



# Northern Arizona University Launches a Student-Centered Mobile Experience

*“Our mobile app and desktop experiences help streamline the student experience, driving higher engagement and success.”*

– Patty Allenbaugh, Senior UX/UI Analyst,  
Northern Arizona University



## At a Glance

To deliver on its mission to meet students where they are, Northern Arizona University provides seamless student experience and online access to key information and processes across both physical and online campuses. By calling upon the Modo platform, it is enabling its students, faculty and staff via both mobile and desktop platforms.

### Key Metrics

- **40,000+** downloads of mobile app
- **25,000** average unique users
- **8,400** unique users of digital student IDs

Northern Arizona University (NAU) serves more than 29,000 undergraduate and graduate students spread throughout the main Flagstaff campus, 20 other statewide campus sites and online. Students can take a combination of online and in-person classes, but 20 percent of the population is solely online.

## Needing to enhance the mobile experience

Like all modern universities, NAU recognized a need to create student experiences exclusively for mobile. In fact, the mission of its IT Services group is to use technology and services to meet students where they are. “A mobile app is pivotal when it comes to student engagement and success, and familiarizing students with campus life,” says Patty Allenbaugh, Senior UX/UI Analyst at NAU.

Over the years, NAU launched mobile apps but wasn’t meeting the needs of its students. “Because the apps weren’t a priority, we weren’t focused on keeping them up to date,” explains Marc Lord, Director of Enterprise Information Services at NAU.

Plus, the platform NAU had used to launch its apps had gotten stale. Moreover, the IT group was challenged to maintain multiple uncoupled systems to enable a mobile view of PeopleSoft. “We were using limited functionality but spending lots of time and money to try to keep everything updated and in sync,” says Chris Graver, Manager, Applications Programming for NAU.

Seeing the need for an enhanced mobile campus app that was easier to manage, the school’s CIO and leadership charged the IT Services team with finding a solution.

## Enabling an app for students by students

An RFP committee comprised of stakeholders from across campus reviewed five mobile app platforms, including Modo Campus®. According to Lord, the Modo platform stood out due to its ease of implementation, numerous pre-configured modules, and the highly customizable platform. According to Lord, the platform enables easy setup of numerous roles (“personas”) within a single mobile app. “We can build a single app experience for multiple personas and multiple apps delivering specific functionality for different target groups.”

After the selection, a mobile app team headed by Allenbaugh met with student groups to solicit their input and participation in designing the app. As Allenbaugh says, “Student developers and designers are the heart of our team – providing us with guidance and instant feedback. In fact, we make it clear the app is ‘built for students – by students.’ ”

The first mobile app that NAU launched using the Modo platform went live in 12 weeks and was designed to serve current students. Today, the NAUgo app includes distinct experiences for Flagstaff campus students, statewide and online students, and faculty/staff. It also has a guest experience for visitors to the Flagstaff campus, pointing visitors to parking, events and other relevant information. A temporary persona helps orient new students to campus.

“If we had tried to develop the app in house, we wouldn’t have had the resources to link to other custom apps and keep everything updated and in sync. Using the Modo platform, a small team given the leeway to develop the app as they saw fit was able to meet the school’s needs,” continues Lord.



# Personalization Utilizing XModule & XComponents



## Harnessing XModule™ and Modo Communicate

To deliver a student-centered app, NAU took advantage of XModule™ for Modo Campus® and Modo Communicate Premium. Both features have enabled NAU to provide the personalized experience that students were craving.

Previously, students were taking screenshots of information in PeopleSoft and saving it in their phones. Now within the app, students can see their class schedules, whether for in-person or online classes, live in the NAUgo app. They can also see their financial and graduation status and any issues preventing them from registering for classes or graduating. The app makes it easy to access past grades – even going decades back – as well as instructor, advisor, and mentor contact information. With a click on a name, an email client opens for easy communication.

App users can get information and news via several general and opt-in channels, such as those for events, freshmen, transfers, and parents. “Parents love that they can subscribe to a channel specific to them to stay abreast of what’s happening on campus,” explains Allenbaugh.

## Replacing and improving portal access

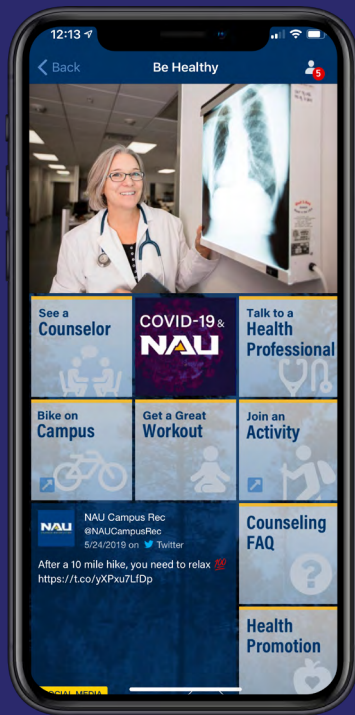
A Modo-powered desktop portal is another way that NAU meets its constituents where they are. LOUIEgo is how students authenticate into PeopleSoft via the mobile app. Students could already log in to a previously launched portal to see courses and other information on desktop.

