



A&M EDUCATION

# Making Student Experience a Priority

## Student Experience – does it get the attention it deserves?

Surprisingly, student-centricity has not been universally adopted as a core guiding principle by many higher education institutions. This is a major opportunity for changing the game across potential mission goals, along with enhancing accessibility, diversity and financial sustainability.



Students are the focus of the majority of higher education institutions in the United States from mission, reputational, and operational perspectives...



Yet the student experience has been neglected over the years - suffering from outdated assumptions regarding institutional standards, administrative operations, and individual expectations.



Frequently both academic and administrative leaders focus investment and changes on issues tangential to the student experience...



And management consultants, technology companies and other higher education service providers have lagged their commercial peers in introducing change to the sector.



The big opportunity for higher education – every aspect of the student experience can be approved at most institutions – this is not an exaggeration, but a reality based on adaptable practices and proven technologies.



And there is a measurable business case associated with many of the potential changes, which can materially increase both effectiveness and improve efficiency.

Higher education institutions traditionally underestimate the importance of both effectiveness and efficiency in student experience and operations. Institutions spend millions in building “big brand” equity; marketing academic programs and student life; and welcoming prospects and parents to campus. But once prospects become admitted students, the music stops. Putting aside the quality of faculty and academics, the student administrative lifecycle is largely neglected. New admits receive sporadic communication. Parents may not be communicated with at all. The summer is long, and the institution is silent. Next steps for course registration, housing, dining and student life are opaque. Students receive dozens of forms, duplicate requests for information, and multiple invitations to log in to disconnected systems. The websites are link farms. The “mobile experience” is non-existent. Getting help involves persistent digging, multiple calls/transfers/voicemails, dead-ends and delays... Welcome to college. This experience is just an introduction to the typical student experience, which has evolved into dysfunction based on a lack of understanding of student needs and expectations; siloed schools, operations and technologies; and administrators prioritizing their own interests over those of the students.

## Student-centricity: The new mantra for service operations

From A&M's perspective, there are three primary levers to achieve excellence in student experience:

1. Become a student-centric institution.
2. Build a consumerized, personalized, social and mobile digital experience (e.g., digital utilities, self-service, full-service channels, collaboration).
3. Establish professionalized, contact center-based, service operations with the right people, processes and technologies to exceed student expectations – access, response time, courtesy and results.

None of this is easy, but it is all attainable. A&M's practitioners have pioneered transformational changes with large and small, traditional and online, public and private and "rich and poor" institutions. We are seasoned business leaders who bring conviction to capability design and commitment to successful implementation.

## Student Experience Transformation

### Student Services Baseline

#### Potential Focus Areas:

Operating model – people, process, technology  
 Operating model – central v. school views  
 Student survey – satisfaction  
 Staff survey – activities, effort, skills  
 Operating costs snapshot  
 Heatmaps – performance, satisfaction, digital maturity, gaps  
 Service model recommendation

### Digital Experience Analysis

#### Potential Focus Areas:

Constituent personas workshop  
 Focus groups  
 Current state – digital (e.g. mobile, utilities, self-service)  
 Benchmarks (i.e. what other institutions have done)  
 Design workshop  
 Clickable demo  
 Roadmap (integrated with Student Services)  
 Business case (integrated with Student Services)

### Sample First Project Approach

As a starting point, A&M recommends a Student Experience Roadmap project, which rapidly assesses the current state, student-facing, operating model in the context of the student journey, digital capabilities and institutional services. Typical areas of focus might include admissions, aid, onboarding, registrar, accounts and billing, student advising and success, off-campus services (e.g., career, study abroad) and auxiliaries (e.g., dining, housing, athletics). Leveraging surveys, focus groups, workshops and detailed analysis, the A&M team will provide a synthesized set of deliverables, including a set of service model recommendations, a "clickable" digital experience, a cross-functional implementation roadmap and a quantified business case.

