Blackboard®

Supporting Students Through the Student Lifecycle

+4000 incremental enrollments as a result of improved student services

Ivy Tech At a Glance

› Indiana's largest public post-secondary institution

› The nation's largest singly-accredited statewide community college system

› Serves nearly 200,000 students per year

› 32 statewide campuses across 14 regions

Ivy Tech Community College Sets a High Bar In Serving Students from Enrollment to Graduation and Beyond

Like many institutions, Ivy Tech Community College System has two major student-centered goals: create a more efficient way to get prospective students enrolled, and increase scale to better support current students through to graduation. By partnering with Blackboard Student Services, Ivy Tech has supported enrollment growth, enhanced its student experience, and increased retention—all to help its students get ahead.

The Challenge: Gaps in Student Support and a Bottleneck in Enrollment

As Indiana's largest public post-secondary institution, Ivy Tech Community College serves nearly 200,000 students a year across 32 statewide campuses. Like many of its peer institutions in other states, the system experienced significant growth when the economy dipped in 2008. However, following the growth spurt, Ivy Tech's enrollment and retention numbers began to drop. Changes to the state funding model and budget challenges left Ivy Tech's student services resources stretched thin. The result – a bottleneck in admissions, financial aid, and registration.

Additionally, the college's processes were inefficient, incongruent across campuses, and not aligned with a flexible campus learning experience. Those who applied or registered for classes at different campuses across the state received inconsistent service and different answers, in particular in the area of financial aid. Service was slow, bottlenecked by high student demand and limited resources. Consequently, students began looking elsewhere or stopped the process altogether, and the college lost enrollments.

> **"A smaller institution might say, 'Outsourcing something of this scale is only for big schools.' But I think if schools can be strategic in their approach, Blackboard can help them put something in place that can scale to their specific needs. If your institution is in need of excellent customer service on a students' watch, then this is a resource that makes sense for you."**
>
> **Jeff Fanter**
> **Vice President Communications**
> **Enrollment and Marketing**
> **Ivy Tech Community College**

Mobile-Friendly Self-Help Portal

"We were finding that some of our students may have been choosing not to enroll in the college, or, frankly, stay retained in the college because they couldn't get information in a timely manner," says Senior Vice President for Student Experience, Communications, and Marketing Jeff Fanter.

The Solution: A Virtual Student Success/Help Center

In order to reclaim its growth trajectory and provide a high quality student experience, Ivy Tech began looking for more efficient ways to serve its student body and prospective students from enrollment to completion. The college partnered with Blackboard Student Services to launch a one-stop virtual Student Success/Help Center to augment their on-campus staff. Since going live, the partnership has continued to evolve in new and innovative ways to scale Ivy Tech's resources and better serve its students

"It's our responsibility to ensure that students get enrolled and retained in school. And our core competency is what takes place in the classroom. So we decided we needed a partner whose core business focuses on exceeding students' expectations for admissions and financial aid support. That partner is Blackboard Student Services," Fanter says.

Together with Blackboard, Ivy Tech developed solutions for enrollment, admissions, advising, financial aid, and registration. They started with a centralized, Student Success/Help Center capable of resolving all student questions on these topics. The approach includes:

› **A mobile-friendly self-help portal** with individualized admissions, financial aid, and student accounts status trackers; online chat; and access to more than 700 knowledgebase articles to quickly answer student questions

› **Extended live support** delivered by highly trained professionals using Blackboard's proprietary service support software to deliver a faster, one call resolution for students and parents

› **Proactive outreach** calls and texts to applied and current students at key milestones of their journey

› **Interaction tracking** that continues to build purposeful connections with prospective and current students

With call center and self-service solutions in place through Blackboard, Ivy Tech campuses have been able to provide the personalized attention students need to successfully progress through the student lifecycle—with measurable results.

Constant Innovation of the Partnership to Drive Results

After seeing such profound results from its one-stop virtual Student Success/Help Center, Ivy Tech and Blackboard continue to develop new ways to leverage their partnership to better serve students.

"We have created a solid partnership over the years. At Ivy Tech, we think of Blackboard as a part of our team and regularly consider how we can better leverage their services and technology to help us improve our student experience. Our partnership gives us the scale to keep students on track to achieve their educational goals. This is key, in particular when it comes to cumbersome processes like financial aid," says Ivy Tech Chief Student Financial Resources Officer Ben Burton.

Together, Ivy Tech and Blackboard developed a strategic plan for online learning and shared service consolidation for student support across all 32 campuses. This strategic relationship continues to yield new initiatives and benefits for both the system and its students including:

Improved Communications Through Recruitment and Enrollment: Ivy Tech and Blackboard developed an intricate communications plan of emails, text messages, and phone calls that allow the college to monitor and encourage students' progress through the enrollment funnel.

