# Barton Community College Boosts Federal Aid by $2.6 Million with Streamlined, Automated Verification

Almost three decades in financial aid have given Myrna Perkins profound perspective into how pivotal her department is in making college dreams a reality for students. Perkins is the Chief Accreditation Officer and Director of Financial Aid at Barton Community College, a multi-location and online Kansas-based institution, and she is committed to improving financial aid processes to drive student financial success—one of the core priorities at Barton Community College.

Recent improvements in her office mean that sluggish paper processes have been replaced with streamlined, automated processes—allowing for faster verifications and, therefore, faster disbursements of aid to students. Over $2 million in additional aid has flowed right where it's sorely needed—to students struggling to pay for college. "We don't have a large high-need population, but for the students who need aid, it's so crucial," explained Perkins.

## The Solutions: 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.

## More Applications and Aid Dollars, Plain and Simple

Perkins is a big fan of simplification, especially since she can remember the paper-heavy days of the past. "In our financial aid office, almost everything we do now is automated or electronic. We have very little paper."

That's why StudentForms was a sure bet for the school, which it fully integrated with its SIS, Ellucian® Banner. Initially, StudentForms was utilized for its ability to streamline and simplify verifications; then the financial aid team at Barton expanded on its capabilities to manage SAP appeals and professional judgements (PJs).

The hard numbers prove that StudentForms was the right move. Financial aid awards jumped up $2 million from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019. And from fall 2018 to 2019, federal financial aid is up another $600,000. They're also receiving a significantly higher number of applications. "It's just putting all the pieces together," Perkins says. "Being able to award quicker means we're able to disburse more aid to students, and I think that's where we're really seeing a return on investment by partnering with CampusLogic and StudentForms."

## An All-around Overhaul

With verifications, PJs, and SAP appeals all optimized, Perkins has her eye on improving another process: scholarships. Currently, students may receive multiple institutional scholarships

because the person awarding funds doesn't have visibility to awards already received, she explains. "If we can centralize and see which scholarships a student has already been awarded, we can stretch our institutional scholarship dollars." She'd also like to see more external scholarships make their way into the hands of Barton students.

The college is now onboarding with CampusLogic's ScholarshipUniverse, a unique, adaptive, and mobile-optimized solution that automatically matches student profiles against internal and fully-vetted external scholarship opportunities—all in one place. Perkins hopes that centralizing and streamlining the process will help the school use institutional funds more effectively.

## Keeping it Simple: A Winning Solution

Perkins has witnessed how a better, simpler solution wins over both students and staff. The college's 6,200 students took to StudentForms right away, she reports. "I think there are two things. We're delivering the requirements in a form that students accept and like—through their devices. The second thing is the robust communications plan that's built into StudentForms. The texts and auto-emails that go out...our staff doesn't have to handle that. It's automatic."

The seven staff members in Barton's financial aid office all adapted to StudentForms smoothly, reports Perkins. Their initial nerves were quickly replaced by excitement at being able to streamline and simplify processes and make things easier—both for themselves and for students. Says Perkins, "You have to make things as easy for the students as possible, and if you make it easy on the students, you make it easier on the staff."