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## No Id, No Entry

The scent of freshly brewed coffee filled the room, along with ten employees from the Administrative Office. All of them were sitting quietly next to each other. They were carefully listening to every word uttered by the woman in front of them. At the moment, she was describing the progress on the printing and issuance of IDs.

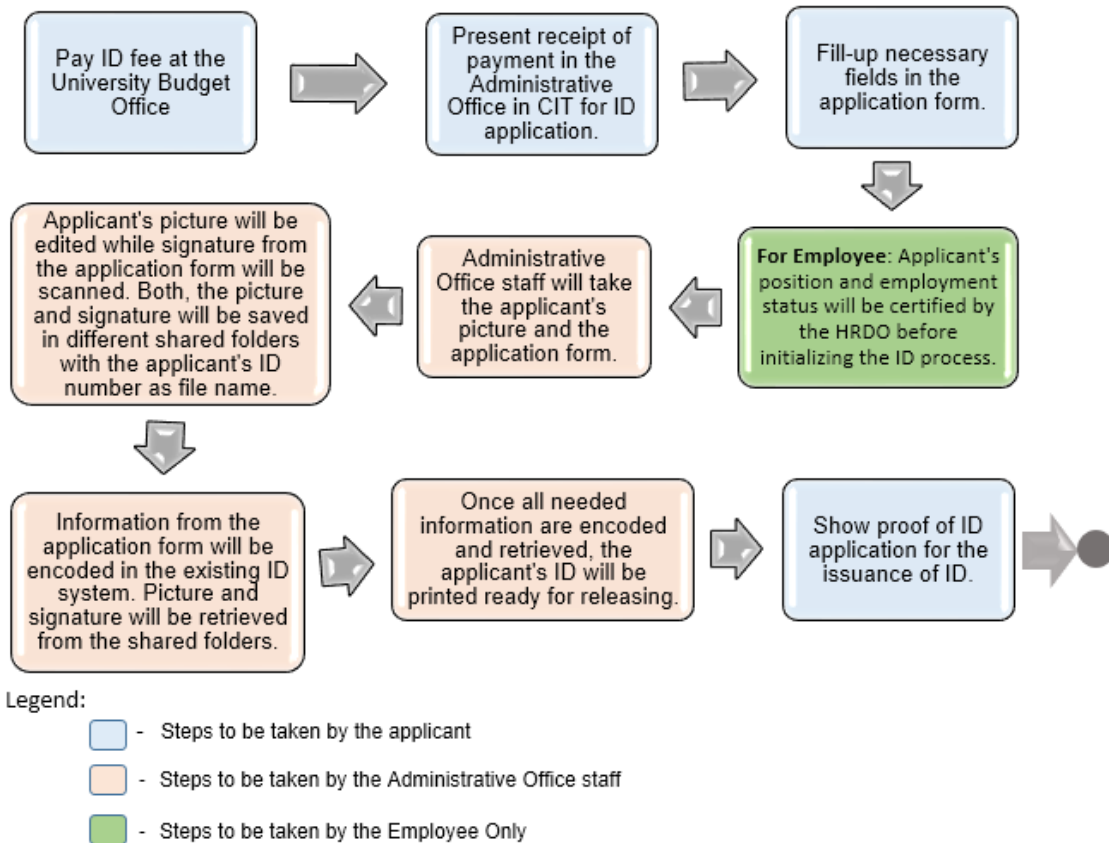
“I commend the report presented to me yesterday. It showed that there are now only very few ID backlogs left compared to the number of backlogs report you had months ago,” said Prof. Mai M. Maunto, the newly appointed dean of the College of Information Technology (CIT). She smiled and paused before continuing in her low-toned voice, “but I have still noticed that students or employees need to wait three to five days before they can claim their IDs. While we are waiting for the progress of my request for a new ID machine printer, I would like to hear updates on how we could integrate the ID application software to our database.”

Prof. Maunto was smart, keen, fair, soft-spoken and a respected leader, which is why she was loved by almost all of her constituents. She was the third dean of the college since its establishment and an alumnus of the university.

Months before she took over the position as the dean of CIT, she had already heard complaints from students and employees in the university about the problems of the existing ID system.<sup>1</sup> One of the problems was the astounding number of backlogs and delays in the production of IDs at the university. The delay could take from three weeks to a month, and up to two months in some cases. The administration had already raised the issue to her as the dean of the college, because she was in charge of the whole ID production, and asked her to come up with a complete report of the problem.<sup>2</sup>

Being young and new to the job, Maunto felt pressure to prove herself but was still enthusiastic and hopeful. One of the main dilemmas she saw during her previous meeting with her staff was the lack of integration of the database and the ID system. Therefore, she needed to draft a proposal on how to implement a new system that would be integrated to the student and employee's databases to speed up the process of ID production and eliminate encoding errors during the manual process (see Figure 1 for the existing ID application process).

