

Blackboard Student Services & Embry- Riddle Aeronautical University-Worldwide

GENERATED SOARING ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL AID RESULTS WITH 24/7 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Worldwide (ERAU-W) is recognized as the premier institution for aviation and aerospace education in the world. Its mission is to teach the science, practice and business of aviation and aerospace, preparing students for productive careers and leadership roles in service around the world.

Through a combination of online courses and a network of more than 150 locations worldwide, ERAU-W helps over 26,000 students achieve their dreams.. Over the last decade, Embry-Riddle has established itself as a respected leader in technology-enhanced education and is committed to providing superior academic instruction to adult learners, many of whom are active military members, wherever they are located.

The Need

ERAU-W's dedication to innovation and to the military community's unique learning needs has been rewarded with strong enrollment growth and international brand recognition. In 2009, however, the institution began to experience symptoms of growing pains:

- ▶ **A nearly unmanageable volume of student inquiries in the form of calls and emails**
- ▶ **Low turnaround time on processing financial aid packages given bandwidth challenges driven by student support inquiries**
- ▶ **Inability to capitalize on marketing initiatives and leads in the enrollment pipeline due to limited resources and high demand for services**
- ▶ **Students experiencing long hold times, busy signals and unanswered voicemails in financial aid**
- ▶ **Limited or non-existent visibility into enrollment and financial aid metrics, but a strong need to make datadriven decisions**



QUICK FACTS

- Annually delivers instruction to over 26,000 students, with nearly 90,000 class enrollments
- Empowers students to choose online or on-site courses based on their unique requirements
- Over 150 locations worldwide

Students were frustrated by extremely slow response times, and our staff were frustrated because they couldn't have the conversations they needed to have with each student," says Becky Vasquez, Chief Technology Officer at ERAU-W. "We knew we needed a staffing solution that would balance the workload of our staff while at same time connecting to students interested in pursuing their dreams."

The Partnership

Recognizing the need to add additional capacity to its student service teams, ERAU-W chose Blackboard Student Services in order to create efficiencies and regain credibility within its financial aid operation and student recruitment efforts. “We wanted a partner who wouldn’t just see us as a client, but one who would understand how important Embry-Riddle is to its students,” says Vasquez.

Blackboard Student Services jumps in where ERAU-W leaves off—extending teams, absorbing volume, and filling process gaps. This enables ERAU-W to scale without sacrificing quality of instruction or service.

The Financial Aid Solution

Blackboard Student Services responds to inquiries from students on all aspects of the financial aid process—from explaining the FASFA to helping students understand their aid eligibility. By giving students the option to engage with ERAU-W’s financial aid office at any time via any medium, including web 2.0 favorites like chat and online self-service, ERAU-W’s core financial aid team has earned back valuable work day time that was previously allocated to the constant barrage of student support inquiries. The Blackboard Student Services and ERAU-W partnership has allowed ERAU-W to better manage the volume of inquiries, eliminating a driving source of student frustration.

The Enrollment Management & Admissions Solution

On the enrollment side, Blackboard Student Services helps qualify leads for the school—serving as a first point of contact to most prospective students. Blackboard Student Services addresses complex program and admissions-related questions for undergraduate and graduate students around the world on a 24/7/365 basis. From the point at which a prospective student requests information all the way through the online application submission, Blackboard Student Services works with students to help them through the process smoothly and efficiently. For example, in May of 2011, ERAU-W implemented a state-of-the-art automated dialer solution to increase the capacity of lead handling and enable more efficient, timely follow-up with prospective students.

“The metrics speak for themselves,” says Bill Hampton, Associate Vice President of Marketing and Enrollment Management at ERAU-W. “Within six hours from inquiry, our prospective students are taking follow-up actions to pursue enrollment with Embry-Riddle.”



Blackboard Student Services has turned around our admissions, enrollment, and financial aid operations, helping us experience significant growth over the past two-to-three years.

Dr. John Watrat,
Executive Vice President, ERAU-W



THE RESULTS



- ▶ 25% increase in total aid packages processed and disbursed by financial aid office within the first six months
- ▶ Within three years, dramatically increased annual financial aid packages processed from \$3.8 million to over \$24 million
- ▶ Reduced turnaround time on new enrollment inquiries from 4+ days to within minutes
- ▶ Reduced response time on loans and verifications from two months to within 24-48 hours
- ▶ Disbursed \$3.8 Million dollars in one day—the largest single amount in campus history
- ▶ Grew applications by over 14% year over year
- ▶ Able to use staff time to execute mission-critical internal deliverables like the first-ever training manual for campuses, and refine policies and procedures