Virtual Academic Advising Support: Like many schools, Ivy Tech has a three-pronged requirement for enrollment—assessment, orientation, and advising. By working creatively, Ivy Tech and Blackboard were able to reduce the staff workload. They filter groups of students who need to see a live advisor from those who can move forward in the enrollment process. Those students go through Virtual Academic Advising, leveraging a Blackboard advisor who walks them through basic course selection and a scripted advising conversation.

Social Media Support: Ivy Tech has created a very vibrant Facebook presence, which students look to for information. Blackboard helps the team respond in a timely manner to Facebook posts via an integration which tracks over 70 key words and allows Blackboard Student Services advisors to respond directly to students who post questions on Facebook.

Early Outreach to At-Risk Students: Ivy Tech pulls data from Blackboard Learn to identify students who have not logged into their course within a certain timeframe. Then, a Blackboard Student Services representative reaches out to the student to answer questions and solve problems. This preventative outreach helps improve retention.

Improved Technology Infrastructure on Campus: Ivy Tech has replicated a physical one-stop student support location at each of its campuses. These locations offer the same type of streamlined support experience students receive from the Student Success/Help Center. Instead of trying to pull data from various SIS screens (too time consuming and difficult to train staff), they deployed the same technology that Blackboard's call center advisors leverage at these centers. This reduced training time from four days to four hours and enabled staff to answer multiple questions quickly.

> **"We knew that [Blackboard] had experience in a call center environment, which clearly was important to us. But there were people there who also had experience in higher education, including a former financial aid director—these were people who knew what our students were going to be calling and asking about, and who also appreciated what our world was like, what we were all experiencing. That was extremely important to us."**
>
> **Jeff Fanter**
> **Vice President Communications Enrollment and Marketing Ivy Tech Community College**

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OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

› Inconsistent service levels across the 14 regions (office hours, staffing, etc.)

› Lack of standardization for students attending multiple colleges

› Long lines, unanswered voicemails and emails

› No ticketing system for documentation of inquiries

› No self-help capabilities

› No scale to proactively contact students with reminders

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BLACKBOARD PARTNERSHIP RESULTS (2013/2014

› Reduced wait times from 19 minutes to 33 seconds

› Overwhelming client satisfaction – Net promoter score at 66 (outstanding)

› 26% deflection in call volume due to the Interactive Voice Response phone automation and Web self-service technologies

› 90% of issues resolved without needing to contact campus

› Increased application yield by 3.6% in 2014, an impact of almost 4,000 incremental enrollments

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Results: Onward Growth

Continued results have proven that Ivy Tech made a smart choice in partnering with Blackboard Student Services.

› Consolidated student services support (admissions, financial aid, registration) drives more efficiency at scale, reduced cost, and a better student experience

› Blackboard augments Ivy Tech staff, handling more than 290,000 inbound calls

› Blackboard deployed more than 440,000 proactive outbound calls to students to help them through enrollment and financial aid requirements as well as remind them to pay bills and register for class on time

› Students who speak with a Blackboard advisor regarding their admissions process enroll for classes at a rate of 25 to 30% higher rate than students that do not speak to an advisor

› Increased application yield by 3.6% in 2014, an impact of almost 4,000 incremental enrollments, due to improved communication plan

"You were so diligent about calling her and checking in with her to make sure she had everything completed. You guys have done a wonderful job at your outreach to the kids."

Ivy Tech Parent

What's Next for Ivy Tech—Evolving Partnership

With measurable results from their existing efforts, Ivy Tech and Blackboard continue to work collaboratively on new ways to leverage and expand their partnership.

Due to the success of the partnership between Ivy Tech and Blackboard in assisting applicants through the enrollment process, Ivy Tech has decided to expand Blackboard's reach of their enrollment funnel out to prospective students. An effort for recruiting high school prospects through K-12 partnerships is underway. And they are developing inbound and outbound campaigns with enrollment and admissions to better engage students and improve retention even further. In addition, Blackboard is helping Ivy Tech implement CRM capabilities to better monitor and reach out to prospective students at the campus level. With streamlined support across all processes, student services can be most effective—helping Ivy Tech grow and its students get ahead.

Learn More: Blackboard Student Services

To learn more about how Blackboard Student Services can design and deliver scalable solutions to help your institution, district, or system deliver a more immediate, personalized, and connected level of service for students, visit **blackboard.com/studentservices** or contact your Blackboard representative.

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