



University of Idaho Adapts with Ellucian Experience

University of Idaho Makes Experience Their Own
with MyUI to Empower Student Success

Before University of Idaho implemented Ellucian Experience, UI students had to navigate several disparate software programs and websites for all their needs. Similarly, the university's previous web-based platform was a trusted and familiar approach to solving UI's digital needs, but it had begun to show its age.

"How we have it set up, it's very '90s-esque," said Jason Starace, Technical Product Manager for Enterprise Applications at University of Idaho. "You log in, you have your tabs at the top for Student, Faculty, Financial Aid, General Info; it just looks old. I grew up with web pages like that and for anyone else it looks very outdated and confusing. It doesn't get the info in an easily digestible way."

However, with the help of IT staff like Starace and Brandon Krous, Enterprise Developer, University of Idaho are modernizing their students' academic adventures. They're doing so by taking Experience and turning it into a fully customized and comprehensive portal called MyUI, which provides students a fresh-looking and user-friendly interface that guides them all the way from filling out their application to donning their cap and gown.

Racing into the 21st century

The biggest way in which University of Idaho has taken ownership of Experience to improve student success is the eclectic array of custom-made cards that makes their instance of Experience truly unique to UI. Staff members like Krous build cards in React and seek out help from Ellucian tech support as needed to build the one-of-a-kind MyUI.



Case Study

Main Challenge

University of Idaho's antiquated portal exacerbated its student experience.

Solutions

Ellucian Banner
Ellucian Experience

Results

- Built customized and modernized Experience dashboard MyUI
- Streamlined administrative tasks for students
- Positive feedback from beta testers

One such card is a financial aid card, on which a student can see and review their financial aid package and accept and decline partial amounts of loans or see if the student has been approved for work study and/or any applicable scholarships. The card also links to their FAFSA worksheet and shows them the status of their FAFSA application, including if they need to take any actions on their loans. This could be a huge boon for students; according to FAFSA data, high school graduates in the classes of 2021 and 2022 left a combined \$7.33 billion in Pell Grants unclaimed because they didn't complete their FAFSA forms.

MyUI also has a registration card, which displays any holds and action-items a student needs to handle as well as what their registration date and time is. Once the student's registration date and time approach, MyUI provides them the appropriate links to the registration system so they can sign up for courses. Once the student has registered, the registration card shows them relevant info such as who the professor is and—when applicable—any fees associated with the course that may arise.

There's also a library card, which isn't your father's library card.

"We allow students to reserve rooms directly from MyUI in the library card," Starace said. "So we pull in that form, they can fill it out, show the availability of the room and when they can reserve it and for how long."

Beta testing a revolution

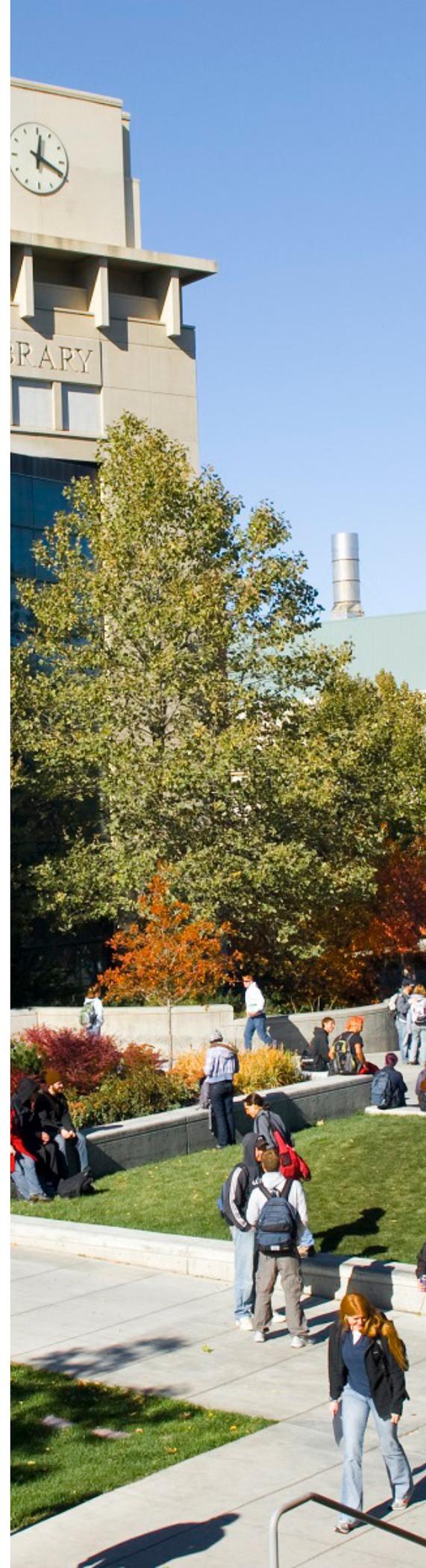
With a slew of cards in their arsenal, University of Idaho did a beta rollout of MyUI in the 2022-23 academic year, during which time they saw as many as 700 unique users testing the portal out. So far, feedback has been positive.

"They really do like the idea," Starace said.

"They like how it's tying everything together for them; they're not having to go to multiple systems and find or track down these things—we're just providing it to them in one location—and they like the look and feel of things. Seeing something that is refreshed and tailored to them has been a great experience," Starace said.

"It's been [...] should I say 'overwhelmingly positive' or just 'positive'? It's been somewhere in between there.

Krous agreed, echoing Starace's earlier sentiment that the difference between their previous portal and the Experience-powered MyUI is night and day for students.



