have been accepted as a student to Central University. Your remarkable application influenced us in making this decision, and we look forward to your future at C.U. You have until May 1 to ensure your commitment to Central University for the upcoming semester. In the meantime, you will be sent a list of academic and financial advisors to contact for any concerns you may have. Again, congratulations, we hope to see you on campus in the fall.	
	Sincerely, C.U. admissions committee

Data Dictionary

Admissions File:

Name	Type	Format	Description	Example
AppPool_Num	Integer	#####	Overall number of applicants	30,234
ACPT_APP	Integer	####	Number of accepted students	5,123
REJ_APP	Integer	#####	Number of rejected students	10,235
WLST_APP	Integer	####	Number of waitlisten students	3,654
STU_SERV	Text		Student Serives	Central University Student Services
REV_BOARD	Text		Review Board Information	Jane Doe is part of the board
CMT_STU_INFO	Text		Committed student information	Student name, DOB, address, gender
STU_MAJOR	Text		Student's Major	Information Management & Technology
STU_ADV	Text		Student's Advisor	Jane Doe
STU_RES	Text		Where the student will live on campus	Ernie Davis Hall
STU_FIN_AID	Integer	#####	Student's financial Aid	#####
STU_SCHOL	Integer	#####	Student's Scholarship	#####
GUARD_INFO	Text		Student's Guardian (Parent) Info	Jane Doe and Adam Doe

System File:

Name	Type	Format	Description	Example
SYS_USER	Text		Person's Username	jane.doe
USER_PASS	Secure String		user's password	<password>
USER_GROUP	Text		If user is a worker/student	admissions worker or student

Department Responsibilities

- Accepting and filtering student application
 - Can be done through an algorithm at first, and then after that holistic application review from the department
- Deciding what criteria to apply and assess for a given academic year
- Assessing applications for eligible criteria
- Contacting prospective students when necessary
- Conducting interviews with prospective students
- Responding to information requests
- Advise prospective students on programs offered and admissions procedures
- Referring accepted students to the scholarship information

- Assessing prospective students with financial capabilities and needs
- Providing students assistance to complete enrollment forms
- Arrange orientation programs
- Host prospective student receptions and tours
- Maintain a database of prospective student information
- Ensure the filtering process is numerically proportional to the number of students accepted in a given semester.

Risk Mitigation

- **Solutions to prevent potential risks**
 - Identification of risk possibilities before they have the chance to occur
 - Consistent documentation and record-keeping by technical staff to reiterate their work on the project and any additional plans
 - Large-scale training within the organization to create multiple equipped staff members, increasing the capabilities of risk management within the organization
 - Observations of risk management, ensuring that staff members know what to expect potentially

Implementation Plan

To understand how the system will implement the information above:

- **Testing**
 - Test all parts of the application to make sure that they are working and accessible

- Create a Test Data Set (fake students, applications, etc. that can be run through the system)
- Run through potential issues or challenges to make sure the system and staff can handle them if they ever actually occur
- Test the part of the application where students can reach out if they have questions regarding their application
 - Kind of like the help center
- Test the part of the system that will show students the status of their application
- Test to make sure the software for the system generating applicants information stays up to date
- Make sure that the accepted student's information is carried on through the next steps.
 - Finding an advisor and being able to get in touch with the financial aid office
- Create the system so that applications can be filed into different categories based on demographic region people are from or their GPA/test scores
 - Create fake applications at first to test this to make sure applications can be filed properly
- Report any bugs/problems and then fix them, continue testing until everything runs correctly

Maintenance Plan

- **Solutions to maintain the system**
 - Play the adaptive maintenance role
 - This will keep the system running smoothly, but maybe in the foreseeable future, a student's requirements to be accepted and selecting processes may change over time.
 - Keeping a business plan that can adapt keeps the cunning system edge.

Create Changes By:

- **Training**
 - Create specialized training to develop the skills and abilities of the final application reviewers to understand their role responsibilities and keep in mind the universities goals
 - Final application reviewers will go through a series of guidelines on how to select an appropriate candidate.
- **Periodical Testing**