

**The 2013 Health Administration, Management & Policy
Centralized Application Service Case Study**

In Partnership with Rush University

Rush University HAMPCAS Case Study

In analyzing data by school in the current HAMPCAS application cycle, Rush University showed the highest number of applications. Rush was also highly successful in using the system during the previous cycle. Because of this success, this case study was initiated to help capture best practices inherent in the Rush process so that these can be shared with other institutions using the HAMPCAS system. Of note is that Liaison and WebAdmit have already used Rush as a model to show the capabilities of the HAMPCAS-WebAdmit duo, how it works and how it can be tailored to a specific institution.

Analysis found four key components to Rush's successful implementation:

1. Requiring that Candidates Apply via HAMPCAS and only HAMPCAS.
2. Adequate Training and Customization at the Outset.
3. Inclusion of HAMPCAS in Marketing and Recruitment Materials.
4. Using a Scoring Tool that works with HAMPCAS.

These components are producing results.

Requiring that Candidates Apply via HAMPCAS and only HAMPCAS

A key component of Rush's success using the HAMPCAS system is that Rush *requires* applicants to use the HAMPCAS system when applying to the Rush University Department of Health Systems Management (HSM). Other application systems are not offered or accepted.

When first adopting HAMPCAS at Rush, the Program worked closely with its college leadership to institute HAMPCAS as the sole portal for applications to the program. This kind of high-level buy-in was key to using the system to best affect.

One of the main challenges effecting this decision was that applicants to HSM would apply and pay fees via HAMPCAS and not via the university's central application system. It was determined that this loss should be returned in increased efficiency in admissions processing. Also mentioned was the fact that the amount of high level applications and HSM's national exposure would both increase while using the HAMPCAS system.

Adequate Training and Customization at the Outset

In implementing the system, Rush has relied more on hands-on and specialized trainings for both advanced and less experienced users. Rush has found that this hands-on approach has engaged staff more readily to use the system and has been more effective than solely relying on training via webinars.

Rush noted that WebAdmit has been a helpful partner in working with the university to plan and implement hands-on training and in providing follow-on support to ensure the specialized system works for the task at hand.

Rush also noted that a careful use of the "custom fields tabs" has allowed the staff to create better reports and options that make the system easier to use for those on the institution's admissions committee. Additionally, the system maintains individualized and updated

information in a more systematic process, and since the system is web-based, users have seen a decrease in emails and an increase in automated processes that previously were done by hand.

Rush attributes the ease now of using the system to analysis performed at the front end of implementation. The HAMPCAS system works best when tailored to the needs of an individual institution. However, institutions may need to assess these needs prior to launching the system to determine where the specialization needs to be established and how to make the system work for it.

Having a “power user” who is trained in the system and can help tailor it to the needs of a particular institution is helpful in adoption. The system has to have some kind of ownership within the school. It is a tool that if harnessed can automate processes, but it is not a magic bullet that automatically streamlines every task in the admissions process. As with the above noted examples, Rush has such a user, who notes that it is key to remember that users have to make the system work for them, and ensure that they are not working for the system.

In regards to integrating and customizing the HAMPCAS system with the University’s central application system, Rush followed the keep it simple model. Instead of dedicating resources to building a bridge program, or an import-export process to share data between HAMPCAS and the central application system, Rush uses a simple method of ensuring applicants are processed through the university system.

Once an applicant is officially accepted to the Rush program, that applicant must complete a supplemental application via the Rush University central application system. The supplemental application has now captured the data in the central system proving that HAMPCAS does not have to work at the exclusion of a central application system; it can work in concert with the system.

Inclusion of HAMPCAS in Marketing and Recruitment Materials

HAMPCAS information is included on all Rush HSM handouts and materials, including web content. These materials detail the step-by-step process of applying to Rush and using the HAMPCAS system from gathering recommendation letters to when to hit submit.

Rush used the following thought path to create the materials. Once again, working on a keep it simple model:

1. Why you should go to Rush.
2. What sets Rush HSM apart from other programs?
3. So you want to go to Rush, here is how to use HAMPCAS.
4. This is what you need: recommendation letters, test scores, etc. as indicated by the institution’s index card.

All slide decks and all open house materials include the info on applying through HAMPCAS. And any possible confusion with other programs is clearly outlined.

Using a Scoring Tool that works with HAMPCAS.

Finally, Rush is using a scoring tool that is built to work with HAMPCAS and one that relies on an admission scoring system that calculates via percentile and not raw scores.

Results

Using the HAMPCAS system, Rush has seen an increase in well-qualified applicants to their program. For example, Rush officials noted that 2 years ago the program received applications from 16 “cream of the crop” applicants—as indicated by their scoring tool. This year the program has received approximately 60 applicants at that top level. Their experience has been that they are not only receiving applications from better applicants, more importantly they are receiving five times more “great” applicants.

Rush still receives applicants from many of the same schools as before HAMPCAS, but notes that those students looking for CAHME (the Commission on Accreditation Healthcare Management Education) accredited institutions in their region are taking another look at Rush.

International applicant interest has increased, but this interest has not necessarily translated into applications. However, Rush requires a GRE score for all applicants, and believes this requirement may deter international students who may have already earned a PhD or MD in their home country.

Best Practice Recommendations

Negotiate the application process and remove any dual application requirements through strategic buy-in of campus and college administration and leadership.

Stress the value of the HAMPCAS system as a tool to more efficiently utilize staff time allocated to the admissions process—any lost revenue from application fees should be returned in other areas of the balance sheet.

Recommend using HAMPCAS and only HAMPCAS for all applicants in order to prevent confusion and possible duplication, and to better leverage the tools the admission portal offers. Transitioning to a solely HAMPCAS based system is also the only way to capture the data for comparison against the aggregate.

Ensure that the applicant-scoring tool complements HAMPCAS and that HAMPCAS complements the scoring tool to ensure fit and ease of use when evaluating candidates.

Whenever possible, include HAMPCAS information in marketing and outreach materials both in print and online. Include HAMPCAS and the convenience it offers applicants—one set of recommendations and transcripts—as yet another attractive reason to attend your institution.

Make the system work for you. Make sure when implementing and using the HAMPCAS-WebAdmit duo to know what your institution wants from the system and reach out to established resources at WebAdmit for specialized training and advice on the best ways to tailor the system to your needs. Designate a “Power User” to have increased ownership and oversight of the system.