“The big thing, which Jason has mentioned, is that with [our older portal], all you get is links and there’s no real digestible information directly on the page,” Krous said. “MyUI fixes that and allows them to quickly see when deadlines are coming, when their homework is due; they don’t have to log into Canvas to see when their homework is due then log into another portal to see when their classes are coming up. It’s all on one page and I really think that’s going to help students moving forward not miss assignments, not miss deadlines for graduation, things like that.”

Easing faculty and staff life

While the beta rollout of MyUI primarily focused on students’ academic journeys, its developers haven’t forgotten about faculty and staff. In fact, quite the opposite. The full rollout of MyUI will feature robust components for every side of campus life. One opportunity is a card for faculty advising. Some faculty advisers have struggled with other software platforms, so Starace and his team are developing a card that can combine class lists so a professor can bring up lists of students that are their advisees. Clicking on an advisee shows that student’s GPA, class load, active holds, and more; advisers can then clear holds directly from the card.

“We’re gonna be looking at a card that really focuses on the advising experience for faculty,” he said.

Additionally, MyUI doesn’t use ILP; any integration they use has to tie directly into Canvas APIs. Due to this, updating grades has been a cumbersome task for professors. Another card is in the works that ties into Canvas API, Ellucian Banner, and any other system professors may need to enter in grades so they can have an easier place to do so. The interest in the software is there as well; a recent Educause survey showed that 69% of faculty say the use of Learning Management Systems is important to their teaching. On the upside, it isn’t a system that University of Idaho has to build from scratch: Experience provided some useful tools for this process.

“We don’t need to actually change how grades are displayed to the students; we already have that,” Starace said. “Ellucian provided cards that we were able to release to take care of that, so we don’t need to change too much there.”

With one fewer thing to worry about, MyUI staff are able to focus on the professors’ side of the grading process.



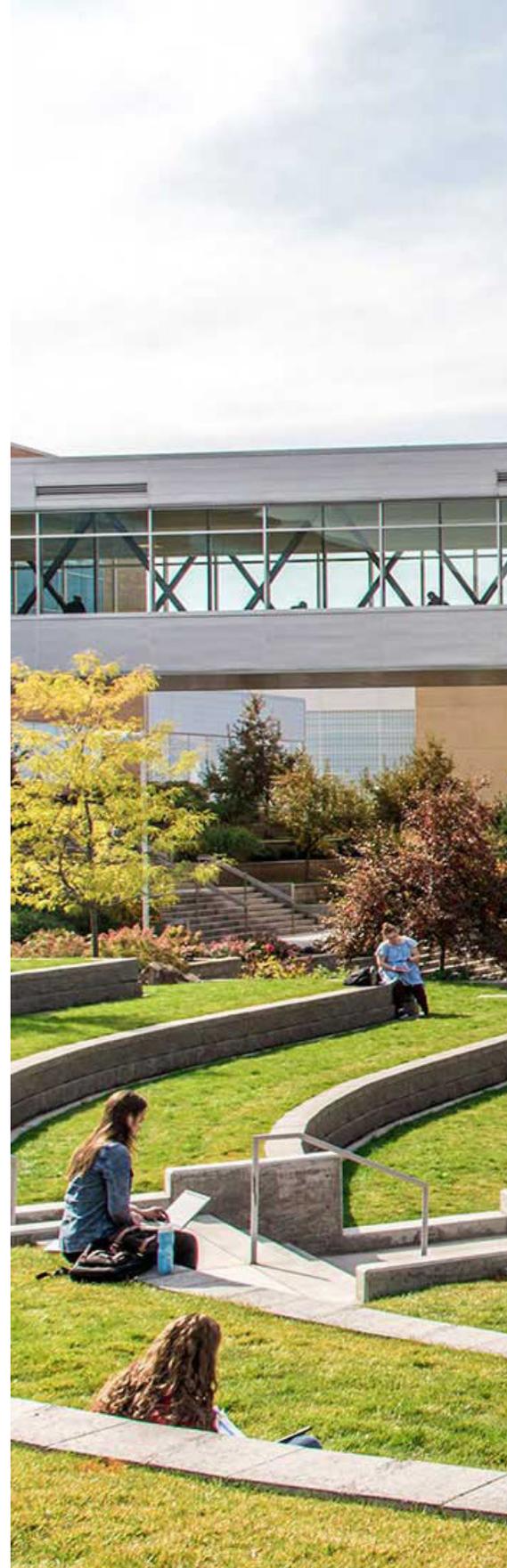
Continuously evolving with experience

In addition to the completed cards tailored toward students and those in the works for faculty, even more of MyUI's custom cards are still in various stages of development to further enable student success. Among others, the IT team is working on a housing card. As with many institutions, University of Idaho requires first-year students to live on campus. For them and for any other students who choose to live on campus, residents will see their dorm mailing address, who their roommates are, contact information linked to maintenance teams, and so on. This way they can access all their housing information and who to contact for any housing needs.

Starace and his team are also excited to present a graduation checklist card at University of Idaho. The process of applying for graduation at UI comes with deadlines and associated late fees for missing those deadlines. Unfortunately, the links to complete the process are often hard to find, buried deep in the UI website. Bringing that information to the forefront of MyUI will help students avoid fees and frustration as well as help them graduate on time. Speaking about the graduation checklist card, Starace also seemed to hint on the greater solution provided by Experience and MyUI.

“A lot of the students I’ve been talking to as we’re going through this, they’re taking 15, 18, 20 units, right?” Starace said. “They have amazingly busy and complex things going on, so why have to worry about some of these administrative tasks that they need to do in order to complete their degrees? If we can take that off their shoulders and help them on that path, it’s going to be extremely beneficial to them.”

“That’s something that’s really going to take that load off their shoulders.”



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