



Client Success Story

Strengthening Columbia University's Capital Project Engine



Client

Columbia University's (Columbia or University) Facilities and Operations division is the University's largest administrative unit, responsible for a wide range of services including housing, dining, public safety, and campus operations. Within this organization, Capital Project Management (CPM) oversees all design and construction activity on the Morningside campus and the Baker Athletics Complex. CPM's approximately 20 project managers are responsible for managing budgets, schedules, design, construction, and regulatory compliance across major capital projects.



Issue

As Columbia sought to improve efficiency, enhance customer service, reduce costs, and increase resources in support of its mission, CPM recognized the need to assess the maturity of its operating model and identify opportunities to improve performance. Columbia engaged Deloitte to evaluate core work processes, staffing levels, project delivery practices, and long-term capital planning capabilities relative to peer institutions.



Impact

Deloitte applied experience across construction management and higher education to assess CPM's current-state operating model, compare project costs and staffing levels, and benchmark performance against Ivy Plus institutions and other peer groups. The assessment focused on three areas: people, processes, and technology and data.

Deloitte developed 15 recommendations and an implementation roadmap to strengthen CPM's operating model and support a more scalable future state.

People

Deloitte's recommendations related to organizational design strengthened CPM's operating model by closing critical capacity gaps, improving how talent is developed and managed, and creating clearer governance and decision-making structures. These recommendations focused on reducing delivery risk, streamlining decision-making, and making project delivery more consistent and scalable as demand grew.

Processes

Moving to processes, Deloitte's roadmap of recommendations focused on strategies CPM could use to improve how projects were planned, routed, governed, and closed out across the unit. These process improvements were designed to increase delivery predictability, improve cross-functional coordination, minimize delays or bottlenecks, and raise overall project reporting consistency.

Data and Technology

Deloitte's assessment of CPM's technology surfaced pathways to manage projects using more consistent systems, enable better reporting, stronger cost-estimating, and improve record keeping. Through these recommendations, CPM would have improved visibility into project health, improved forecasting accuracy, and smoother project delivery and closeout.

Deloitte and Columbia developed a practical roadmap to strengthen CPM's people, processes, and systems. The result was a more disciplined and scalable capital project management function positioned to deliver projects more efficiently, with greater transparency, and with stronger service to the University community.

For more information,
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