How Keiser University achieved its "student first" mission and boosted retention

By combining Blackboard® Learn, Anthology® Ally, and Anthology's data capabilities, Keiser University has been able to provide an individualized student experience.

Keiser University, one of Florida's premier private higher education institutions, incorporates a "students first" philosophy into all it does, both inside and outside the classroom. So, whether Keiser's leaders were working to enhance courses, ensure programs were achieving the right student outcomes, or positioning faculty to be in lockstep with each student's progress, one thing became clear—Keiser needed an integrated educational technology platform that could support the depth and breadth of their efforts.

"At Keiser, each student is considered an individual and the university strives to be aware — at all times — of the needs of each member of the student body," said Sherry Olsen, Vice Chancellor of Keiser's Online Division. In an attempt to achieve this personalized learning experience for students, Olsen and her team had tried using several different technical solutions in the past, but none offered the integrated and robust environment they demanded.

INSTITUTION TYPE:

FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE

LOCATION:

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

ORGANIZATION SIZE:

19,000+

ANTHOLOGY PRODUCT:

Anthology **Ally**

Blackboard LEARN

Selecting Anthology to create a high-touch student experience

Keiser selected Anthology's suite of products due to its breadth of solutions and the depth of integration. By implementing Blackboard® Learn, Analytics for Learn, Blackboard Outcomes, and Anthology® Ally, Keiser has achieved a deeply integrated and seamless environment to facilitate top-tier teaching that supports the personalized student learning experience.

> Anthology makes it easy to develop an ecosystem that serves all of our students. Anthology has helped us solve many different issues and address a number of university goals.

Sherry Olsen, Vice Chancellor, Online Division of Keiser University

Developing high-quality digital learning environments

For Keiser and each of its 21 physical campuses, it was essential to deploy Anthology university-wide while also offering the ability for each campus to personalize the learning experience for their specific students. The university took full advantage of the easy-to-use customization tools available within Blackboard Learn, ensuring that each campus could meet its specific needs without losing out on university-wide integrations.

Following a master course system in which each class is either four or eight weeks long, Keiser's Online Division has come to rely on Blackboard Learn to navigate its fast-paced learning and course programming environment, as Learn enables faculty to develop and prepare course content and transition courses into live terms as quickly as each month.

Increasing retention with analytics and dashboards

Having complete visibility into educational performance and trends was a top priority for Olsen and her team. Using Analytics for Learn, Olsen created a dashboard for each of their 21 campuses, offering campus presidents, deans, and faculty complete visibility into academic performance.

With this enhanced visibility and accountability, Keiser made certain that engagement from both students and faculty follows the institution's standard for a personalized learning experience. With easy-to-use dashboards, faculty can more quickly identify at-risk students and intervene, ultimately promoting higher retention rates. Plus, presidents and deans can ensure faculty are actively engaging with students, too.

Analytics for Learn helps us ensure that our students are getting the best support and attention available—and when they aren't, it helps us identify the gaps so we can close them.

Sherry Olsen, Vice Chancellor, Online Division of Keiser University

Tracking student learning outcomes

To ensure students achieve the learning outcomes promised, Keiser implemented Blackboard Outcomes together with Blackboard Learn to map and measure the university's program learning outcomes (PLOs) and student learning outcomes (SLOs). Keiser has documented its learning outcomes for both programs and courses, and these outcomes are mapped to course assignments and assessments as a means of ensuring each is achieved and student performance of each outcome is continuously tracked.

"Faculty are now able to link learning outcomes directly to their digital assignments," said Olsen. "Using [Anthology], our assessment teams now have easily accessible assessment data to review, can make data-supported improvements, and have set up a robust review cycle—all to ensure continuous improvement."

Making content accessible for all students

While Keiser acquired Ally for the purpose of helping assess the accessibility of course content for students requiring accommodations, Olsen soon found its usefulness has extended to all of Keiser's learners. Olsen provided the example of adult learners utilizing Ally's alternative formats capability whereby students can convert recorded lectures into written transcripts that can be read and documents into audio files for listening—all in support of individual learning preferences.

Harnessing Anthology consulting expertise

Keiser has continued actively working hand in hand with Anthology's consulting team—experts that oversee and assist the university—to achieve its goals. "We can rely on the expertise and experience our Anthology consultants bring—especially around analytics, outcomes, and assessments. They understand our big picture and help us actualize each step we need to prepare for our future," said Olsen.

Positioned to move fully online without missing a beat

The ease of use of Anthology's solutions was particularly beneficial when Keiser had to move all its courses online during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Because of all our unified processes within Anthology, we didn't miss a beat when we were forced to move everything online," said Olsen. "Anthology enabled us to get resources to students more quickly, and because we were able to train faculty to make the transition without many barriers, we set them up to better help the students, especially those who were apprehensive to online learning."

The result: a high-touch, individualized learning ecosystem

With Keiser's vision and Anthology's robust products combined, Keiser has been enabled to:

- Attain historically high 2020 retention rates in a year most colleges experienced a decline
- Easily adapt to unexpected events like COVID-19
- Gain increased visibility and accountability across the university

> Anthology offers a true learning ecosystem whose tight integration and interoperability enable us to achieve a student-first solution incomparable to anything else on the market.

Sherry Olsen, Vice Chancellor, Online Division of Keiser University

Looking ahead: Anthology for Student Advising

Keiser continues to innovate new ways to connect Analytics for Learn data to make data-driven decisions about its practices and procedures. According to Olsen, one of the next steps is to "position faculty to look at historical data and get a whole picture of the student and advise them more effectively."

Products highlighted in this success story:

Anthology **Ally**   **Blackboard** LEARN

anthology
Advancing Knowledge