**Figure 1**  
**Flow of the Existing ID Application Process**



*Source: Interview with Prof. Mai M. Maunto, dean of the College of Information Technology (CIT), on October 15, 2016*

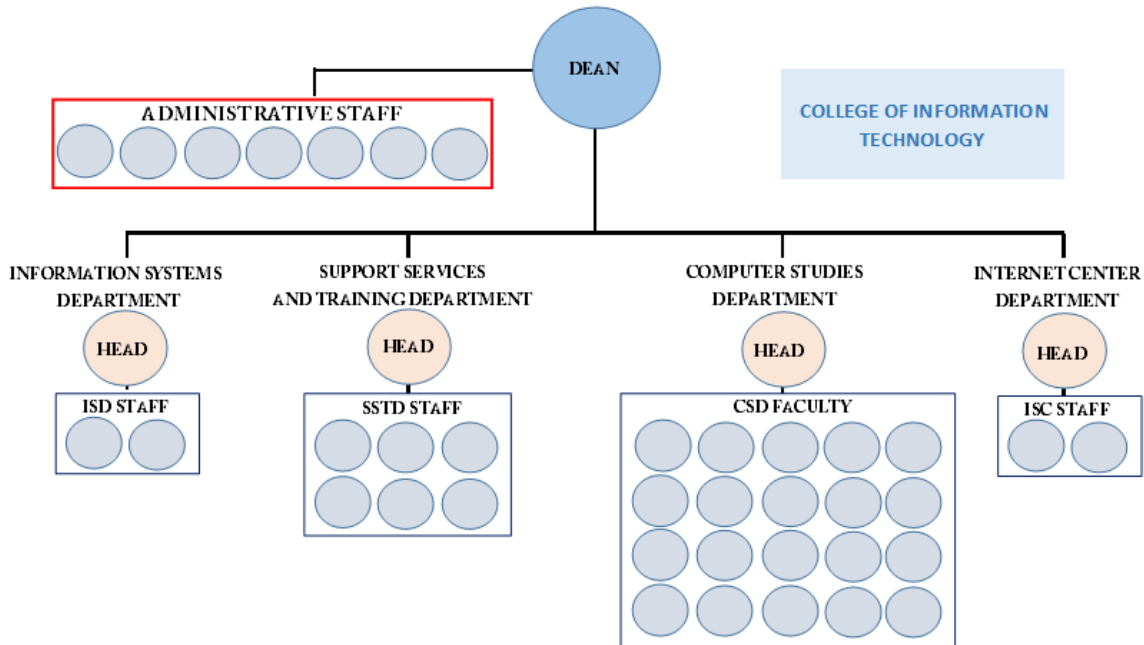
## The College Of Information Technology (CIT) And The Administrative Office

The College of Information Technology was the youngest college of the university. It had been approved to become a collegiate unit on February 18, 2005 through its BOR Resolution No. 19, Series of 2005.<sup>3</sup> There were four disparate offices, excluding the Administrative Office, under the umbrella of CIT spearheaded by the dean of the college, namely: the Information System Department (ISD) that had only three staff excluding the department head; the Internet Service Center (ISC) having two staff; the Support Services and Training Department (SSTD) which had six staff, and the Computer Studies Department (CSD). These departments were under the direct supervision of the department heads appointed yearly by the dean. All departments were service-centered departments except for CSD, which was the only academic

department among the four. CSD offered two degree programs: Bachelors of Science in Computer Science and Bachelor of Science in Information Technology.

The Administrative Office, on the other hand, was directly headed by the dean herself. There were about six staff in the office. One of the functions of the Administrative Office was the issuance and production of the identification cards (ID) for all students and employees of the university, including employees of the external offices under the university itself.

**Figure 2**  
**Chain of Command of the College of Information Technology**



Source: Excerpts from the minutes of the 193rd meeting of the Board of Regents. Resolution No. 19. S. 2005, Annex D; 10 Year College Wide Strategic Plan pages 5-10

Two of the staff who were directly in charge of the processing were Farhan and Sheldon. Farhan was in his late 30's. He was short and had a brown complexion, married, and had two sons. His look and demeanor was strict and hard. He was in charge of taking and editing the ID pictures and signatures of applicants. On the other hand, Sheldon was petite, sat in one of the corners of the Administrative Office and preferred to be left alone with no one watching him. He was directly responsible with the printing of IDs.

### Disadvantages of the Existing System

As Prof. Maunto waited for responses from the group, she remembered the first meeting she had had with the staff of Administrative Office, when she had asked them about their roles and the current ID process.

"I want to hear from you, Farhan," she said. "May I know exactly the details of your work?"

"Ma'am, I am in charge of taking the student or employee's ID picture," Farhan replied, "as well as scanning their signatures from the application form [see Figure 3 for (a) student application form and (b)

*faculty application form*]. After taking the picture, I will be editing the picture's background: a white background for employees and maroon for students." Farhan answered. "After editing, ma'am, I'll be saving the edited version of the picture as well as the signature in a shared folder with Sheldon, with the student or employee's id number as file name," Farhan concluded.

"Why is there a need to take the picture for students and employees?" Maunto asked, "Don't we already have their profile picture taken during their enrolment and employment?"

"Ma'am, our database are not connected with the enrollment and employment databases, which is why we need to manually take the picture," Farhan replied.

Though shocked by what she heard, Maunto continued: "How long does it take to edit a picture and signature?"

