

40,000 New Users in 90 Days: University of Findlay's Mobile Redesign Playbook



University of Findlay

CASE STUDY

University of Findlay

INDUSTRY

Higher Education

The Challenge

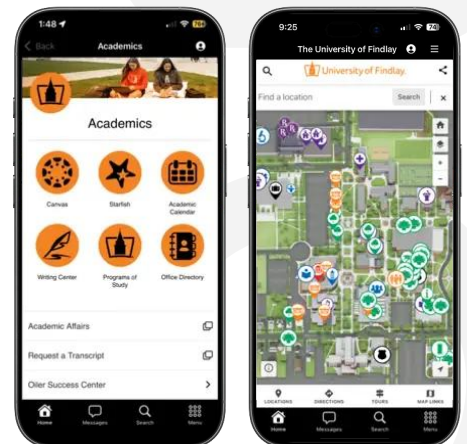
For a university founded in 1882 on the belief that meaningful lives and productive careers go hand in hand, the University of Findlay had a surprising gap in its student experience: a campus experience platform that had stopped doing its job.

Located in Findlay, Ohio, the university had invested heavily in cross-campus collaboration, weaving together enrollment, student affairs, and academic affairs into a unified model of student success. But its Oiler Mobile app had gone more than five years without a meaningful update. Core features, such as the campus directory, had stopped functioning. Navigation was confusing enough that users struggled to find basic tools. The visual design no longer reflected who Findlay was as an institution.

For a university that believed student success is a campus-wide responsibility, the app had become a missed opportunity. New students arriving on campus had no reliable student engagement platform to meet them where they were. Families, alumni, and visitors were equally underserved. What should have been a welcoming digital front door had quietly become something people avoided. The team knew a surface-level refresh wouldn't be enough.

The Approach

Findlay committed to a full modernization using Modo 4.1, with the goal of building a higher education mobile app that could genuinely serve every member of the university community: students, faculty and staff, alumni, families, and visitors.



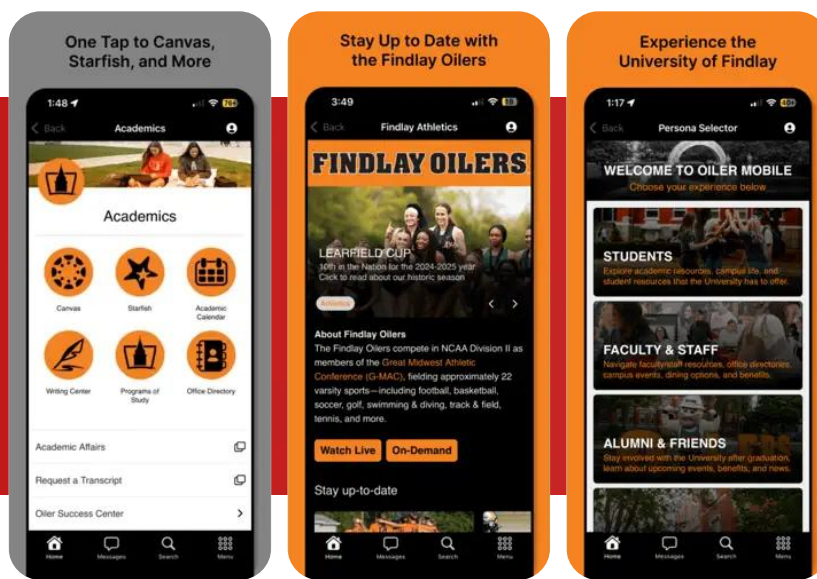
The redesign process was deliberately collaborative. The project team developed two initial design concepts, evaluated both, and moved through three rounds of testing: an internal design and development review, a full-team refinement pass, and external testing with campus departments and student workers. Feedback from each phase shaped the final product.

The new campus engagement platform introduced persona-based experiences for students, faculty and staff, alumni and friends, and Visitors and Families, each with tailored content and navigation. A persona selector gave users a frictionless way to set their experience from the start. Campus Messages and a Message Center were built in as central communication hubs. The Campus Map was rebuilt for easier navigation, particularly for new students and visiting families. Push notifications, both targeted and opt-in, gave the university a direct and personalized channel for reaching different audiences. Athletic news integration, student life and events modules, and opt-in channels for categories like homecoming rounded out the experience.

One unexpected benefit came from Modo 4.1's no-code Screen Builder feature. The project had been scoped for five to six months, but from concept to app submission, the team finished in roughly half that time.

The Experience

For a new student arriving at Findlay, the student portal campus app now feels like an extension of the welcome they receive in person. The same week they're walking through orientation, meeting their advisors, and taking placement tests, the app is surfacing relevant messages, event schedules, and campus resources. Push notifications arrive with the right information at the right time: tutoring hours before finals, dining specials, Dean's List announcements, and week-in-preview roundups. The tone is warm and specific.



The rebuilt Campus map became the app's top module in November, drawing more than 10,000 views. That figure reflects how practically useful it is for anyone new to campus, whether a first-year student navigating between classes or a family visiting for an open house. Campus messages topped 18,000 views in October alone. Athletic news drew more than 6,000 monthly visitors consistently, giving students and families a shared point of connection around Oiler sports.

The app also reinforced something Findlay had been building institutionally: the belief that student success belongs to the whole campus, not to any single office. The mobile experience made that philosophy tangible, giving every persona a place in the same digital environment and making it easier for the right information to reach the right people at the right moment.

The Results

The numbers from Fall 2025 make a strong case for what a well-built campus experience platform can do. Unique visitors grew 290% from September to October, rising from 8,661 to 25,091. From launch through November, the app attracted more than 40,000 unique visitors, compared to 18,000 total users across the entire previous academic year. Total screen views over just three months (260,670) nearly doubled the figure from the full prior academic year (133,539).

Growth extended well beyond the student audience. Alumni and Friends visits increased 816% from September to October. Faculty and staff grew 416%. Visitors and Families grew 314%. Push notification volume grew 210% over the same period, and persona-targeted pushes increased 186%. The Persona selector saw a 203% increase in usage as more users customized their experience, a sign that people were engaging with the app on their own terms rather than out of obligation.

+290%

Unique Visitors

+816%

Alumni and
Friends Visits

+416%

Faculty and
Staff Visits

THE RESULT

40,000 Unique visitors
in 90 days

For a new student arriving at Findlay, the student portal campus app now feels like an extension of the welcome they receive in person.

The Takeaway

Findlay's experience is a useful reminder that a student engagement platform only works when it's built around the people using it. The previous app had aged out of relevance not because the technology changed, but because it hadn't kept pace with what students, families, and staff actually needed. The redesign succeeded because the team treated it as a community product, one that required real input from real users, rather than an internal IT initiative.

The result is a higher education mobile app that supports the same philosophy Findlay has built into its academic and student affairs model: that belonging to a university should feel continuous and connected, not pieced together from disconnected systems. For institutions thinking about their own mobile presence, that framing is worth borrowing. A campus engagement platform, when it works well, is part of how a university shows students that they belong there.

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1 Washington Mall, #1056, Boston, MA 02108 | 1-888-663-6522 (MODO LABS)

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