

Customer Case Study

Boston College



Boston College Uses Prolog® Software to Eliminate Budget Surprises on 10-Year, \$1.6B Master Plan, Expansion Program

Boston College (BC) is one of the oldest Jesuit, Catholic universities in the United States. Faculty members are committed to both academic excellence and research and the university's students earn more than 4,000 degrees annually in more than 50 fields of study. BC has experienced tremendous growth in recent years, with total enrollment topping 14,000. To accommodate future growth, BC has recently announced a 10-year Institutional Master plan that includes an estimated \$800M in construction and renovation projects that will provide campus-wide improvements, as well as additional student housing, academic buildings and recreational facilities.

Prolog was introduced to BC in 1999 by the then-new Assistant to the Executive Vice President, Joe Comerford. He brought more than 35 years of commercial construction management experience to the university. But that wasn't all. He also brought knowledge of Prolog Manager from Meridian Systems, a project management tool that would play an important role as the university expanded its facilities.

When previously introduced to Prolog while working in the private construction sector, he was impressed. "It was the first system I had used that was written from the project manager's perspective rather than the accountant's," he says. "When I came to BC and saw the budget management deficiencies that existed in the current FileMaker Pro system, I knew that Prolog would be the perfect program for managing our major projects." So he contacted Boston-based PSS Consulting Group, a Meridian Global Reseller that provides consulting, integration and training services.

After purchasing a single user Prolog license from PSS, Comerford, who is now Assistant to the Vice President of Facilities Management, began to track project budgets that were also being tracked in FileMaker Pro. "Over time," he recalls, "BC saw the need to have broader financial control over what we were doing. By then, I had the information needed to demonstrate that Prolog fit the bill."

Adopting a New Standard

In 2005, after getting approval to formally implement Prolog, the Capital Project Management Division of Facilities Management worked with PSS to purchase additional Prolog user licenses for the department, facilitate rollout of the program and provide training.

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Joe Comerford

*Assist. to VP of Facilities Management
Boston College*

The Facilities Management department, which is responsible for managing new capital construction projects while maintaining existing campus facilities, has six project managers that, along with Comerford, would be the primary Prolog users.

With help from PSS, the resistance to change within the department – a common occurrence when new technology is introduced into an established environment – was overcome. “PSS came on-site and we set up a computer lab classroom where we taught the project managers the basics of Prolog’s budget management capabilities.”

After the initial learning curve, the project managers readily adopted the software. Today, the university has standardized budget management for all major construction projects using Prolog.

“PSS has been great to work with,” adds Comerford. “They helped us set up the software and iron out the wrinkles, and have continued to provide very knowledgeable, responsive service. PSS is our go-to contact for technical issues, training and ongoing support.”

Eliminating Budget Surprises

As the project owner, profitability isn’t an issue for BC, but budget management is critical. That’s why each approved major project is set up in Prolog and the entire budget is established, from contracts for the architect and general contractor down to furnishings and equipment.

Throughout the project, cost commitments are tracked against budget line items. Potential change orders (PCOs) are diligently tracked and, if approved, become committed costs. “Prolog gives us hands-on, day-to-day, real-time management of the budget. The project manager knows exactly what the commitments are against every line item on the job, sees the immediate impact of change orders on the budget and can make decisions accordingly. Prolog eliminates budget surprises.”

The ability to have complete control over project budgets is more important than ever to BC as it prepares to embark on its 10-year, \$1.6B Master Plan, expansion program. “Having Prolog in place will enable BC to have an accurate handle on the budget of each project coming down the line. It’s going to get a lot of use over the next several years!”

Integrating Prolog with Accounting

BC is now working with PSS to implement an integration link between its Prolog software and the university’s PeopleSoft accounting system. Currently, project invoices are entered into Prolog, approved by the project manager and then routed to the Purchasing department, where they are re-entered into PeopleSoft and processed for payment.

When the integration link is complete, data from Prolog will be automatically transferred to PeopleSoft line-by-line, without manual re-entry. “A major benefit of this link is that it will eliminate the potential for human error and save time. Transposing numbers or misplacing a decimal point are typical when you manually transfer dollar figures from one system to another.” Integrating Prolog and PeopleSoft will eliminate this possibility.

A Solid, Bottom Line Investment

Although Facilities Management hasn’t had to formally justify the university’s return on its Prolog investment, demonstrating to upper management what the software can do has solidified its value. “After 36 years on the commercial side of the construction fence,” concludes Comerford, “I’ve never seen a program that works better than Prolog to track – in real-time – what’s happening on a project’s bottom line.”



Boston College Project Profile

Boston College 10-Year Institutional Master Plan, Expansion Program
Located in Chestnut Hill, MA

On December 4, 2007, Boston College unveiled a 10-year Institutional Master Plan and expansion program that calls for \$700M in new construction and \$100M in campus renovation projects over the next decade.

The Master Plan will create 21st century classrooms and laboratories; replace a 47-year-old student center and a 35-year-old recreation complex; add much-needed playing fields and athletic facilities and provide campus housing for 610 additional students. In addition, the plan will help develop an integrated campus with linked quadrangles, pedestrian walkways and buildings in the tradition of BC's distinct English Collegiate Gothic architecture.

Key Project Elements

- › Four new academic buildings on Middle Campus
- › A 200,000 sq. ft. student recreation complete with fitness center, pool, jogging track, basketball courts and multi-purpose rooms
- › A 285,000 sq. ft. university center on Lower Campus to accommodate BC's 230 student organizations, provide dining and conference space and allow expansion of Robsham Theater
- › 610 additional beds for undergraduate student housing
- › Development of the Brighton Athletics Center, which will include a 1,500-seat baseball and 500-seat softball field
- › A fine arts district on the Brighton Campus
- › A new campus quadrangle with a pedestrian walkway to connect various campuses

Master Plan Architect: Sasaki Associates, Inc., Watertown, MA

Start Date: Spring 2009

Completion Date: 2019

Anticipated Results: The Master Plan will provide the infrastructure to support the University's Strategic Plan to become a national leader in liberal arts education and student formation among American universities, and the world's leading Catholic university and theological center. The Master Plan will enable the University to create the academic, co-curricular and residential facilities needed to help raise Boston College to the highest echelon among premier American universities.



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