



Move forward fearlessly



Five ways IT modernization lays the foundation for future success

While few in higher education would ever dispute the benefits a modern IT infrastructure brings to campus, it has historically been easier to let adoption goals lapse—whether due to stalled projects, perceived costs, or a lack of skilled IT resources. With the COVID-19 disruptions of 2020 extending into 2021, delaying is no longer a choice. The time is now for colleges and universities to accelerate their technology modernization—not only to compete for students, but to survive.

With faculty, staff, and students logging in from home to work and attend classes, COVID-19 has created an imperative for increased IT resilience, agility, adaptability, and scalability. To make the changes needed to support this new learning and working environment, education leaders are turning to external experienced tech partners like Ellucian to help achieve this critical mission.

Here are **five ways** IT modernization can help higher ed earn high marks in this new reality.



According to
*The Chronicle of
Higher Education,*

Only 4% of 3,000 colleges

polled in October 2020 were operating fully in-person, with most reporting plans to not fully open in 2021.¹



1 Cloud

Even if you have some workloads already in the cloud, making additional strategic moves to the cloud should be a top priority for institutions. Cloud-based solutions help improve security, simplify day-to-day infrastructure management, reduce costs, and free IT teams to focus on core institutional goals. Cloud solutions are also a critical element in improving recruiting, admissions, fundraising, student experience, and staff workflows.

For example, as students attend classes online and interact with services from mobile devices, they expect an easy, complete, consumer-level experience. With cloud technology, IT departments can provide 24/7 access to secure, reliable networks and the ability to create, deliver, and share information institution-wide from any device. Students can do everything they need to through a unified student experience, and faculty and staff are empowered to engage and support students through the same cloud-based infrastructure.



2 Analytics

In areas such as recruitment, enrollment, and retention, institutions are increasingly turning to analytics to gain insights into performance and make better, more informed decisions. While institutions have long been collecting data, many have been using it primarily to show the makeup of the first-year class or a student group, rather than to improve strategic planning, real-time decision-making, and the student experience.

Analytics tools require processing large volumes of high-quality data using sophisticated infrastructures, and the dedicated tech talent to manage it all. By leveraging the speed and flexibility of cloud-based services, higher ed leaders can tap capabilities that were previously cost-prohibitive. With Ellucian Analytics plus Amazon Web Services (AWS), employees can access a single source of truth across applications and departments with easy-to-use tools for actionable insights.



The power of better analytics

At the University of La Verne in Southern California, adding an institution-wide analytics solution has given the school a new approach to decision making that's backed by data-governance and change-management programs. To answer questions about the profitability of a particular class or the effective utilization of classroom space, administrators can now quickly and easily access those figures.



3 Automation

Manual, paper-based legacy processes and workflows plague all industries, and higher education is no exception. Before COVID-19, students frequently had to take paper forms around campus to get signatures from different faculty and administrators. This already inefficient process became even more challenging as campuses shut down and in-person services became unavailable.

With Ellucian, every function—from admissions and registration to academic records and curriculum management—can be streamlined with automation to gain efficiency and reduce errors. Data from online forms flows into the correct systems without manual entry. Necessary follow-up work, such as approvals, kicks in via workflows with automated reminders. Errors are minimized and time is saved.

Automated workflows make work better

At Troy University, administrators had no way of determining which students were eligible for CARES Act funding, who needed it, or how to distribute those funds. The university employed an Ellucian automated workflow tool to create a multi-step, online-only process. Students could augment the information the system pulled in to create the data needed to establish eligibility and need—without any paper and with minimal human intervention.



4 Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are all the buzz today, yet few institutions have implemented AI/ML strategies fully. ML helps systems learn and apply rules, with those abilities growing exponentially based on the data they can access. At Ellucian, we continually improve our AI and ML with anonymized data, creating a value loop where the more our products are used, the better we can make our automation and analytics.

Institutions report using AI and ML to predict the number of applicants who will accept admission by combining historical data with external data to improve enrollment forecasts. AI and ML can provide course recommendations and customized solutions based on graduation requirements, scheduling availability, course prerequisites, and more to successfully guide students. They can also power chatbots, which can answer student questions 24/7 without burdening busy staff.



5 ERP systems

Modern enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems consolidate critical data and deliver it in a single system, giving users the right information at the right time. But rather than thinking about an ERP system in isolation, it can be beneficial to look at how a SaaS ERP solution, in conjunction with your other modernization initiatives, can drive synergistic results. When campus systems work together from the same data pool, users enjoy a seamless experience with better insights at a lower overall cost.

With SaaS ERPs, you can access a wealth of data beyond what's in your ERP system. You can monitor how your prospects, students, faculty, and staff are actually using your system. When users log into a SaaS ERP, they'll be presented with content specific to their roles—and that content can change and adjust based on the time of year. At the beginning of the semester, reports relating to registrations come to the top automatically. And when it's time for admitted students to notify the institution regarding their decisions, that information is featured for the appropriate employees. That's where AI and SaaS can work together to create powerful solutions.

Move forward fearlessly—today

The coronavirus pandemic has forced universities to evolve faster than ever. By creating a strong digital foundation for all campus activities, colleges and universities can deliver faster online registration; easy-to-use advising and grading tools; more streamlined admission processes; improved personnel, inventory, and financial management; and the intelligent analytic tools needed for better decisions.

Ellucian's complete SaaS solutions give you access to the cloud's security and scalability features along with enhanced mobile, self-service, and extensibility tools. Technology partners like Ellucian with AWS can simplify this transition so you can focus on the mission-critical issues of student engagement and learning.

Contact us to help your institution achieve success today while expanding and unlocking greater potential tomorrow.

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