Engage with students in meaningful ways

Ellucian CRM Advise helps Delta State University give personalized attention to each student

Delta State University is located in the heart of the Delta—one of the poorest areas of the nation and also the most underserved by education. "Only 11 percent of the students graduating from K–12 are considered college-ready," says Dr. Edwin Craft, chief information officer at Delta State University. "Our students come to the university and need some type of remedial coursework to be successful in higher education. Only 57 percent persist to the next year—so we lose approximately 46 percent of our students in the first year."

Because funding is a major issue, the university enlisted the Ellucian Grants Services team to help them find financial opportunities. The First in the World Grant, hosted by the Department of Education, was appealing because it encouraged universities to think outside the box in their efforts to attract and retain students. With the help of the Ellucian Grants Services team, Delta State University applied for and received the grant. Given that many of the students entering Delta State University are from educationally underserved populations and not considered college-ready, the university has formed a comprehensive student success initiative that includes every department on campus with various task forces. "We know that once we get them to the second year it makes it easier to get to the third and fourth," says Craft. "With the First in the World Grant, we actually had a four-year plan. The First in the World Grant provided the resources we needed to purchase Ellucian CRM Advise as one of the products that was going to help support our student success initiative."

The initiative is far-reaching. "The campus-wide retention task force works closely with the Student Success Center to coordinate next-step, university-wide retention strategies, to examine administrative policies and practices to ensure they are optimized for student success, and to identify opportunities to overcome challenges faced by our students," says Christy Riddle, executive director for Student Success at Delta State University.

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Delta State University
Enrollment: 2,778

Ellucian CRM Advise

Ellucian CRM Advise helps you engage the right people at the right time with the right resources to make sure your students succeed. This student engagement solution helps you support and encourage students by:

- Addressing problems with early alerting and consistent, timely interventions

- Facilitating meaningful connections between students and the campus community

- Applying insightful analytics to strengthen your programs and help students

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Identify at-risk students

As part of its four-year student success strategy, Delta State University uses Ellucian CRM Advise to identify both high-achieving and at-risk student populations through institutional data and connect these students to relevant campus resources. It set up an early alert and intervention program that looked for signs of academic, financial, or personal struggles. "When we started implementing Ellucian CRM Advise, we looked at the key metrics that identify an at-risk student," says Craft. "Grades and attendance are the major factors. But there are also other factors that universities typically have access to in their databases but they may not be using. So, we began looking at high school GPAs, ACT scores, involvement with clubs, even their participation in discussion boards." This information helps the university proactively connect with students in a meaningful way before they exhibit signs of trouble.

Encourage excelling students

Ellucian CRM Advise also helps the university's early alert task force provide meaningful support to the students who are doing well. "One of the things that we really liked about Ellucian CRM Advise was the ability to not only send a student an email or have a person call a student when they were struggling with classes, but also award them for the great achievements that they had," says Craft. He believes that if every message the university sends is negative, the students would quickly stop listening. "If we can tell them, 'Congratulations on that A,' or 'Congratulations, you're now a sophomore,' or 'Only one more semester until you graduate,' that's a huge message that really makes them want to achieve better."

Deliver real-time data

Having access to the information faculty and staff need to see how a student is doing and respond quickly is essential to meaningful engagements. "One of the things that I really like about Ellucian CRM Advise is the ability to provide real-time data," says Craft. "Advisors and other people in the university can pull their own data for the needs of the day and not the needs of yesterday." Ellucian CRM Advise associates a student success score to an individual and provides easy-to-use tools and automated messages that help faculty and staff communicate with that student both independently as well as on a larger scale. For example, it can send a message to the student that their GPA is low and also alert faculty and staff that this particular student needs immediate intervention.

Create student success scores and metrics

While higher education institutions may use data to track students that have dropped out, they may not know why, or more importantly, what they can do to help them stay in school and graduate. Keeping students engaged the first year is critical. "We don't have GPAs for freshman because they haven't completed any courses at the university. But we do have GPAs from their high school," says Craft. "So, we insert that into their student success metrics." Ellucian CRM Advise gathers a variety of information both in and out of class to create an overall student success score including grades, attendance, logging into online courses, using the learning management system, turning in assignments, and more. "All of that information is key," says Craft. "We can't just look at one or two criteria in student success anymore. Ellucian CRM Advise helps us use both reactive and proactive data."

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DR. EDWIN CRAFT,
Chief Information Officer,
Delta State University

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