

Grand Valley State University Sees 60% Open Rate and a Significantly Streamlined Student Experience with StudentForms and CampusCommunicator



With a student body totaling around 25,000, Grand Valley State University (GVSU) has a big job to do every time they send out communications—or when they ask their students to communicate with them. GVSU wanted their communications to be effective, targeted and able to meet students where they were—a difficult task with such a large student body. But the Boston-based college’s financial aid team was already prepared to turn on a dime. Thanks to their digital, paperless processes, they can stay in touch with students and parents—any time, from anywhere. “CampusLogic has given us a platform to operate digitally,” explains Caruso. “We can do business as usual with very little disruption.”

"Our goal is to recruit an inclusive and diverse student population from a wide range of backgrounds" said Nicholas Bromley, Associate Director at GVSU. "We're student-focused and student-centric. We conduct one-to-one outreach with students to help them navigate the process."

Having a student-centric model makes effective communications even more critical. But manual processes and tedious systems slowed them- and their students - down. Around 25 percent of GVSU's student body is selected for verification every year. The school's process was entirely manual, which meant the financial aid administrators at GVSU had their work cut out for them.

Verification changes and year-over-year updates also meant a lot of additional maintenance and changes. On the front-end, manual processes had students searching for forms, printing them out and hand-delivering them to the aid office, all without a secure, electronic portal to submit.

"We realized we needed something different because the barriers for students to get documents to us was pretty high," Bromley continues. "There were so many steps students had to take."

Then, Bromley says the team turned to StudentForms

Enter StudentForms

In less than four weeks, StudentForms was up and running at GVSU, and the impact was immediate.

Bromley says the entire process of a student completing verification has become easier. Students could submit their documents easily (and securely), which allows staff to process documentation quickly and turn aid around more efficiently-in less than a day, to be exact. This, compared to the seven-day average for verification turnaround, is a major improvement.

What's more, an easier and more intuitive process means fewer fielded questions by staff from students.

"It has given us more time to do individual outreach that's more targeted," Bromley notes.

CampusCommunicator supports clear communications for students

Before deploying CampusCommunicator, the financial aid office at GVSU generated award letters via in-house software. But the process was anything but simple. Every individual letter was printed and mailed by hand; without the benefit of secure electronic delivery or the visual tools that garner increased engagement among students.

"It was a lot of packing envelopes—by the thousands," Bromley said. "We generated more than 10,000 award letter communications just for new students."

The GVSU team had a few different goals to achieve with award letters. They wanted to improve the overall award letter quality, the ability to customize award letters with institutional branding, explain financial aid options in an engaging way and utilize visual resources like videos to help students understand their aid. CampusCommunicator checked those boxes and more, Bromley notes.

Informed students and strengthened messaging

Beyond high-impact customization, GVSU can produce higher volumes of high-quality letters, without hours of stuffing envelopes and other tedious manual tasks.

With CampusCommunicator, Bromley says the open rates for GVSU's templates are sky-high, at around 66 percent. Even better, call volumes—usually loaded with student's question—have gone down

Students clearly understand the cost of attendance and financial aid terminology. Bromley says he knows students are reading what they're sending. Average time on page is around 46 minutes, he notes.

For GVSU, CampusLogic's advanced software supports two goals: Students get increased financial awareness, while staff time is freed up from answering frequently asked financial aid and enrollment questions. Now, financial aid pros can get back to personalized, 1-to-1 advising. And when students and staff feel this lift, so do enrollment, persistence and completion rates.