

Blackboard® & University of North Texas



Keeping Students, Informed, Aware... and Enrolled

When it comes to resolving delinquent accounts, the ability to communicate with speed and consistency at low cost can be a decisive factor in helping students stay on track until graduation. The Blackboard Connect alert and notification service allows campus leaders to notify thousands of students in minutes using the power of their personal voice.

Problem: Delinquent Student Accounts

It is a challenge for colleges and universities nationwide. Administrators need to notify students when classes are subject to cancellation due to delinquent account status, but it is often difficult to engage students directly and know with certainty that the message has been received.

The University of North Texas (UNT) is one of the largest schools in Texas, enrolling more than 33,500 students. The university previously spent \$15,000 annually on phone calls — placing approximately 10,000 calls to students concerning accounts. Prior to using the Blackboard Connect service, UNT administrators followed up on delinquent accounts by sending e-mails to students and having temporary staff make phone calls. E-mails were problematic. Few students responded and the university could not assess if students had read them.

The use of temporary staff also proved to be an expensive option, with significant costs in manpower, office space, long distance charges, and staffing time — it would normally take ten people two days to complete the calls to 1000+ overdue accounts.



Quick Facts

- 25,308 undergraduates
- 6,739 grad students
- 2,045 faculty
- Blackboard Connect client since September 2007
- On December 7, 2006, sent first pilot call with 1,400 students with drop notice warnings for overdue accounts.
- Within one week of the pilot call, UNT fully recouped 800 of those accounts.
- <http://www.unt.edu>



Administrators also needed to clearly and consistently transmit specifics to students, eliminating any chance of miscommunication by temp staff, and avoiding “rebuttals” from students about cancellation of classes.

Solution: Blackboard Connect

The university took a fresh approach by using the Blackboard Connect service. The message was consistent, delivered by a campus authority, and, because of Blackboard Connect’s service model, no long distance charges were incurred nor was any temp staff utilized.

Result: Message (and Payments) Received

On December 7, 2006, 1,400 students were notified that their classes would be dropped unless they remitted payment by December 11th. Within one week, UNT had fully recouped 800 of those accounts. Previously, it would have taken days to deliver the same message with greater resources expended for less return. This one call generated the best results ever achieved by a single initiative taken by the school toward resolving accounts issues.

“With the [Blackboard Connect] service, we’re in control with the ability to reach our entire community in the same time frame. The response it generates is incredible, and we can go in and analyze our results. It’s easy to use and intuitive: we had the service up and running without needing much training.

We will be looking at making many more calls with the [Blackboard Connect] service”

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