



## Cal Poly Pomona transforms the student experience

### Leading polytechnic creates a one-stop shop for all administrative support requests

Cal Poly Pomona, part of the California State University system, is a polytechnic university located in Pomona, California. Cal Poly Pomona offers more than 60 majors and degree programs almost 24,000 undergraduate and over 1,500 graduate students. Nationally recognized and highly ranked for its academic programs, the university is known for its learn-by-doing approach, taking education beyond the classroom to give students the real-world skills they need to succeed in their careers.

Cal Poly Pomona takes pride in being a student-centered institution that is committed to delivering student success. That's why Cal Poly Pomona has launched an ambitious and comprehensive digital initiative to unify and streamline administrative services for students. By giving students one place to go for support services ranging from registration to financial aid and housing, the university is enhancing the student experience and freeing student time to focus on why they are there – to learn.

### Traditional administrative support is frustrating for students and costly for universities

Cal Poly Pomona's CIO, John McGuthry, explains. "With traditional university administration environments, students walk or call into an office – such as financial aid – and sit in a crowded room waiting to see an advisor. They go through their story and have their question or issue addressed. Then, they go to another office – for example, housing – and have to start over. There's no knowledge sharing between offices, so students repeat the same information again and again. That creates a miserable student experience. Students dream of coming to university to learn, not to spend time navigating administration."

"This model frustrates students, and it also strains the university's resources. It's a one-size-fits-all approach. Administrative staff spend most of their time answering simple questions, rather than devoting attention to students who have complex issues. That means that the students that really need it don't get the support they deserve. And, for the university, there's the cost of redundant activities and systems in each administrative office. In other words, you end up doing less with more."



CAL POLY POMONA

#### Location

Pomona, California, United States

#### Industry

Higher Education

#### Type

Polytechnic university

#### Faculty and Staff

1,221 Faculty

1,219 Staff

#### Students

24,000 undergraduate

1,600 graduate

#### Mission

We cultivate success through a diverse culture of experiential learning, discovery, and innovation.

### Transforming the administrative support model

According to McGuthry, "Our goal is to create a flow-through administrative support model where each student gets the level of support they need. The starting point is a single portal for all administrative services. Here, students can find answers to simple questions from an online knowledgebase. If they can't find what they want, they submit a question or eventually chat online with a university representative. If they have more complex issues, they will be able to book an appointment online and come into the appropriate administrative office. And, let's be clear. We want to keep that personal contact so that administrative staff continue to build relationships with students. By moving to a flow-through model, they can spend more time with the students who need it."

### 70% reduction in change-related incidents

This journey to student-centric administrative support began when Cal Poly Pomona modernized its IT service desk. McGuthry says, "We were moving to a centralized IT support model and needed to replace our old ticketing system, which was on its last legs. We chose ServiceNow because it was a platform that allowed us to grow our capabilities. For example, we used ServiceNow to put in place structured change management processes that reduced change-related incidents by more than 70%."

"Along with these ITIL processes, self-service was also a big driver. We now offer a huge catalog of IT services through the ServiceNow portal – everything from PC replacement through to booking video conferences and setting up equipment in classrooms."

### A campus-wide administrative services delivery platform

"Originally, we just bought ServiceNow for IT. However, as we used it, we realized that it was solving the same problems we needed to address in other student centered administrative services. It automatically routed incidents to the right teams, so we could automatically route student requests to the right administrative office. It provided self-service, which allowed us to move to a flow-through support model. And, it was a single system of record. With ServiceNow we can share student information between offices, rather than asking students the same questions again and again."

### Building a roadmap for success

Despite initial skepticism from some of Cal Poly Pomona's administrative offices, the approach gained momentum. According to McGuthry, "Our administrative offices saw ServiceNow as an IT tool rather than the service delivery platform it is. However, we asked them to trust us. We started with our enrollment office, which already wanted a system to track interactions with students. As enrollment administrators became familiar with ServiceNow, they saw the potential. And, they quickly realized the benefits of having a single platform across offices. For instance, students would often come to IT with enrollment questions, and we could now route these tickets directly to the enrollment office."

Buoyed by this success, Cal Poly Pomona launched its digital initiative, with the goal of bringing all of its student centered administrative offices onto ServiceNow. Financial aid was next out the gate, part of a roadmap to unify services across all administrative offices in the next few years. McGuthry says, "We're deliberately taking the time to get this right. We want to create a great experience for our students, and that means understanding their expectations – which are different to those of a mid-career CIO. That's why we're continually running focus groups and validating our designs with our students."

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"We're committed to our students' success. That starts with delivering a great support experience, but it goes beyond that. By understanding how each student is interacting with our administrative offices, we can see if they need help. That level of care will set us apart, as we continue to give our students what they need to achieve their career aspirations."

– John McGuthry, CIO, Cal Poly Pomona

### Delivering proactive student care

Ultimately, the goal for Cal Poly Pomona's is to create a single student record, capturing a full history of each student's interactions with its administrative offices. McGuthry says, "We're committed to our students' success. That starts with delivering a great support experience, but it goes beyond that. By understanding how each student is interacting with our administrative offices, we can see if they need help. For instance, if a student is running into trouble – for example, if they're missing payments or not registering for classes – we'll be able to see that and reach out to them. That level of care sets us apart, as we continue to give our students what they need to achieve their career aspirations."

### Challenges

- Deliver centralized IT services to the institution
- Support self-service resolution with an online catalog
- Unify and streamline administrative services for students

### ServiceNow Solutions

Platform and ITSM

### Results

- Change-related incidents reduced by more than 70%
- Staff have more time to focus on solving complex issues
- A single system of record reduces duplicative efforts and enables various offices to share information
- Model in place to provide students a single portal for all administrative services – IT, enrollment, financial aid, etc.

