When it launches following the Spring semester of this year, the final installment of the University Catalog will add an advanced search feature that allows users to identify programs of interest according to a variety of criteria. This capability promises to make Penn’s vast array of academic opportunities visible in ways not possible before.

After consulting with stakeholders and reviewing available options, the NGSS team has recommended, and sponsors have approved, a summer 2021 target for the first use of Pennant Records for student registration, replacing Penn InTouch. Traditional Summer I and Summer II terms will be retained, though the new system may treat them as a single unit for certain processes such as billing.

In the last issue we saw how new courses are proposed and how they are reviewed and approved in the College of Arts and Sciences. While that process varies among Schools and between graduate and undergraduate levels, it results in manual entry of course additions, changes, and deletions directly into the Student Record System (SRS)—either by the School or by department or program administrators, depending on the School and level.

Some Schools have developed software tools to track proposals, collect supporting documents, and facilitate reviewer access. But these have not been integrated with SRS. Variations among academic units’ practices have posed challenges for data integrity and for producing a coherent Catalog for users.

NGSS is working with the vendor Leepfrog to implement Curriculum Manager (CM) as the official point of entry for all course inventory management. CM functionality also supports curriculum governance. It is fully integrated with the University Catalog, also based on a Leepfrog product.

CM routes course and program proposals through review and approval workflows that are automated and customized for each academic unit and level. Penn currently supports some integration between CM and SRS, and CM will integrate fully with Pennant Records in the future. The CM 1.0 pilot launched in the College of Arts and Sciences in June 2018. CM 2.0 is being implemented for use by all other Schools for release later in 2019.

Change management prepares people to succeed in new circumstances. As Curriculum Manager implementation approaches, these activities accelerate. Existing work process flows have been analyzed against functional specifications and projected new flows. Schools are being engaged to describe roles and responsibilities in their units, and as these descriptions are completed, hypotheses about the impact of the changes on individuals will be developed, adjusted as needed, and validated. This knowledge forms a strong foundation for working with Schools to plan communications and define training and support.

The build phase for Release 1 of Pennant Records and Pennant Aid has begun, and will overlap with the build phase for Release 2, which begins this summer. The objective of the build phase is to bring construction of system components to a level of completion sufficient to begin end-to-end, or system integration, testing (SIT). That means:

- data converted from existing systems are 90%+ accurate and complete
- configurations are in place to support all relevant business processes
- all units of code have been tested against technical and functional requirements
- business procedures and training materials are ready for users who will conduct acceptance testing
- plans, scripts, and data sets are in place for SIT
- fully configured, production-ready security and access controls are prepared
- external systems are available and ready to test integrations

For more information, visit the NGSS program website.