Jenzabar Case Study

Brevard College Retains More First-Year Students and Athletes Using Jenzabar Retention

About Brevard College

Brevard College, a Methodist liberal arts college, is located in Brevard, North Carolina. The college has approximately 750 full-time students.

https://brevard.edu/

Core Retention Challenges

▶ High turnover rates for first-year students and athletes

▶ Lack of insight into at-risk students

▶ No way to identify how or when to intervene and prevent turnover

Project Outcomes

▶ Increased first-year student retention to 70%, up from 50%

▶ Increased student retention among athletic teams that participated in the program by 30%

▶ Improved correspondence with students

▶ Established 10 key indicators to identify at-risk students

▶ Enhanced ability to intervene turnover by implementing changes at the right times

▶ Established good will with faculty

Student retention has always been an important performance indicator for higher education institutions. For smaller institutions, like Brevard College, student retention, especially for first-year students, is even more vital. With the COVID-19 pandemic and shift to online learning, Brevard College faced even more substantial risk. Fortunately, Brevard College leverages Jenzabar Retention for maximum insight into student engagement and success, allowing administrators and faculty to intervene appropriately and keep students enrolled.

Prior to using Jenzabar Retention, Brevard College used a homegrown solution that required staff to input student data into manually operated spreadsheets. This time-consuming and redundant process negatively impacted efficiency while simultaneously leading to data silos and poor student relations.

The move to Jenzabar Retention opened significant opportunity for Brevard College, as the product leverages highly customizable predictive modeling capabilities. At Brevard College, faculty and staff use this predictive technology to identify at-risk students using a variety of preconfigured factors, including if students are athletes.

Jenzabar Retention allows Brevard to aggregate huge volumes of data on students to improve retention, success, and intervention capabilities. The predictive modeling component also allows Brevard to identify unique student trends. For example, while many institutions assume that student athletes are more likely to remain enrolled due to increased engagement with the institution, this wasn't true for Brevard College. In fact, Brevard College found that student athletes were more at risk of dropping than students who were not part of the athletic program.

To address and intervene this issue across campus, faculty and staff established a formalized study hall program for all students. For athletes, in particular, staff partnered with coaches to build team cohorts for study halls. Brevard College saw an increase in retention across teams that participated in the study hall program. Specifically, the football team, which traditionally had the lowest retention rate, saw a 30 percent increase in retention.

The surprising athlete turnover rates made Brevard College revisit and challenge all its existing assumptions. This allowed the institution to totally revamp its intervention and retention strategies across campus.

Tackling First-Year Turnover

While student turnover is always a challenge for higher education institutions, retaining first-year students is vital not only because those students make up a core portion of the student body in later years, but also because first-year retention is a measurement of student experience. In many cases, first-year retention rates indicate to incoming or prospective freshmen how many students liked their experience enough to return to the institution for another year. If an institution's first-year retention rates are low, incoming enrollment numbers may dwindle as prospective students look for institutions that offer better experiences.

Jenzabar Retention provides huge insight into this area for Brevard College. The institution can capture data on first-year students and align information with the

platform's predictive models, which highlight key risk factors such as grade point average, participation in athletic programs, where students lived in relation to the college, demographic information, and more. Using this information, Brevard can accurately identify students at risk of dropping out using a three-colored scale: green represents low risk, yellow represents slight risk, red represents significant risk.

Prior to using Jenzabar Retention, Brevard College didn't have the ability to quickly measure first-year retention, which meant intervention tactics were often too late to prevent turnover. Jenzabar Retention allows Brevard College to avoid waiting until the end of the semester to see if students will succeed. Faculty and staff can quickly identify risk factors in real time, ask why those problems exist, and implement countermeasures to increase student engagement, satisfaction, and success.

Jenzabar Retention also breaks down the barriers between students and staff, allowing personnel to build stronger relationships with students. Individuals who may have had ancillary relationships with students in the past now have much more personal relationships with a greater level of care.
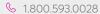
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Jenzabar Retention has truly revolutionized how we engage with students, identify risk, and apply intervention tactics to minimize turnover. Following a seamless implementation, Jenzabar's team and retention solution have enabled our college to improve long-term student enrollment and success.

Brandon Smith
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Find out more

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