



esm PURCHASE

A personalized procurement experience



Texas Southmost College-Gorgas selects Ellucian Purchase by ESM Solutions

A purchase department decision. And benefits for everyone.

Texas Southmost College (TSC) is a community college that takes pride in its dedication to student success. Recently recognized as a Bright Spot by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, TSC offers more than 50 programs of study that lead to an associate degree or certificate, or serve as the first two years towards a baccalaureate degree.

TSC's commitment to student success is always paramount, however many administrative processes within the purchasing office needed transformation, they were highly-manual, and causing headaches and frustrations for many stakeholders across campus. Entering a purchase

order could take two to three days, and that didn't even include the time needed to obtain approvals and sign-off. Because the process was impaired with so much manual effort, sometimes staff could even forget to place the order.

Procurement knew something needed to change. Then COVID hit, further exposing the challenges of manual and paper-based processes at the college. The team suggested it was the ideal time to transform purchasing processes and proposed Ellucian Purchase to support a new approach.

Securing Buy-in

With a goal of transforming procurement, the team began evaluating purchasing solutions, including Ellucian Purchase. As an Ellucian Colleague customer, integration was a vital consideration. It was a member of the college's IT team that introduced the idea of Ellucian Purchase due to the supported ETHOS integration, and IT remained a steadfast internal partner throughout the evaluation process.

TSC purchasing and IT teams capitalized on the momentum and worked together to secure board approval and funding for Ellucian Purchase.

The team highlighted the reduction in manual, time-consuming processes as a key part of the justification for a new solution and received the approval to move forward in early 2023. With an implementation kick-off shortly after spring break, the college went live with the solution, including staff training, in September 2023. Finance for the project was in part covered by the CARES Act, which supported the initial set-up cost.

In a manual muddle

For years, the college relied on manual purchases to enter, route, and approve purchase requests. Online approvals were non-existent, requiring staff to email requests and upload, compare, and match documents to secure the approvals they needed to move forward with the purchase.

Furthermore, the college lacked a centralized catalog where stakeholders could search through an up-to-date list of vendors and pricing to find what they needed. Shopping carts didn't exist either, requiring stakeholders to submit purchase order requests manually. And once they requested the purchase order, communication ceased because they didn't have a way to notify buyers of the status of their PO.

A transformed procurement experience

With rich functionality, including vendor catalogs and automated PO processes, Ellucian Purchase is integrated with Ellucian Colleague using ETHOS.

Using Ellucian Purchase, TSC will deliver a more intuitive, convenient shopping experience. Buyers can browse a catalog of approved vendors and products and add items to their cart. Then, using an automated workflow, shoppers will move through the process, from purchase to approval to receipt, receiving status notifications every step of the way.

Further, the purchasing team will eliminate email approvals and manual cross checks of purchase orders. Using Ellucian Purchase, staff easily gain a holistic view of supplier's orders, approvals, and transactions for better real-time control. Role-based workflows and automated approval routing help buyers, approvers, and receivers work more intelligently to manage compliance and ensure the purchasing process is easy to follow.



From left to right: Josue Muñiz, Martha Casanova, Patricia G. Saldivar, Nilda Mora, Raul Garza

REASONS TO SELECT ELLUCIAN PURCHASE

- Cost effective
- Rich functionality
- Vendor catalogs
- E-commerce based user experience
- Compliance
- Overview of suppliers, orders, approvals
- Real time control
- Improved workflows
- Ellucian Colleague Integration
- Ellucian Banner Integration

Recognized for their efficient purchasing operations

The TSC purchasing team also received accolades from the Texas Association of School Boards Officials (TASCO), winning the Award of Merit for Purchasing Operations. The award, established in 2009, "recognizes Texas school districts, open-enrolment charter schools, and education services centers that are committed to following professional standards in the acquisition of goods and services in accordance to State of Texas laws."

Despite having over 1,000 school systems in the state, only 71 recipients met the award criteria, with TSC as the only community college honored with the award.

"We feel very proud to be recognized as one of the educational institutions and the only community college to receive this merit award for a second time," said Saldivar. "This award represents the effort in following best practices in the area of purchasing operations, and it continues a tradition of striving for improvement at TSC."

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As the first company to deliver procurement solutions built specifically for the education sector, ESM has enabled hundreds of institutions to personalize buying pathways, curate trusted suppliers that uphold institutional integrity, and transform the ways in which they connect people with the resources they need to advance education. With a commitment to education since day one, ESM solutions enable institutions to engage with trusted suppliers that are both brand-safe and brand-secure, giving their communities a sense of confidence that they are doing their part in fostering sustainable procurement.

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