



EAB

INSIGHT PAPER

The Next Technological **Revolution** in Student Success

How Automations, AI, and Better Data Management Can Improve the Morale and Effectiveness of Student Success Teams





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Introduction


Advancing Student Success Management with Technology

Technology has profoundly transformed how colleges and universities approach their student success strategies. The earliest student success strategies focused on building engagement and a sense of belonging. Advising and support services were available, but students were typically expected to seek them out on their own.

This changed in the 2010s, when higher education institutions began pulling data collected in their Student Information Systems (SIS) into newly adopted Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms. For the first time, frontline student success staff could access a holistic view of each student, allowing for proactive, data-informed advising. Predictive analytics, surveys, and early alerts further transformed how colleges and universities approached student support. Advising offices expanded and became the hubs of “coordinated care networks,” connected to a wide array of campus resources.¹

Today, we are witnessing the early stages of a second technological revolution in student success—one driven by shortages in staffing capacity. Shrinking budgets and low morale have left many teams without enough personnel to deliver high-touch support at the level students need. In response, student success teams are adopting automation to serve as “virtual staff,” lightening the burden and freeing student success professionals to spend more time on the coaching and mentoring that only humans can provide.

The artificial intelligence (AI) revolution is supplementing team capacity in even more sophisticated ways, potentially opening new avenues for supporting students. This transformation presents leaders with an opportunity to fundamentally rethink how labor is distributed across their teams—an opportunity that could not be more timely. For colleges to take full advantage of this revolution, leaders need to advance their strategy in two critical ways.



First, they need to prepare their human workers by helping them find their way forward. Some traditional roles in admissions, advising, tutoring, and finance could be at risk of being lost to AI in the coming years.² Now is the time to help your staff evolve their roles to focus more on uniquely human skills—judgment, empathy, and deep student knowledge—that cannot be replaced. Doing so allows them to offload the “nonhuman” work that clutters their daily routines. By deliberately relieving these burdens, leaders can elevate their teams and help them rediscover the satisfaction and purpose that drew them to student success work in the first place. We will explore this in Part 1 of this paper.

Second, colleges and universities must commit to stronger data management. Student success data from across academic affairs, student affairs, and enrollment management needs to be unified into a single, accessible repository.

Doing so is key to enabling automation at scale and making the current generation of AI assistants smarter and more useful. This requires a data warehouse and a unified data infrastructure—connecting the Student Success CRM to the SIS, LMS, enrollment CRM, advising platforms, and any relevant shadow systems. Institutions that invest in this foundation now will be best positioned to support both their people and their students—today and in the AI-powered future to come. This will be the focus of Part 2.





PART 1

Understanding and Adopting Automations



Addressing the Crisis in Staff Morale

Today's college students face many challenges to their success, but perhaps the most underappreciated is the state of morale among the teams dedicated to support them. Advisors, coaches, and other frontline staff form the core of our student success efforts, working directly with students to help them resolve issues and plan for the future. Few student success offices could function without these critical team members, but years of low morale and increased workloads are making it harder and harder to keep quality staff in place.

One in seven higher education employees left their job last year,³ and 63% of higher education professionals report that staffing shortages are negatively impacting their department's operations.⁴ Instability from turnover exacerbates service gaps and drains institutional knowledge, forcing managers to divert attention to hiring, onboarding, and training. This dynamic

is particularly acute in student-facing roles like advising and enrollment management, where expanded responsibilities—such as mental health support and career development—strain already limited resources.⁵

Workload pressures are a major contributor to staff burnout, low morale, and turnover. Half of higher education staff are working more than full-time hours, with more than half shouldering the responsibilities of colleagues who have left over the past year.⁶ Alarmingly, less than a third feel they are compensated fairly.⁷ More than 80% of employees experiencing severe burnout plan to apply for other positions within the next year.⁸

It doesn't need to be this way. Technology has tremendous potential to improve morale by automating tasks that humans find tedious and repetitive, lightening the burden and allowing them to focus on more fulfilling work.

Reducing the “Nonhuman Work” in Student Success

Faced with persistent staffing shortages, advising teams are increasingly turning to technology to do work that doesn't need a human to do it. “Nonhuman work” refers to tasks that technology can perform as effectively—or more effectively—than people. By contrast, “Human work” is the work that requires a human to do, because it requires essential human skills like empathy, judgment, or creativity.

Every role on a student success team includes at least some of both types of work, but the nonhuman elements are often tedious and repetitive. For many student success professionals, these tedious tasks include things like scheduling appointments, logging interactions, sending follow-ups, and running weekly reports. Time spent on these tasks contributes to feeling of being overworked, takes time away from students, and drives turnover. Automating the non-human tasks helps staff maintain a healthier work-life balance and focus on their most meaningful work. This can have a big impact on morale.



Do This Thought Exercise

List all the tasks you perform in your role, ranked from most to least enjoyable. Focus on the bottom 20%—the tasks you find least fulfilling. Ask yourself: *Could these be automated? How might you implement that automation? What would you do instead? How much more might you enjoy your job?*

This simple thought exercise makes the benefits of automation tangible. Try doing this exercise as a team to find commonalities and help win over those who are skeptical of the value of automation.

