CASE STUDY

Connecticut College Seamlessly Delivers Mobile and Desktop Apps and Experiences with the Modo Labs Platform

"Modo enables us to satisfy all constituents while easily making changes on the fly and scaling as needed."

– Laurie Schaeffer, Senior Director of Enterprise

Founded in 1911, Connecticut College is a private liberal arts college in New London, Connecticut offering 56 majors, minors and certificate programs to just over 1,700 undergraduates. Of note is that 95% of Connecticut College's undergrads find themselves employed or in graduate school within a year of earning their undergraduate degree.

A survey of students, faculty and staff revealed the student desire for a mobile-first experience and interest in a desktop experience, especially for staff and faculty. To replace its outdated portal, the school began looking for a solution. "We wanted a single solution that would suit both needs," explains Laurie Schaeffer, Senior Director of Enterprise Systems at Connecticut College.

Updating its portal experience

CamelWeb, named after the school's mascot, is Connecticut College's digital platform offering real-time information to its community, including everything from campus events to dining menus to quick and easy access to college resources. Previously, the school delivered this via an on-premise Luminis portal from Ellucian. While the portal was mobile friendly, it wasn't a true app. Moreover, the school found it unreliable, leading to unexpected downtime that impacted the entire campus.

Given that Luminis was based on the discontinued Adobe Flash platform and Ellucian was ending support for the platform, Connecticut College knew the time was right to find a more agile solution – and in time to deploy an app for new student orientation.

"We were dedicating too many resources to support and maintain Luminis. We needed a cloud-based solution that gave us the flexibility we needed to support everything in the portal, while improving the administrative and user experience," says Jean Kilbride, Associate Vice President for Enterprise and Technical Systems at Connecticut College.

Going live faster than expected

As Connecticut College explored its options, Modo stood out for several reasons, including the number of Higher Education customers and the fact that the platform supported both a mobile and desktop experience from Day 1. Connecticut College also valued Modo's ability to deliver unique views and experiences for each type of user on campus, all with no code or development.

In just five months, the school rolled out a new mobile app for its Welcome Weekend along with experiences for existing students, employees, faculty and staff. "Hands down, this has been the most seamless transition we've gone through. You always hear outcry or outrage no matter how you plan for a change like this. There was none with this," says Schaeffer.

According to Adam Bastien, Web and Print Graphic Designer at Connecticut College, "I found it very easy using the Modo Labs platform to set up the design. It was simple to choose the typography and colors, upload assets, and customize as needed. Visually, it's a more modern approach."

Because of powerful delegation options in the Modo Campus solution, the school was even able to involve a student intern to help populate information in its new mobile app, something it has continued after launching.
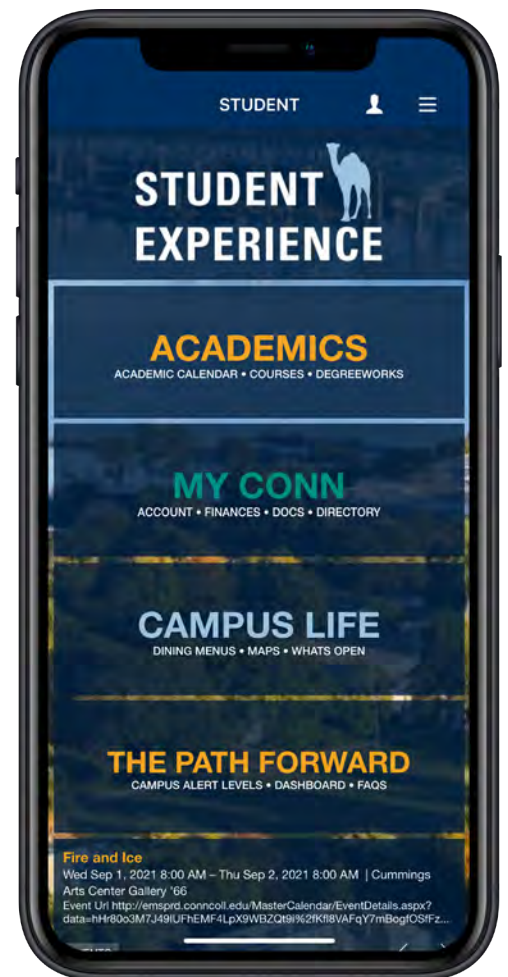
Enabling the desktop experience

Once it had rolled out its new mobile app, the school turned to the desktop experience. Using support for different personas in the Modo platform, it created a customized desktop experience in the same platform that included different content for students versus employees, faculty and staff. This enabled Connecticut College to use the same configuration, content, and integrations between mobile and desktop experiences, while customizing the experience for each device type.

"Modo even gives us the flexibility to associate people with more than one role, since some people fit into multiple roles," explains Schaeffer.

To deliver a more dynamic experience for users, the school took advantage of built-in Modo functionality such as robust outdoor maps and the ability to integrate with existing campus applications to show which laundry machines are available and which facilities are open across campus, all designed to make daily life on campus easier.

Providing intuitive access to resources

Whether in the mobile app or on the desktop, students, faculty, and staff instantly recognize CamelWeb. New students are introduced to the app via Student Life during Welcome Weekend. Plus, the school's pre-orientation portal prompts students to download the Modo-powered app, which reduces the amount of resources needed to help students once they arrive on campus.

