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Transforming Challenges Into Success

How New Jersey Institute of Technology streamlines financial processes using Ellucian platforms.

Confusion. Errors. Frustratingly long delays. The financial aid office at New Jersey Institute of Technology was dealing with all that and more—until a suite of Ellucian products changed everything, recalls Chaitrali Vishwas Rane, manager of student financial aid information systems at the Newark-based public polytechnic university. “With Ellucian, it was like we flipped a switch that made things smoother and more efficient,” Rane says. “We’ve seen enrollment numbers climb, retention rates improve, and more students graduating.”

Significant enrollment increase

More than 12,300 students were enrolled in 2022-2023 at NJIT, which Forbes has ranked No. 1 in the country for the upward economic mobility of its lowest-income students. Enrollment is reaching a new high of 13,000 students for 2023-2024, and Rane credits the improved financial aid operations as being part of the reason for the increase. “We’re giving aid to students more quickly, and now they have their own customized plans. We see a lot more students are viewing and applying for scholarships,” she says. “This results in more students enrolling faster.”

Solving a challenging process

Before NJIT partnered with Ellucian, financial aid applications were reviewed, processed, and verified manually. Accurate record-keeping and compliance were challenging, as were maintaining confidentiality and tracking documents that were submitted via paper, email or



Case Study

Main Challenge

Enrollment and retention growth

Solutions

CampusCommunicator
ScholarshipUniverse
StudentForms

Results

- Calls and appointments to address questions is down 50%
- Open rate of 87%
- Streamlined financial aid department’s operations
- Improved overall student financial success

through multiple different platforms. It often would take much longer than the 7-day goal to verify applications, and financial aid offer letters were snail-mailed after multiple staff members spent hours preparing them. Letters often included confusing terms, prompting phone calls or appointment requests for more information, including questions about potential scholarships.

“Approximately 70% of students and parents were reaching out to discuss their aid packages,” Rane recalls. “The traditional communication methods didn’t always provide the clarity to ensure that recipients understood everything.”

That changed in 2019 with the addition of StudentForms and CampusCommunicator from Ellucian.

Streamlined verification

StudentForms streamlines the verification process, allowing students to submit everything securely and conveniently online, then track and verify submissions in real time. Errors, requests for updates and questions have all decreased as a result, and the department meets the 7-day goal for processing much more consistently, Rane says.

“58% of documents have already been reviewed by our staff by the time the semester begins, which is a significant improvement. With less time spent on manual reviews, they can redirect their efforts toward more valuable work.”

CampusCommunicator sends digital financial aid offer letters tailored to individual students, breaking down complex terms and providing clear explanations of financial aid offers.

Today, calls and appointments to address questions are down 50%, Rane says, and there has been another “remarkable” effect of the new communication system.

Enhanced student engagement

“We’ve observed an approximate open rate of 87% for these communications, which is a significant improvement in engagement,” Rane says. “Before CampusCommunicator, many critical communications were ignored or unopened, leading to confusion and support inquiries. Today there has been a remarkable decrease in the number of questions.”



Students also don't have to ask about scholarships anymore. Their digital financial aid offer letters include information from ScholarshipUniverse, which provides access to a vast database of 17,000 potential funding sources and uses an adaptive matching algorithm to connect students with them.

Contributing to student financial success

The partnership with Ellucian has not only streamlined the financial aid department's operations, Rane says, but it has improved student financial success overall.

"These resources attract students to NJIT, make them feel they are important here, and help them make better borrowing decisions," Rane says. "Everything is transparent and helps them make smart decisions about enrollment, about what to do with the aid they are getting, and what they want to borrow. It gives them a head start to plan wisely on their higher education journey."

"It's about giving students the keys to their future, right from the start."



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