

# Wait Times Vanish at SLCC; Aid Verification Goes From 6 Weeks to Less Than 1 Day with StudentForms



Long waits, long lines, and even longer verification times. That's what the financial aid office at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) was facing—and they needed to find a solution, in short order. Caroline Bitter, Assistant Director of Compliance and Training, came to SLCC from schools that were already using digital processes to help them streamline daily tasks. “Coming here to a full paper process, I was completely baffled, surprised, and shocked at how cumbersome it was,” she says. “It could take six weeks for files to be reviewed, and everyone was complaining about the lines in the financial aid office. We needed to cut down the red tape for students.”

There had to be a better way—one that would streamline processes and provide better customer service to the 35,000 students at SLCC. Cristi Millard, the school's Director of the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, set out to find it. One solution stood out, providing exactly what they needed, while interfacing well with their SIS, Banner.

## The Solution: StudentForms by CampusLogic

StudentForms simplifies financial aid processes—like verification, professional judgments, and SAP appeals. A key component of the cloud-based CampusLogic student financial success platform, StudentForms provides a digital portal for financial aid professionals to manage tasks, review files, and automate student communications via text and email. Plus, students can upload documents from any mobile device—a feature staff and students love for the time savings.

## Verification Times Reduced from Six Weeks to Less Than a Day

SLCC, the largest community college in Utah, started using StudentForms three years ago. Those long days? Long over. Verification is now completed in a fraction of the time. “In August of 2018-19, the file review time was 0.69 of a day, and in September it was 0.58 of a day. Those are our two busiest months,” Millard explains. “It went

down for 2019-20. It was 0.67 of a day in August and 0.55 of a day in September. It's gone from six weeks to less than a day for file review.”

Bitter is a self-described nerd who loves rules and regulations, and StudentForms hits the mark for her. “I really value and appreciate the efficiency and the efficacy,” she says. “I'm in charge of compliance. The margin of error has dramatically gone down with StudentForms, simply because of the OCR capability that automatically imports the information from the submitted documents. Because I love compliance, I really appreciate that.” She says one of her verifiers has reviewed more than 730 files this year, and errors are almost nonexistent.

## Less Paperwork, More Time for Positive Outreach

Both staff and students are astonished that lines at the financial aid office have nearly disappeared. Staff members have more time back in their workdays, and they know just where to use it.

“We are able to do more positive outreach to students because we’re not just pushing paper anymore. Before, the staff that handled most of our student forms could spend all day just trying to get through paperwork. Now, they are done with paperwork by 9 a.m. or 10 a.m. at the latest,” Millard says. “We’re able to contact students and say, ‘Hey, we noticed you haven’t finished this form. How can we help you?’ There is more opportunity for positive outreach, and I find that really helpful and attractive.” She adds that the college’s administration also really likes the fact that they are once again able to sit down and counsel students. After launching StudentForms, the number of aid awards packaged at SLCC increased by nearly 25%, clearly demonstrating the measurable impact created by reducing the friction and frustration around the verification process.

## Doing Their Part to Empower Overall Student Success

Being able to quantify how they’re contributing to student success is key, because the administration emphasizes the importance of overall student success, Millard says. “We are contributing to that from the financial aid point of view, helping students find a way to pay for school, not just for one semester, but so they can complete their education.”

“That’s student success,” Bitter adds. “To be able to help and facilitate students through the program they want to go through, whether the goal is a transfer to a four-year college or to graduate, get that dream job, and start benefitting the community.” By empowering student financial success, the financial aid team is filling in a valuable piece of the overall student success story at SLCC.



Ellucian innovates and delivers at speed for more than 2,900 customers across 50 countries, serving 28 million students. As a steadfast partner in transformation, Ellucian empowers institutions to accelerate their goals and help every student succeed. **To find out what’s next in higher education, visit [Ellucian.com](https://www.ellucian.com).**