

Creating a Learning Ecosystem at Saint Leo University

How the school took advantage of an LMS search to transform learning

At a glance

Students: 15,000

Faculty: 1,300

Faculty: 3,854

Modalities: On-Ground, Online, Blended, Synchronous Video and Whiteboard

Challenge

Saint Leo University's previous learning management system (LMS) was being shut down. At the same time, the school was facing enrollment and retention challenges. On the enrollment side, Saint Leo wanted to better connect the right student to the right program at the right time. In terms of retention, it wanted to quickly identify students who weren't going to graduate, as well as understand the realities—both inside and outside of the classroom—for all student types, at the same or less cost than its previous LMS offering.

Solution

Saint Leo architected a multi-tenet solution, heavily leveraging Application Program Interfaces (APIs) to turn nine commercial platforms into one user experience. Bridging the non-user facing tools was an Enterprise Service Bus (Mulesoft) which connects all components to one another, while the cornerstone of the user-facing tools was a new LMS (D2L's Brightspace), with very rich API sets (Valence).

Regardless of modality, students would now experience a new teaching context with rich usability, high accessibility, and learning analytics never actualized in higher education. All this culminates in a system that promotes meaningful artificial intelligence, guiding students and professors to be successful whenever possible. Even on-ground classrooms got a boost by seeing real-time, behavioral analytics, promoting new teaching models and not only boosting productivity and collaboration, but changing learning. This allowed the school's design teams and master faculty to start leveraging new strategies across classroom types, encouraging gameful, adaptive, and narrative design.

Reinforced by D2L's integrated user support, all students, faculty, and staff now have access to materials, discussions, their grades, and each other, with a unified help desk only a click or call away. This gives teachers the flexibility to educate in a more collaborative and interactive ways while students have unprecedented access to social options, augmenting their college experience.

Results

In the first few months after implementation, students are saying that they've never felt more connected to other students outside of their classroom. Students at any of 44 center locations, as well as online students from around the world, can meaningfully learn and engage with each other.

Having already seen a small uptick in retention—even during the transition—the implementation of better support, social connectivity and added flexibility gives Saint Leo confidence that Lions SHARE will help with both enrollment and retention, creating a “next generation” learning system.