#### Wave 1 Experiences

Pre-College	Web/Mobile Basecamp	Mass Marketing
Campus Tour	Admissions Process	Financial Advising
Comms and Journeys	Admitted to Enrolled	Onboarding

#### Wave 2 Experiences

Arrival	Academic Advising	Course Registration
Teaching and Learning	Digital Campus Mobile App	Learning Content
Residential Education	Auxiliaries	Accounts and Billing

#### Wave 3 Experiences

Academic Programs	Research, Work and Volunteerism	Off-Campus Programs
Diversity	Wellness	Community
Extracurricular Programs	Career Advising	Offboarding/ Graduation

#### Holistic Digital Experience

Profile	Virtual ID	Course Planning	Classroom Companion	Moments that Matter	On-Campus Programs	Career Counseling	Public Safety App	Get Help – Real-Time
Preference	Building Access and App	Classes	Content Library	Checklists	Off-Campus Programs	Career Planning Utilities	Emergency Communications	Get Help – Appointments
Privacy	Dining Access and App	Curated Directory	Faculty Evaluation	Alerts and Notifications	Campus Calendar/ Map Utility	Storefront	Dynamic Ad Space	Get Help – Self-Service Utilities

#### Unified Shared Services

Channel Management	CRM Contacts	Admin Alerts – Analytics Driven	Admissions	Registrar	Wellness	Career Services	Bookstore	Public Safety
ChatBot	CRM Cases	Workflows/Process Orchestration	Aid	Accounts and Billing	Diversity	Housing	Human Resources – Student Workers	Athletes
Knowledge Management	CRM Communications	Workforce/Quality Management	Student Life	Academic Advising	Off-Campus Programs	Dining	IT Helpdesk	Other Auxiliaries

### Pro Forma To-Be Service Model

# Conviction and Commitment – how is A&M different?

A&M is not a traditional strategy consulting firm or technology solution integrator. A&M’s culture stems from decades of support for complex, urgent, “make or break” deals, transactions and projects. The higher education practice is driven by the intensity in our DNA to provide a differentiated, focused set of services in higher education. The core services A&M provides to the sector are:

Higher Education Offerings	
Institutional Resilience	Student Experience Transformation
Mergers and Acquisitions	Administrative Operations Transformation
Restructuring and Recovery	Finance/CFO Advisory
Investigations and Compliance	IT/CIO Advisory
Interim Leadership   CFO, CIO, CHRO +	

## A&M Higher Education Offerings

A&M rapidly assesses efficiency, spots redundancies and takes action to improve cost and service. Unlike other firms, we don’t need to reinvent the wheel when looking for operational synergies and posing workable solutions. And, we don’t need years and years to achieve results. We bring our blend of financial, operations and HR savvy senior staff to your site to actively co-lead your process of transformation. Our teams already understand higher education operating models and transaction processing in depth – we won’t need to tease things apart on your nickel. And we won’t spend weeks developing inventories of pain points. You already know them, and so do we. Beyond analysis, A&M brings an intensity of focus with an incisive value mindset to implementation. Our teams meld with client organizations to take responsibility for enacting and stewarding change, actively assisting with the transition to new organizational structures, business processes and technologies. We view your bottom-line results and return of value to the mission as our primary reward for work well done.

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## ABOUT ALVAREZ & MARSAL

Companies, investors and government entities around the world turn to Alvarez & Marsal (A&M) for leadership, action and results. Privately held since its founding in 1983, A&M is a leading global professional services firm that provides advisory, business performance improvement and turnaround management services. When conventional approaches are not enough to create transformation and drive change, clients seek our deep expertise and ability to deliver practical solutions to their unique problems.

With over 9,000 people providing services across six continents, we deliver tangible results for corporates, boards, private equity firms, law firms and government agencies facing complex challenges. Our senior leaders, and their teams, leverage A&M’s restructuring heritage to help companies act decisively, catapult growth and accelerate results. We are experienced operators, world-class consultants, former regulators and industry authorities with a shared commitment to telling clients what’s really needed for turning change into a strategic business asset, managing risk and unlocking value at every stage of growth.

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