

# Driving Operational Efficiency and Strategic IT Services

## A Strategic IT Function Can Improve the Student Experience

With rapid changes to the landscape of higher education, competition for students is at an all time high. Institutions must be on their game across the board—from IT help desks to financial aid offices, no corner of the campus can afford to deliver sub-par service. For the IT department in particular, technological innovation has given rise to complex options, high expectations and a high-stakes support environment—making service quality more critical than ever before.

Increasingly, technology provides the backbone for all academic and non-academic functions in an institution. Complex learning management systems, blended learning models, SIS implementations and fully online programs are just a few of the forces driving the need for exceptional, strategic IT services. Unfortunately it can be hard to focus on strategy when the sheer volume of student inquiries absorbs a large fraction of time and resources.

- ▶ **70 Percent** of students agree with the statement that technology and IT “makes doing my course activities more convenient.” (source: ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology, 2009)
- ▶ **48 Percent** of students disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “My institution’s IT services are always available when I need them for my coursework.” (source: ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology, 2009)
- ▶ **1.263 Average** student enrollment (FTE) per help desk staff member. (source: ECAR study December 2007, Service on the Front Line: The IT Help Desk in Higher Education)

## Making Time for Strategy

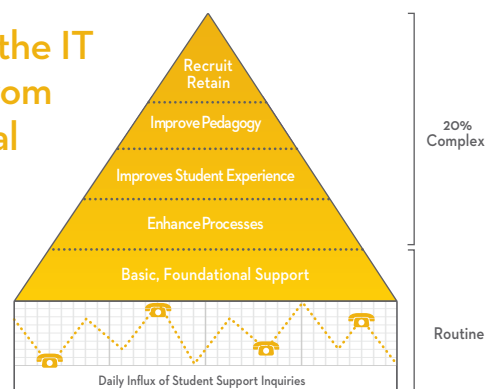
Historically, the IT function has served a critical if not a strategic role within the institution. Now, the country’s most progressive institutions are learning to draw on the transformative power of technology to improve the student experience—from both a service and a pedagogy perspective. The IT function can play a significant role in such mission-critical goals as recruitment and retention—as long as it can separate the complex from the routine and clear time for strategic thinking and action.

## How Blackboard Student Services Can Help

Through hundreds of engagements with leading institutions, Blackboard Student Services has learned to help clients shift IT’s focus from firefighting to problem solving. By enabling 24/7 multi-modal interactions we move the needle on key support metrics, allowing IT to spend more and more time focused on strategy:

- ▶ Increase self help ratios
- ▶ Increase consistency of student experience
- ▶ Decrease cost per student interaction
- ▶ Decrease student confusion about where to find answers

## Leveraging the IT Function: From Foundational to Strategic



## Virtualized Services

From providing students with a single place for key information to delivering immediate answers to routine questions, communicating the right message at the right time, via the right medium, requires more than just “bodies on phones.” Blackboard Student Services virtually extends your team with highly trained professionals that know your institution and your challenges. Imagine having “extra” IT and help desk resources—complete with supervisors, infrastructure, and industry-leading processes.

- ▶ **24/7/365 staffing**
- ▶ **Professionally managed service operations**
- ▶ **Multi-modal inbound and outbound campaigns**

## Education Process Redesign

The IT function, when leveraged to its full potential, can help an institution recruit, educate and retain students. Education Process Redesign dives beneath the complexity of daily IT processes to improve transparency of information, reduce redundancy, increase efficiency, and develop strategic, sustainable practices.

- ▶ **Analytics**
- ▶ **Benchmarks**
- ▶ **Best practices**

## Technology Solutions

The power of technology can have a dramatic influence on education outcomes—from creating a single view of student data for better decision-making to reducing the workload for IT support technicians. Technology can drive increases in staff productivity...and make the lives of busy, multi-tasking students easier.

- ▶ **Custom CRM software and reporting**
- ▶ **Commercial SaaS development**
- ▶ **Cloud-based telephony and service platform**

## About Blackboard Student Services

Blackboard Student Services brings virtualized support and technology enabled solutions to the world’s most progressive institutions. Our market leadership is earned by driving client results in every major benchmark, including retention, enrollment optimization, operational efficiencies, and financial aid utilization. We do this through virtualized services, education process redesign, and technology solutions.

## IT Support Results

We combine virtualized services, process redesign and technology solutions to help institutions manage peaks in demand so IT professionals have more time address core, strategic goals. Our success is measured by our client’s results. To the right are a few examples of how we have helped drive operational efficiency for IT departments around the country:

- ▶ **700% increase in self-help cases—drastically reducing cost per interaction.**
- ▶ **90% student satisfaction rates**
- ▶ **Strong year over year increases in LMS use**
- ▶ **Significant increases in hours spent focused on institutional goals/mission**

## Get Started

To learn more about how Blackboard Student Services can help you achieve your organization’s goals, visit [blackboard.com/studentsservices](http://blackboard.com/studentsservices). If you are already a Blackboard client, contact your Blackboard Account Representative.