Calling upon Modo's support for desktop, NAU simplified the desktop experience by delivering information and links tailored to each user. Students benefit from self-service access to academic, financial, and personal information, including the ability to request unofficial transcripts and add/drop courses. It's also easy for users to seamlessly transition to other app tools from LOUIEgo.

"LOUIEgo replaced the student version of our previous portal, greatly simplifying the experience for them," says Allenbaugh.



**LOUIEgo is now a multi-platform experience**



**Health & Wellness Category Winner**  
2020 Appademy Awards



**Best Student-Driven App Category Winner**  
2021 Appademy Awards

## Enhancing the app to address changing needs

When COVID-19 hit, a student designer spearheaded a redesign of NAUgo. At the same time, a student developer used XModule and XComponents to enable many integrations with the school's PeopleSoft instance.

NAU already had a robust health and wellness module in its mobile app, with information about counseling, and access to medical records and crisis hotlines, and the ability to book appointments with campus health services. Using the Modo framework for COVID, it enhanced the module, carefully curating wellness content from various campus departments and successfully delivered in the mobile experience. The school also linked a health check-in app to NAUgo, requiring students to authenticate and check-in daily.

In 2020, NAU won the Modo Appademy award for its "Be Healthy" module, and in 2021, it won the Modo award for the best student-driven app in recognition that new components of the app are designed, developed, and structured with initial student feedback and subsequent user testing, and with the assistance of student designers and developers.

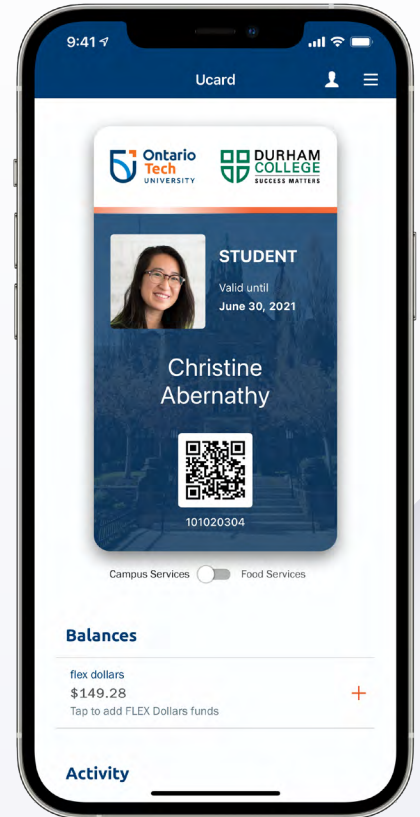
## Enabling students with digital IDs

More recently, NAU's ID card office approached Allenbaugh's team for help launching digital student IDs. To confirm the need, the team surveyed students. "The response was overwhelming. We already had the infrastructure in place for door readers and ID cards, and a digital version would provide the added benefit of better security for transactions and the ability to track and disable IDs if they were lost or stolen," she explains.

Calling upon this existing infrastructure, Allenbaugh's team launched a Digital JacksCard for iOS, allowing students to store their JacksCard ID right in their Apple Wallet. Working in close collaboration with TouchNet, Apple, and Modo, NAU started with a pilot in March 2021 and went live with the Digital JacksCard in August 2021.

"Modo was an amazing partner, working closely with us throughout the project and providing needed integrations for a seamless transition from NAUgo through OneCard technology and on to Apple Wallet. We plan to roll it out to staff and faculty soon, and launch an Android version in 2022," Allenbaugh explains.

To date, NAU has seen 8,400 unique users on over 10,700 unique devices (both Apple Watches and iPhones). In fact, it's one of the most popular NAU mobile app modules.



## Driving high adoption and usage

Using built-in Modo analytics, NAU tracks its app adoption and usage metrics. Every month, it presents year-over-year numbers to the app's steering committee, comprising representatives from Student Affairs, Marketing, Advising, and Accessibility, to name a few. Since the redesign and rerelease of the app in August 2018, NAUgo has been downloaded over 40,000 times. The app's current daily average number of unique users is 25,000.

Through Modo analytics, Allenbaugh can easily see how many users are signed in versus not, indicating how many students are accessing personal data versus general content.

