University of Wisconsin Colleges Online

Madison, Wisconsin

University of Wisconsin Colleges Online offers students an opportunity to take their general education classes or complete an associate's degree in a convenient online format. Classes in the online program are taught by the same highly qualified professors who teach in the UW Colleges' on-campus classrooms. UW Colleges online offers approximately 90 classes each term, serving around 2,000 students. Students are requested to complete course evaluations for first-time online instructors and every few semesters. Faculty use these evaluations to improve instruction and class materials.

Challenge

When the University of Wisconsin (UW) began its Colleges Online program, they faced an unexpected challenge: all of their students were distance learners, making it difficult to continue their paper-based method of gathering course feedback. Unfortunately, the university's requirement to collect this information did not change. "We faced a big challenge on how best to gather this information from as many students as possible while being at a distance," says Jennifer Hendryx, an instructional designer for the University of Wisconsin Colleges Online.

Further, UW Colleges Online needed to be able to capture students' attention beyond a simple email notification. The university uses an online learning management system by D2L™ (Desire2Learn) to deliver and track its robust online program.

Enter Class Climate and its Brightspace integration widget.

Solution

"We could quickly and easily create a course evaluation survey to email to our students," states Hendryx. "We were able to send an initial email request for them to complete the evaluation and send follow-up reminder emails."

Class Climate provides two effective methods for creating evaluation surveys—as well as a variety of output formats, including formats enabled for mobile devices.

To solve UW's additional outreach needs, Class Climate also provides a direct connection to Brightspace. D2L is a featured integration partner. Through that relationship, Scantron offers a configurable widget that provides student users with a link to a list of their open online Class Climate evaluations on each student's home page.

UW configured the connector to provide a direct link to evaluation forms for each class in which a student is enrolled. The links are activated when the evaluation period opens and deactivated when the period closes, ensuring that the university only gets timely and pertinent feedback.

"We love this added integration because in addition to the students receiving initial emails and reminder emails through Class Climate directly, they are also able to see and complete the evaluation(s) right from within Brightspace," says Hendryx.

Solution Snapshot

Online course feedback to support distance learners

Easy survey creation

Initial and follow-up email survey notification

Direct survey links in Brightspace™ student home pages

Instructor and administrator reports immediately available

Fully automated, time-saving process

Results

"This process has been working great for us for several years," asserts Hendryx. Response rates since the university integrated Class Climate into their Brightspace platform are up from previous years. This improved response rate helps UW be more confident that evaluations are statistically meaningful.

Instructor and administrator reports are immediately available, ensuring the right faculty and staff have timely access to results that help them improve courses and programs. Further, a quality management dashboard helps administrators with an at-a-glance snapshot of program quality.

"Every part of the process works so well," says Hendryx, "From creating the survey to distributing it to reviewing the results. We couldn't be happier with our Class Climate solution and its integration with Brightspace."

"We love this added integration because in addition to the students receiving initial emails and reminder emails through Class Climate directly, they are also able to see and complete the evaluation(s) right from within Brightspace."

"This process provides us with the greatest opportunity to capture as many course evaluations as we can."

Jennifer Hendryx, Instructional Designer
University of Wisconsin Colleges Online

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