"It depends on the quality of the picture, ma'am, and the scanned signature. With the picture, there are times that I still need to adjust the brightness and sharpness of a picture because we are only using an ordinary web camera," Farhan justified.

She sighed upon hearing the scenario. After letting go of a deep breath, she turned toward Sheldon. "May I also know the details of your work, Sheldon?" she asked.

"Ma'am, before printing the ID, I need to first encode the student's or employee's information from the application paper to the ID application software, then retrieve the signature and picture from the folder shared by Farhan." Sheldon answered.

"Since you are encoding the information, I assume that the application software is also not connected with the database. Am I right?" she asked Sheldon.

"Yes, ma'am," Sheldon verified.

"Isn't encoding vulnerable to errors?" the dean continued.

"Yes, there were times when some information was misspelled. If there were cases like that, I reprint the ID for free," Sheldon said.

"How many IDs could you finished per day?" she continued asking.

"Around 80 to 100 IDs, ma'am. But I can't go beyond that number because most of the time, the ID printer overheats and the quality of ID is compromised," Sheldon replied.

"Do you know how old the printer is?" Maunto was curious.

"More or less ten years, ma'am," Sheldon answered.

From the notes she had taken during that first meeting, Maunto summarized possible issues or problems for the backlogs and delays: First, there was an average of 150 ID applications per day for ordinary days, and 300 to 400 applications during enrollment. But, Sheldon could only finish around a hundred of IDs per day, due to the limited capability of the ID machine to produce quality IDs once the machine overheated. Second, Sheldon said that he was also limited with the number of pictures edited by Farhan within the day. If the latter was absent, Sheldon couldn't proceed with the printing because the printing required the ID picture. Third, no record or report about the number of daily applications and ID printouts could substantiate the first and the second claims. Also, attendance of every staff member could not be verified because there was no strict attendance policy. Fourth, only one ID machine was available for the operation, and if it malfunctioned, Sheldon had to travel to Cebu City or to some branch where the printer had been purchased to get it repaired. The nearest branch was in Davao City, eleven hours travel from CIT

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by land. Also, all the necessary ID materials had to be ordered from that same branch, and had to be ordered before the stock ran out. The travel and processing for the repair or purchase of materials usually took one to two weeks and, in the worst case, a month. Fifth, Maunto learned that all ID information relied on the information given or written by the applicant on the application paper, and the application software was not actually connected to a database for validation and storage purposes.

**Figure 3.a**  
**Student ID Card Application Form**

<b>STUDENT ID CARD APPLICATION</b>																									
Date: _____				Control Number																					
First Name										MI		Lastname													
ID number					Course					Year Level															
CONTACT PERSON IN CASE OF EMERGENCY																									
Name of Contact Person					:					_____															
Address of Contact Person					:					_____															
Contact Number					:					_____															
SIGNATURE OF THE STUDENT							TO BE FILLED UP BY CIT PERSONNEL:																		
							Date of Submission: _____																		
							Date of Release: _____																		
							For Encoder's Remarks: _____																		
<b>REQUIREMENTS:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Registration <input type="checkbox"/> Receipt of Payment: OR# _____																									

Source: Interview with Prof. Mai M. Maunto, dean of the College of Information Technology (CIT), on October 15, 2016

**Figure 3.b**  
**Employee ID Card Application Form**

**EMPLOYEE ID CARD APPLICATION**

STAFF  FACULTY  OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

ID. NO. \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (MI) (Lastname)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact No.: \_\_\_\_\_

*To be filled up by the Personnel Office (HRDO). N. B. Any on this part will invalidate this form.*

Rank/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Present Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Appointment Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: (For non-permanent) \_\_\_\_\_

*Certified True and Correct*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

*Approved:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Director*

*Source: Interview with Prof. Mai M. Maunto, dean of the College of Information Technology (CIT), on October 15, 2016*

## The Initial Solution

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As an immediate response to the problem of delays, Maunto required the strict checking of attendance of every staff member in all departments within the college, including the monitoring of the time they logged-in and logged-out in the morning and afternoon. She also made it compulsory to record the number of the printed IDs as well as the number of applications per day.

Unlike to the first, second and third mentioned problems, the fourth and fifth needed to have the approval of the university's officials because they involved money and database integration. Purchase of another ID machine would cost hundreds of thousands of pesos, and integration of the ID application software with the existing student and employee database would need time and further analysis and approval.

Weeks had passed after the memorandum of the strict attendance policy implementation, and reports already showed an overwhelming decrease in the number of backlogs and delays.

But Prof. Maunto didn't want to settle for less; she wanted to completely eliminate the backlogs and delays by making use of the technology. She would need to draft a proposal that would encourage university officials to approve her request for an up-to-date and advanced ID system. The proposal would need to explain the equipment needed, why it was needed, and how it would solve the backlog problem.

## Endnotes

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1 Interview with Prof. Mai M. Maunto, dean of the College of Information Technology (CIT), on October 15, 2016

2 Ibid.

3 Mindanao State University, "History" Accessed on November 24, 2016

<http://www.msomain.edu.ph/cit/index.php/cit/cit-history>