Comm100

HIGHER EDUCATION CHEAT SHEET

How Student Services Can Improve the Student Experience & Reduce Dropout

The goal of student services in higher education is to foster student success.

Whether it's by advising on student housing, offering academic support, or encouraging event participation, student services help to improve the student experience in ways that go far beyond letter grades.

By developing a student's sense of community and improving educational outcomes, student services are also critical to student graduation rates. With the average dropout rate now at 40% in North American colleges and 50% at public universities, it's more important than ever for student services to ensure they are providing the support that their students need and now expect.

Today's students expect support that is:

- Convenient
- Fast
- Personalized
- Available 24/7

This guide will explore how student services can provide this support to their students to help them curb their dropout rates and foster happy, successful students.

-40% Average undergraduate dropout rate at North American colleges

-50% Average undergraduate dropout rate at public universities

+20% Male college student dropouts compared to female

Student services must go digital

Today's Gen Z students aren't satisfied by traditional means of communication. While phone and email might have been fine in the past, 60% of Gen Z say that they "hate calling people." To appeal to these students, colleges and universities must adopt digital communication channels.

By introducing digital communications, higher education institutions can meet the needs of today's students who expect support that is fast, convenient, personalized and 24/7. To deliver on this quality of support, student services must look to adopt these four key digital channels:

1. **Live chat**
2. **Chatbots**
3. **SMS**
4. **Omnichannel**

In the following sections, we'll explain how each of these channels help student services to curb the high dropout trends by meeting students on their terms.

# Improve student engagement with live chat

We know that today's students hate phone calls, and when phone support is all that colleges and universities offer, it can have a significant negative impact on student engagement.

To increase engagement, student services must introduce support that is fast and convenient. 71% of 16 to 24-year-olds now believe that customer service can be drastically improved by a quick response, while 74% of Gen Z agree that "convenience is more important than brand." While phone and email support can't meet that need, live chat can.

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) introduced Comm100 Live Chat for real-time communication with students across five departments and has seen significant improvements in student engagement. TRU's customer satisfaction score (CSAT) is now at a strong 4.28/5, proving the positive impact live chat has on the student experience.

61%

Of under 24 years olds actively avoid phone calls for support
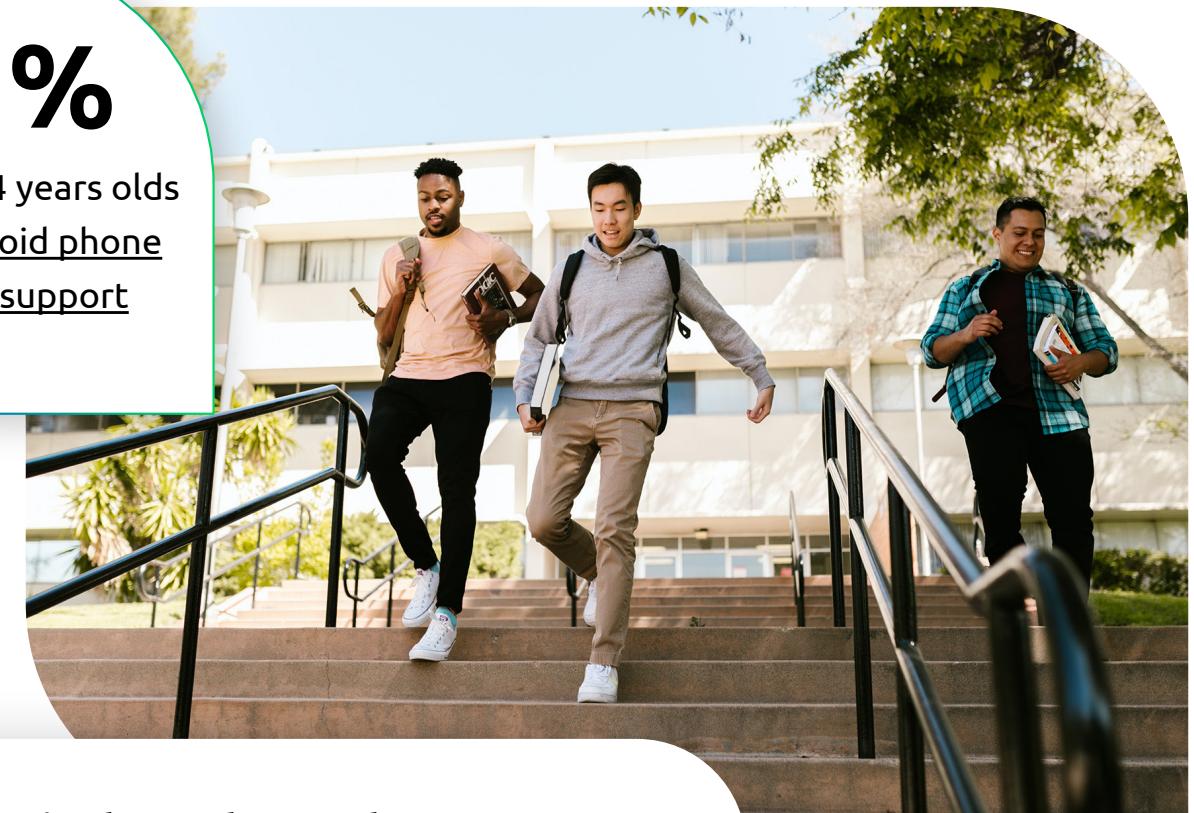
Find out how Thompson Rivers University is increasing engagement with Comm100 Live Chat

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THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Offer 24/7 support with chatbots

Gen Zers rank <u>24/7 customer service</u> highest among factors that would make them feel positive about a brand. With students now seeking around-the-clock support, offering 24/7 support is a powerful tool to increase student engagement and reduce dropout rates.

The only way to offer 24/7 support that is cost-effective is through <u>chatbot automation</u>. With a chatbot in place, student services can automate their most common student requests – all without hiring any additional staff. For schools that have an international presence, this automation can also help to expand support hours across other time zones.

When agents are available during the day, chatbots can respond to the simple requests so agents have more time and capacity to handle complex requests, increasing the speed, attention, and personalization offered to each and every student.

<u>Find out</u> how Cambrian College is automating 70%+ requests with Comm100 AI Chatbot

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CAMBRIAN COLLEGE

Grab student attention with SMS

Today's students are constantly inundated with information. To make an impression with these students, colleges and universities must choose the right channel. With an open rate of 98%, SMS is now one of the most effective channels for reaching students.

Through Comm100 Outreach, student services teams can send bulk and personalized SMS messages to students to prevent disengagement and reduce dropout. Targeted SMS campaigns can include anything from on-campus events and new available services to exam reminders.

Because Comm100 Outreach enables two-way messaging with students, SMS can be used to foster the connection between each student and their school.
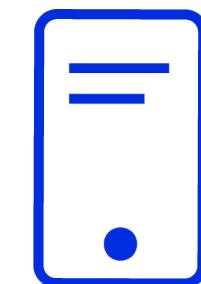
4x

More likely to reply to an SMS message than an email

Provide personalized support with omnichannel engagement

It's vital to offer students a variety of digital channels to reach out for support. However, supporting every channel can prove challenging for student services teams as they juggle platforms and data becomes siloed between channels. By introducing an omnichannel student engagement platform, each channel is connected with a unified console to improve both the agent and student experience.

Rather than using multiple systems, omnichannel platforms bring together every channel and the information within them into one console. This doesn't only help speed up support. It also helps agents provide more helpful and personalized support as agents get access to a wealth of information about each student they speak to.

With the ability to show students that they understand their needs and care, student services can improve the student experience and reduce dropout rates.

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