University of Cincinnati focuses on moments that matter with a unified, intuitive app

University of CINCINNATI

CASE STUDY

University of Cincinnati

INDUSTRY

Higher Education

The University of Cincinnati is a public research university serving more than 46,000 students in 414 degree programs across 118 building facilities. Founded in 1819, it's currently ranked #4 in the nation by US News & World Report for co-ops and internships.

From his vantage point as Director of New Student Orientation, Kasey Drennen has a front row seat to the experience new students had as they prepare for campus and academic life. In 2020 as he and his team were preparing to bring new students in for fall orientation he noted, "We had 17 different tools for them to use, and about 40 tasks they needed to complete. All of these tasks were coming at them from different departments."

Drennen's vision for orientation was to have new students pair with student orientation leaders who could focus on "moments that matter," helping them choose the right academic program and classes that best fit their needs and goals. But they ended up spending more time walking them through various forms and paperwork, and on which tasks students would need to complete and when.

> "Our Bearcat portal isn't a bunch of links. It's a single sign-on with a focus on tasks, not tools. Students can see what they need to do and get it done right there. We've seen a **300% increase in the on-time completion** of some enrollment tasks since moving to Modo."
>
> Kasey Drennen, Director of New Student Orientation
> University of Cincinnati

Re-Thinking the Portal from a Student Experience Perspective

Along with Vice Provost Jack Minor, Drennen and his team championed a new endeavor; bring all of the processes together from the perspective of the student's experience—instead of the University's departmental divisions. They focused on the 'interface' for that experience, the Bearcat Portal, and worked to give students an intuitive, seamless experience that would help them see and attend to deadlined tasks immediately.

University of Cincinnati looked to the Modo Campus app-building platform to power the Bearcat portal on desktop and mobile—not as a collection of links, but a true hub for everything they needed to do or know, all through a single sign-on. The key, Drennen noted, was to take a task approach vs. a tools approach.

"Now from one screen students can see a list of all the tasks they need to complete, from many different software systems including PeopleSoft, whether it's enrollment, housing, financial, immunization status, everything—right in the portal—and handle them on the spot. It's a huge improvement over sifting through dozens of email reminders and navigating different tools and systems. And it helps keep them from missing important deadlines."

Drennen noted that UC has seen a 300% increase in the on-time completion of some enrollment tasks since moving to the Modo platform.

Integrating PeopleSoft

A key part of the seamless experience UC students get with the Bearcat Portal is the ability to register for classes, view schedules, add/drop classes, access financial transactions, check grades and more using PeopleSoft, all within the unified app experience. The Modo PeopleSoft integration not only speeds performance of PeopleSoft on mobile devices, it also captures and preserves the detailed business logic universities build into their PeopleSoft experiences.

For example, Drennen noted, some families split up the tasks that need to be completed in PeopleSoft, with the student handling some, and parents handling others. In PeopleSoft, once a task is completed, it disappears from view. Modifying that experience through the Modo PeopleSoft integration, UC changed the display so that every task is logged with a status and date, even after completion.

Continual Evolution

Because the Modo platform is designed to support continual evolution, adding new modules and integrations over time, Drennen and the UC team plan to next implement personalized notifications and are considering making student bills accessible from the Bearcat portal. He noted, "We plan to use notifications sparingly, for things that are critical and timely, like when they're approaching the registration deadline, or for a change in COVID protocols."

Overall, UC's Modo-powered Bearcat portal now delivers the experience Drennen envisioned. "It has helped us connect with students in meaningful ways. Every task in the portal replaces multiple emails and we'd spend time telling them to go to the portal to complete those tasks. We were way too reliant on email. Students are not. This has been a big game changer."

The power of integrations in delivering an all-in-one digital campus experience

Schools need to move fast to keep pace with all the changes they're facing, and Modo can help by delivering integrations that centralize the digital campus experience. Research shows that the more data people have connected with services that let them act on that knowledge directly, the more successful they are. And when those elements are in one interface vs. searching and switching between tools, the better their experience is.

More than 300 colleges and universities use Modo's platform to create campus apps that unite campus life and the academic journey. It offers virtually unlimited integrations to meet a broad range of institutional goals including student information/learning management systems like PeopleSoft, Banner and Canvas, wayfinding tools like MapsPeople, Tacit food ordering, HID digital access, Apple Wallet, Mainstay chatbot and much more.

Visit modolabs.com/modocampus to learn more, access Starter Kits and resources, or get a demo.

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