



Migrating to Software as a Service and Excelling

How MassArt unlocked valuable free time and resources with SaaS

The annual Ellucian Impact Award recognizes higher education institutions that use technology to solve challenges, operate more efficiently, and create better student experiences. Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt), located in Boston, earned an Impact Award for their incredible migration to solutions supported by Software as a Service (SaaS) delivery model, which saved them precious time and valuable resources over their prior practice.

The Challenge: Aging Systems and Operations

MassArt's IT team has founded a strategy goal called Building an Amazing Student Experience (BASE), which employs diverse technical solutions that enhance student satisfaction. The BASE philosophy relies on MassArt's migration to SaaS. Since Ellucian handles SaaS maintenance, MassArt's IT team has unburdened themselves from performing systems maintenance and have since refocused their efforts and resources on providing better student services. They've utilized Ellucian solutions like Data Connect, Insights, and Experience to expand MassArt's self-service capabilities and other value-added services.

"Like I'm always saying, I don't want systems to manage us; I want us to manage systems," said Lana Ludanova, Director of Enterprise Applications and Integration at MassArt. "Ellucian is a very big help in doing that for us. With Ellucian managing our systems, we are providing more services to our clients."



Case Study

Solutions

- Ellucian CRM Advise
- Ellucian Ethos
- Ellucian Experience
- Ellucian Insights
- Ellucian Intelligent Learning Platform
- Ellucian Workflow

Results

- 1,250 annual hours saved by using SaaS's Ellucian-based systems
- 20 total minutes taken to process all MassArt student ID cards

In order to ensure that BASE succeeds, MassArt needed to fix some issues that were holding them back.

Previously, MassArt manually processed several of their workflow items. Due to this, they found themselves six months to a year behind where they wanted to be with their tech solutions' system updates. Processes like mailing paper bills to students and manually entering student ID information into the MassArt computer system contributed to delays.

MassArt faced other dilemmas with their previous system. The college's expert IT team found data security and recovery to be challenging under their old operational model. They spent resources developing customizations for their software to get it to behave to their specifications. They often relied on phone calls or in-person visits from students to manage student accounts. All these resulted in office congestion, long wait times, and a staff unable to focus on more complex and specialized tasks.

Burdened with processes that the school itself called "outdated" and even "archaic," they knew it was time to migrate to SaaS. What could they do to grow their BASE initiative?

The Solutions: Modernizing and Expediting Processes

In order to overhaul its processes and increase its operational efficiency, MassArt took advantage of several Ellucian SaaS-enabled solutions, including Ethos, Experience, Insights, Intelligent Learning Platform, and Workflow.

MassArt moved to the Ellucian SaaS Platform in December 2020. This move enables MassArt to better expand student services, reduce integration costs, cut manual and paper processes, and provide their Technology department staff more time to focus on high-value activities like addressing MassArt's strategic initiatives.

Migrating to these SaaS solutions and transitioning to focusing on services rather than server maintenance and manual processes helped alleviate several pain points for the college. They were able to get up to date with their system management, which freed up their tech team to spend more time on innovation and delivering value-added services rather than get bogged down with routine maintenance tasks. The migration also empowered staff to be more adaptive, innovative, and responsive to new changes in the world of technology. In other words, MassArt is using the Ellucian SaaS Platform to stay future-proofed, efficient, and accessible.



“My registrar is saying that all these long lines with paperwork during registration are just gone,” Ludanova said. “Because we were able to go online, because we were able to provide the best and greatest solutions, we are letting students spend their time on what is most important to their education, to their creativity, to make sure they’re getting what they need.”

More specifically, Ellucian Workflow has let the staff automate tasks across the institution with a cloud-based business process solution. As they build digital workflows and automate their old manual processes, another pain point they’ve solved is processing campus cards for their students. Calculating and writing MassArt’s campus card number and pin into Colleague will now be done automatically, which is just one of many automations that frees up their technology team’s time and resources.

In addition, MassArt is leveraging other SaaS-enabled solutions. The college has used SaaS to enhance its instance of Ellucian Colleague Self-Service with the Student Finance feature. By utilizing CRM Advise, MassArt ensures at-risk students get early alerts to help them fulfill any obligations they may have in order to stay on track with their academic path. Providing better, more proactive help to students is emblematic of their BASE initiative.

The Results: More Time to Spend on What Matters

With the free time and resources the tech team now has, MassArt’s IT team has been able to work with the registrar’s office, the financial aid department, and MassArt’s business office. This led to the quick development of Student Finance, Financial Aid, Student Planning, and other Self-Service solutions. They’ve found the Self-Service application has been vital to providing them with the autonomy to seamlessly navigate and engage with key academic and financial services.

And of course, the numbers speak for themselves.

According to representatives from the college, since migrating to SaaS and delegating system administration to Ellucian, MassArt’s technology department has been able to reclaim five hours per day that used to be spent on manual tasks and other processes. This adds up to 1,250 hours per year that can now be spent bolstering student success and delivering on the BASE promise.



What about the student ID cards — which MassArt calls campus cards — they used to process manually? Workflow can calculate — and post to Colleague — 4,000 in under 20 minutes. Before migrating, staff spent an average of two minutes per card entering them into the system, so the total task time was more than 133 hours, or 19 business days. Another way to look at it is that in the same amount of time it took to manually enter 10 campus cards into the system, MassArt's new process can do all 4,000.

Moving to SaaS has also helped the school revolutionize its student services operations. Before migration and a full implementation of their Self-Services application, MassArt averaged 1,000 users accessing the app per year. Post-migration, that number has jumped to more than 1,100 on a single day.

MassArt's SaaS migration is saving them time, money, and other resources — and ultimately letting them cover their BASE.



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