

5 Ways to Improve Student Customer Service at Your Community College

Community college practitioners agree that students' customer service expectations have risen since 2020 and that gaps in customer service cause attrition. While we might not think of students as "customers," the reality is their experience as consumers shapes their expectations for how they interact with colleges.

Use this infographic to modernize the way you engage students at every stage of the lifecycle and protect your enrollment—even with limited staff. Bring these insights to life with Navigate, the leading student CRM for community colleges. Visit eab.com/navigate to learn more.



Why customer service matters

85%

of community college professionals think students' customer service expectations have risen since 2020¹

66%

think students needing to repeat themselves multiple times hurts retention¹

Expectations driven by private sector

76%

of people expect to engage with someone immediately when engaging with a company²

61%

of consumers would switch to a company's competitor after just one bad customer service experience²

for leaders

for staff

for both



Provide rapid resolutions

Ensure students receive fast, accurate support so they don't lose momentum.

Identify your 2–3 most common customer service bottlenecks and use them as a manageable, high-impact starting point.

Establish a process for sharing new policies and procedures internally to ensure students receive consistent answers to common questions.

Craft proactive communication and "nudges" to guide students and ensure their progress, connecting them to essential support when needed.



Invest in customer service training

Make sure your teams are equipped with the interpersonal, professional, and tactical skills needed to support students.

Offer customer service-focused professional development training to staff and faculty on topics such as de-escalation, empathy, and inter-office communication.

Apply education and industry best practices to enhance student service, incorporating warm handoffs, active listening, and conflict resolution.

Incentivize staff to participate in customer service skill-building through opportunities to earn badges, credentials, or certificates that showcase their learning.



Ask students about their experiences

Design systems and solutions that are built not only *for* students, but *with* students, to ensure expectations are being met.

Enable students to submit "kudos" or positive feedback about interactions they've had with faculty or staff.

Send brief follow-up surveys after interactions to gauge real-time student experiences, enhancing feedback collection for continuous improvement.

Use tech to deploy instant polls year-round. Gather on-the-spot event feedback, adjust communication preferences, and enhance student engagement.



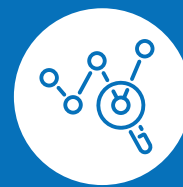
Automate processes and embrace self-guidance tools

Leverage technology to provide fast, accurate, and accessible service to students while streamlining staff and faculty workloads.

Audit your website for user-friendliness and accessibility. Enhance search accuracy and functionality to ensure visitors have a positive first impression.

Optimize application, onboarding, and scheduling with tech-first processes, minimizing student trips to campus and enhancing efficiency.

Regularly update virtual FAQs. Make them accessible on high-traffic webpages and other student self-guidance technology for convenience.



Leverage data insights to proactively anticipate student needs

Prioritize customer service, using data to proactively address student needs and ensure it remains integral to your success strategy.

Use appointment data to anticipate staffing needs during busy times.

Use data-driven insights to identify students at the highest risk, and offer early intervention without waiting for them to request it.

Use predictive analytics to forecast student support service needs and ensure you're using staff resources effectively.

1. EAB 2023 Community College Customer Service Survey 2. Zendesk CX Trends 2022