NAU also runs frequent student surveys using the Quick Poll feature provided by Modo. Most recently, it surveyed 1,000 students about their Digital JacksCard and learned that 90% are having a good to excellent experience.

"We know user numbers at any given time," Allenbaugh says.



## Continually evolving the app

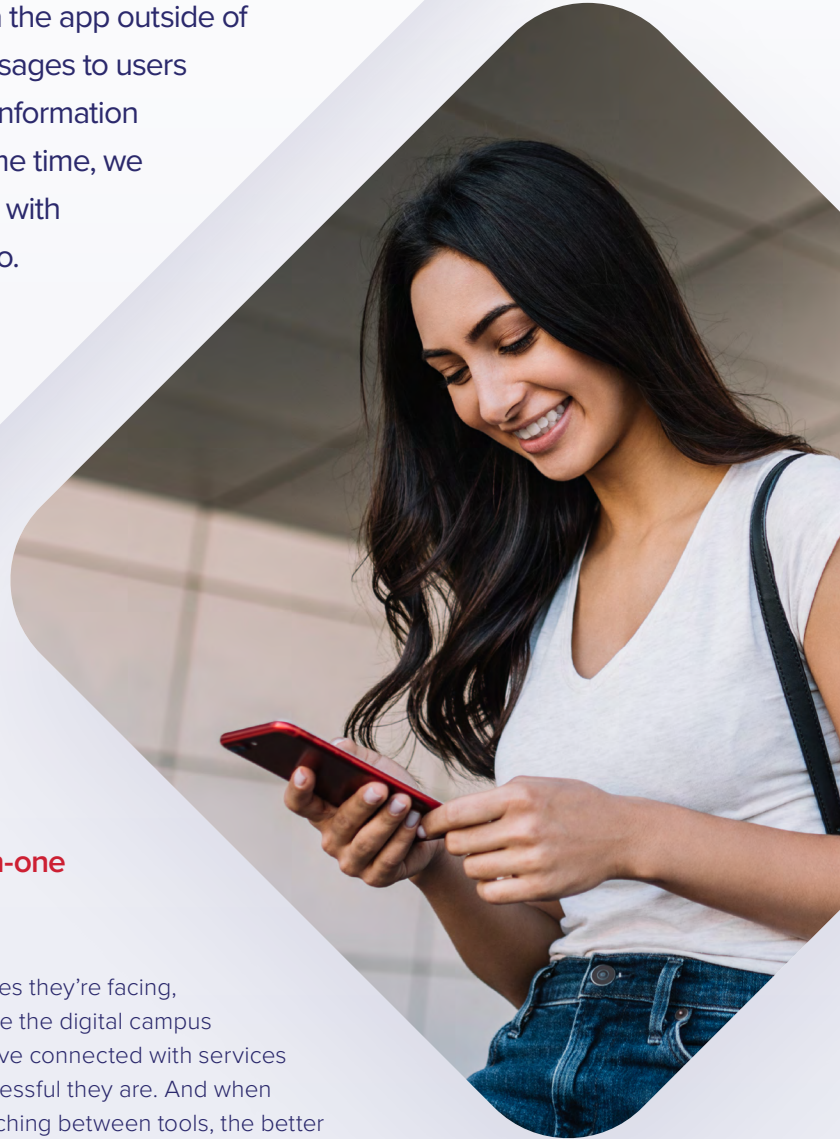
Every month, the app steering committee meets to evaluate student needs. Working cross-departmentally helps ensure the school is capturing every opportunity to engage students and keep them informed. As Allenbaugh explains, "All these points of view help us make great decisions about content and the app's trajectory."

Examples of the output include the featured items at the top of the app's home screen that shows the latest events or information, such as about Homecoming, Pride Month, Black History Month, and Native American Month. "We set a schedule for when these will appear on the app, and it helps raise awareness and get students engaged," Allenbaugh says.

Another recent change has been a persona for prospective students, giving them a feel for what it's like to attend the Flagstaff-based school. Potential students can see top reasons to choose NAU, testimonials from NAU students, information about living in Flagstaff, and a virtual view into campus life.

## Planning for future experiences

Going forward, NAU is exploring how to enable business processes, such as paying a bill or accepting financial aid – via the app. It is also looking at options for personalizing communications via the app outside of opt-in channels. “We want to send tailored messages to users and groups, and continue providing them with information they can’t get from the NAU website. At the same time, we want to take further advantage of opportunities with XModule to grow LOUIEgo usage within NAUgo. By using the app and website as complements and taking advantage of the seamless transition between the two enabled by Modo, we enhance the experience of both,” concludes Allenbaugh.



## 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](https://modolabs.com/modocampus) to learn more, access Starter Kits and resources, or get a demo.



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