HBMSU Smart Campus

Technology Development division at HBMSU

Challenges/Motivation

We used to have many learning systems that operated in silos, and where users had different credentials for each system, and where they needed to enter the same information on different systems. This resulted in large overhead, increased cost, poor usability, and in some instances data integrity challenges. This gave birth to the HBMSU Smart Campus.

Implemented Solution

The Smart Campus is a one-stop-shop portal for all needs of learners and faculty. It seamlessly automates and integrates all relevant services, applications and subsystems (whether open source or commercial) ensuring a smooth and enjoyable user experience.

The Smart Campus offers easy access to a suite of integrated, online services including: (1) fully featured online learning including mobile learning and virtual classrooms, (2) accessing previously taken course spaces (learners keep their access for live!), (3) AI and human-assisted smart advising services, (4) registration for academic and non-academic courses, (5) various learner services, (6) online learning resources, and (7) financials and e-Wallet management.

In addition to all the above, the Smart Campus has enabled social communication, collaboration, and learning: (1) profile management, (2) friends management, (3) groups, and (4) blogs, wikis and discussion forums. Probably the most important social communication and collaboration innovation within Smart Campus is its Sawti Box. The This is a real-time, electronic wall where any user can post questions, suggestions, ideas, or complaints. This helped to enable and foster a fully transparent, collaborative, social environment within the university. This box supports modern social media features such as replies, tags (@), and hashtags (#). When the Sawti Box was first introduced, it was a platform mostly for complaints. Now, it has evolved into a platform for fruitful engagement and peer-to-peer social learning.

Faculty members including adjunct faculty also enjoy a variety of Smart Campus services: (1) advising dashboard and system, (2) course space management, (3) course file management, (4) course syllabus management, (5) reports and analytics, (6) learning objects repository, and (7) instructional resources.

Impact

The Smart Campus has had remarkable impact, particularly on learner engagement and satisfaction. Results of a recent survey indicate more than 90% learner satisfaction with ICT-related facilities powered by Smart Campus. Our learners have been able to express creative and useful ideas, through the Sawti Box, for solving a wide array of problems and improving the quality of HBMSU services.

The Smart Campus project has interesting implications for millions of learners in the Arab region and beyond. Compared to traditional campuses, the Smart Campus provides a new learning approach that is learner-centered and involves active restructuring on the part of the learner. Restructuring occurs through engagement in problem posing as well as problem solving, inference making and investigation, resolving of contradictions, and reflecting. The creation of the Smart Campus has helped HBMSU expose learners to the best faculty available in any part of the world. It has enhanced the range and quality of learning pedagogy.

HMBSU website: https://www.hbmsu.ac.ae/