



# Modernizing enrollment and student support to fuel student success

Wichita State University | [wichita.edu](http://wichita.edu) | Wichita, KS | Nearly 15,000 students



## Rethinking traditional support to eliminate the burden on students

For the nearly 15,000 students at Wichita State University (WSU), time is a valuable resource. The majority of the student body juggles both school and work. To meet both academic and employment commitments, as many as 41 percent of WSU's students take a mix of online and face-to-face classroom courses.

With time at a premium, students struggled with the added burden of taking care of registration, financial aid and other behind-the-scenes administrative issues. Students often had to take care of problems in person, then deal with extensive phone, fax and email follow up. Departments were siloed, making resolution of problems that extended across departmental borders a challenge. Even simple inquiries and problems could take weeks to resolve.

To empower students to succeed, the University decided it needed to provide more convenient and personalized assistance. With a goal of increasing enrollment by 50% over the next decade, largely through expanded online and returning adult programming, WSU recognized that it would need to take a new approach to student services – one that would provide convenient, 24/7 student assistance. To deliver these services, WSU partnered with Blackboard Student Services.

## Envisioning One Stop Student Services

During the 2013-2014 academic year, WSU began the process that would result in the creation of One Stop Student Services. With the university's expected enrollment growth and the increased percentage of distance learners, serving students more efficiently could no longer be just a desire, it had to become a reality. And face-to-face support could no longer be the only option. The plan became clear – WSU needed to create a virtual one stop solution where students could have anytime, anywhere support.

The solution envisioned would include an inbound call center and self-help portal that covered admissions, financial aid, student accounts, records, registration, and student advising. "Our goal was to minimize student runaround," says Lisa Hansen, Director of Wichita State's One Stop Student Services, "and to maximize the number of students we could support virtually."

## Finding the right partner in Blackboard

Early on in its process, WSU recognized that it did not have the in-house resources required to turn their vision into a reality. "We looked at a few different vendors, and most of them had some of the pieces we were looking for," says Mark Porcaro, Executive Director of Online Learning. "One firm was strong on the planning side, but hands-off when it came to execution. One vendor was lacking in

### Quick Summary:

#### Challenges:

- Fragmented enrollment and student support infrastructure
- High percentage mix of distance learners requiring remote support services

#### Goals:

- Serve more students in an efficient manner
- Provide a virtual one stop solution to answer questions and point students in the right direction

#### Partnership Results:

- 44,000+ in-bound interactions handled
- :48s average speed to answer
- 73,000+ students proactively contacted
- 90% student satisfaction rate



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**Mark Porcaro**

Executive Director of Online Learning, Wichita State University

technology. Blackboard stood out on all fronts. It had expertise in strategic planning and tactical execution. It could provide the 24/7 staffing we needed and had best-in-class technology created specifically for one stop support. Blackboard also had the experience and resources to pull off the aggressive, six-month implementation deadline we’d set for ourselves.”

Working with Blackboard, Wichita State designed a strategic solution that included:

- **A centralized One Stop service center** that includes a full suite of student services support, a help desk, and retention solutions to minimize “runaround” and provide one-contact resolution
- **24/7 support** that uses real-time technology integrations to provide immediate and personalized assistance to students
- **A variety of service options** including on-campus face-to-face, phone, email, chat, and mobile friendly self-service
- **An automated voice-recognition system** that directs students to the right source for information
- **Proactive outreach campaigns** aimed at improving student engagement and retention

## Delivering convenient and personalized support

In its first full year of operations, WSU’s One Stop handled over 44,000 in-bound interactions and is on track to exceed that number in year two. Blackboard’s contact center average speed to answer is less than a minute, and resolves about 90% of inquiries without escalation. After call surveys show user satisfaction in the 90% range. Lisa Hansen notes, “the contact center’s ability to take care of so many issues is providing major relief to departments like Admissions and Financial Aid. With Blackboard managing the routine calls, our functional teams can focus on more complex issues and special cases.”

Looking for additional ways to improve the student experience, WSU also partnered with Blackboard Student Services to launch a variety of proactive outbound campaigns aimed at improving student engagement and retention. In the first year, Blackboard’s Student Services advisors connected with more than 73,000 contacts, reaching out to students who needed help with the admissions office; who needed to update their federal financial aid application forms; or who had overdue bills that prevent them from registering. With Blackboard, WSU has also been able to expand student involvement in different events like the university’s career fair and family weekend.

WSU values its relationship with Blackboard. “Blackboard is always making small adjustments to improve the service they’re providing our students,” says Lisa Hansen. “They clearly care about the services they’re providing, and take their work very seriously.”

Mark Porcaro’s comments underscore these sentiments. “As a partner, Blackboard is very student-focused and truly understands that Wichita State’s mission is to help our students succeed. They’re making us happy by making our students happy, and we know that this is a model that will carry forward as we grow our online presence.”

## Learn More: Blackboard Student Services

To learn more about how Blackboard Student Services can design and deliver scalable solutions to help your institution deliver a more immediate, personalized, and connected level of service for students, visit [blackboard.com/onestop](http://blackboard.com/onestop) or contact us at 1-800-424-9299.

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