



AASHE Moving to a Sustainable Cloud Platform Strategy

AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education) is a non-profit agency chartered to empower higher education faculty, administrators, staff, and students to be effective change agents and drivers of sustainability innovation.

When new IT Director Rogelio Zuniga Rubio joined the AASHE team, the small staff was responsible for maintaining day-to-day operations and supporting their custom applications. The apps were long overdue for modernization, but there were underlying issues to address first. The existing multi-cloud infrastructure included four different cloud platforms, creating a costly and overly complex environment. The environment was difficult to maintain, required a cumbersome release process, and lacked security guardrails.

The IT Director, based on his previous experience as a cloud consultant and developer, knew that consolidating down to one cloud platform would go a very long way toward simplifying development and maintenance tasks, resulting in reduced costs and better positioning AASHE to modernize their application suite.





Partnering with Google and Burwood

Based on industry experience, Mr. Zuniga Rubio knew Google Cloud would be an ideal platform and partner for AASHE. Google's public cloud provided an ideal platform for modernization efforts. Google's specializations and acumen in the higher education industry were a big positive for the AASHE team.

AASHE wanted to find a consulting partner who could deliver a reliable Google Cloud solution that would minimize infrastructure maintenance work. Because the original code base was over 10 years old, it was going to be very difficult to fix the list of issues and upgrade software without having a good foundation for their development process.

The Google Cloud team recommended Burwood Group to AASHE. With Burwood's depth of experience in Google Cloud migrations, IT automation, and working with higher education clients, it was a great fit.

Burwood Group Expertise

-  Cloud Onboarding
-  Cloud Migration
-  Application Modernization
-  Google Cloud Services + Reseller Partner

Why Google Cloud for Higher Education?

Google Cloud powers higher education research and infrastructure to increase collaboration, innovation, and productivity.

- Dependable security at scale
- Open sourced and open minded
- Powerful data and analytics
- An innovative infrastructure built to perform

Learn more at burwood.com/higher-education.



“I love Burwood. They don’t make me do extra work. They didn’t waste time trying to become an AASHE domain expert and getting hung up on minor details. Instead, they make great progress on setting up the automation and involve me as needed, only when there’s a specific question that requires my insight.”

ROGELIO ZUNIGA RUBIO
AASHE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

What is STARS?

Created by AASHE, STARS is the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System. It is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance.

1,048 Institutions, primarily within the U.S. and Canada, have used the STARS framework, with 676 earning a stars rating. Learn more at stars.aashe.org.



Phased Approach to Application Modernization

Burwood assessed the current environment and established common goals and objectives with AASHE. They broke the project into multiple, time-bound phases designed to port, establish a GCP CI/CD pipeline, and modernize three mission critical apps:

- **The Bulletin:** AASHE’s weekly e-newsletter
- **Resource Hub:** A library of sustainability tool kits and resource collections
- **STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System):** A customized portal for evaluating sustainability efforts, benchmarking and comparing institutional performance, generating reports, and maintaining documentation

Burwood accomplished the “lift and shift” effort by porting the newsletter and library apps first. Then, they tackled the complex set of tasks required to rehome the STARS apps and over 10 years of benchmark and performance data.

Mr. Zuniga Rubio and the AASHE team liked Burwood’s responsive, direct, and business focused communication style. Most project status meetings were kept brief and to-the-point (<15 minutes). The teams leveraged Slack™ as a critical collaboration tool throughout the project to make iterative changes, ask questions, and make group decisions quickly.

A Work in Progress with Measurable Benefits

The most immediate and tangible benefit AASHE achieved is 50% savings in cloud operations costs. The Google Cloud pay-as-you-go pricing structure is a perfect match for their organization.

AASHE’s application modernization and CI/CD pipeline development is in progress. They are confident that Burwood will help them meet their other goals to improve developer productivity, release quality, and their cloud security posture. They are also looking forward to learning more about using AI to create new analysis tools for users.

“Other cloud platforms’ rigid pricing structures meant we were paying for ‘always-on service.’ What we needed, and what Google provides, is a usage-based model. I am very pleased that we have consistently saved at least 50% each month since consolidating to Google Cloud.”

ROGELIO ZUNIGA RUBIO
AASHE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

About Burwood Group

Burwood Group, Inc. is an IT consulting and integration firm. We help higher education technology leaders design, use, and manage technology to transform business and improve outcomes. Our services in consulting, integration, and operations are rooted in business alignment and technical expertise in cloud, networking, security, and collaboration. Burwood Group was founded in Chicago, IL and is celebrating over 20 years in business. Today, Burwood includes 200 employees and five U.S. offices including 24x7 Operations Centers in San Diego, CA and Normal, IL. Whether you are developing strategy, deploying technology, or managing operations, Burwood is a dedicated partner. To learn more, visit burwood.com.

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