Once signed in, people can access a range of resources, including campus email and the directory, the learning management system, dining hall menus, a career services app that connects students and prospective employers, and club organizations and groups, to name a few.

Connecticut College also delivered rapidly changing information on COVID through its app as a main feature in time for Welcome Weekend. Per Bastien, "Modo allowed us to easily add that to the app, and we can easily retire it once it's no longer needed. In the midst of COVID, it's been very helpful to have these digital platforms to connect with prospective students and easily share information with them, no matter where they are."

After Welcome Weekend, new students are guided into the main student experience on the app, where it continues to serve as a must-have resource during their entire academic career.
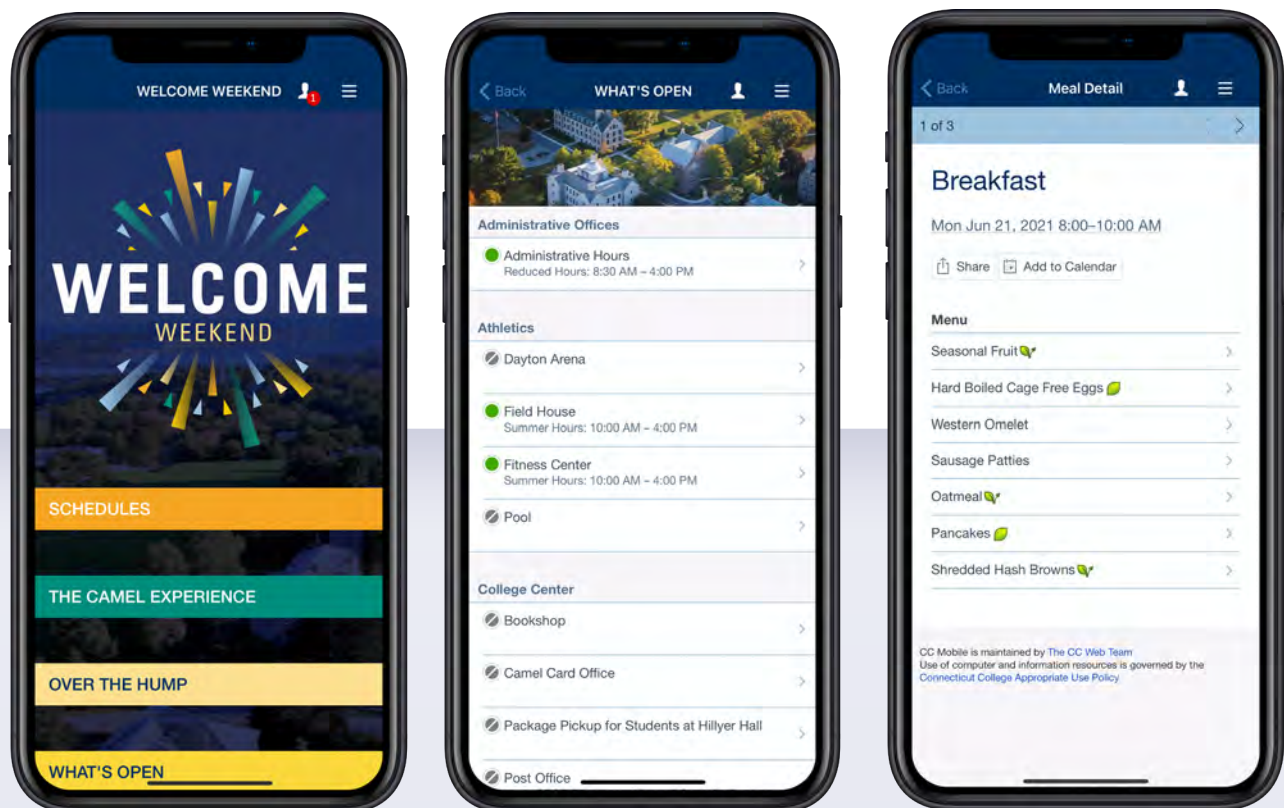
Gaining a foundation for continuously evolving experiences

According to Schaeffer, Connecticut College averages about 1,600 unique visitors and 15,000 screen views a day between its mobile and desktop app.

To ensure it is always satisfying the preferences and needs of its various constituents, Connecticut College utilizes Modo's granular deployment features to update its app and desktop experience as needed with just a click, updating every user's experience instantly. Current plans for future features include new personas for parents and families, and for alumni. It finds that Modo fits seamlessly into its change management process. "We make minor changes all the time and it's easy to do so," says Schaeffer.

According to Kilbride, many faculty and staff didn't see the value in the school's previous Luminis-based CamelWeb presence. "With Modo, they are really seeing the value and using it much more as a gateway to everything available on the campus. In fact, we expect to see usage grow as we evolve our apps over time," concludes Kilbride.

Connecticut College and hundreds more of the world's leading universities trust Modo to deliver unified, mobile first campus experience. Whether wanting to engage prospective students to drive yield, ensure each student has the resources in hand to succeed, or create a digital hub for the entire campus, Modo Campus enables you to deliver these experiences and much more. Let us help digitally transform your campus.
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