Automation Acts Like a “Virtual Assistant”

Modern student success CRMs include robust workflow automation tools tailored for higher education. Institutions that embrace these features report saving up to 10 hours per week per staff member—a change many describe as transformative in the face of chronic staffing shortages. In effect, these colleges have added extra staff capacity by hiring virtual assistants to handle repetitive, time-consuming tasks that humans find tedious.

Four reasons you might need “virtual assistants”

- ▶ Reduce work outside of normal hours
- ▶ Flex team capacity during peak times
- ▶ Offset the departure of a team member
- ▶ Expand scope without increasing headcount



I treat Navigate as a full-time employee in my office; it’s a full-time employee that works 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

Bridget Rose
*Director of the Academic Success Center
Samford University*

The 10 Most Common Types of Student Success Automations

A significant portion of work currently performed by student success staff can be automated. These automations are straightforward to set up and can be managed by any user with basic training. The result is a substantial increase in capacity, allowing staff to focus on high-value, student-centered work. In platforms such as Navigate360, the most commonly implemented automations include:

Automations for advisors, coaches, and student-facing staff

1. Opening cases and alerts
2. Appointment scheduling
3. Follow-up communications
4. Logging interactions
5. Responses to early alert/progress reports
6. Responses to hand-raises, surveys, and polls

ESTIMATED TIME SAVINGS:
10 hours per week per person

Automations for leaders and specialists

7. Preplanned communications
8. Sorting students into workflows
9. Scheduled reports
10. Adding tags to student profiles

ESTIMATED TIME SAVINGS:
10–15 hours per week per person



Case Studies of Automation in Action



Frederick Community College uses Navigate360 to automate and streamline its academic alert intervention process, resulting in greater engagement and efficiency. Success coaches now receive automated daily reports highlighting students with new Alerts or Progress Reports. These students are automatically added to Appointment Campaigns, prompting them to schedule meetings with a coach, which improves conversion rate. By eliminating manual processes, each coach saves 10 hours per week, allowing them to dedicate more time to personalized student support.



Dakota State University automated the workflow for advising incoming students who require placement testing before registering. The admissions office assigns tags in the system according to tests students need to take. The tags are used to initiate automated reminders prior to a student's initial advising appointment and track when they complete testing. By automating this one process, DSU dramatically reduces time spent by advisors finding students who still need testing and correcting errors for students who misregister.



Baylor University has automated follow-up actions and streamlined the communication and intervention process when students show signs of academic distress and prompt a referral from their instructor. The automated messages provide students with several academic support options and make it easy to set up appointments. Roughly 40% of students will act on their own without any additional prompt, reducing the time success staff spend on manual tracking and communication.



Wichita State University automates the creation of cases through the integration of various data inputs, such as intake surveys and early alerts. This automation allows for the rapid identification and assignment of cases to student success teams, ensuring timely and coordinated interventions. By automating these processes, Wichita State has reduced duplicative efforts and improved communication efficiency, allowing staff to focus more on direct student support rather than administrative tasks.



Estimating the Workload Value of Student Success AI Agents

Artificial intelligence now shapes every conversation about automation and technology, and we are beginning to see where it can have the biggest impact on staff workload. Desk workers say AI helps them write content, automating repetitive workflows, and summarize large volumes of information.⁹ Student success teams say they use AI to draft communications, answer questions, help students research career options, and write resumes.¹⁰

AI has real potential to expand staff capacity and improve morale, but most student success teams will need more experience and comfort with AI before they can make full use of this new technology.¹¹ Many are fearful that AI will take their jobs and will be reluctant to adopt it. You may help change their mindset by having a straightforward conversation about the current and near future capabilities of AI.

Encouragingly, studies are showing that the time being saved with AI is being put to good use. Workers using AI say that they are using the reclaimed time to increase the accuracy of their work, be creative and strategic, and improve their work-life balance. Relatively few say that AI is having a negative impact on their work or workload.¹²

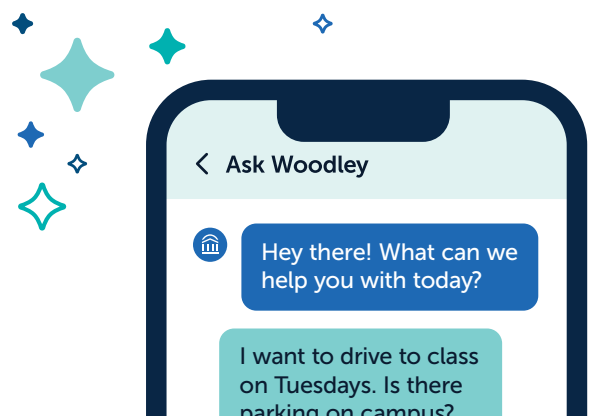
Until now, most of the student success work being done with AI has been done using publicly available tools like ChatGPT. Now in 2025, purpose-built AI agents designed specifically for student success are reaching the market. The student success CRM Navigate360 has AI that falls into two main categories: “AI Assistant” that supports staff, and “AI Navigator” that assists students. We can think of these as the first AI “workers” joining the student success team, and it’s time to consider where they fit on the org chart.

AI Assistant (for Staff) is made up of multiple distinct agents designed to boost staff productivity. These agents function much like office assistants, helping with workflows, drafting communications, and running reports. Their value is best measured by the hours saved, similar to how we assess simple automations. The time savings will vary depending on adoption and job function, but industry experts estimate that AI agents like these are currently saving workers two to five hours per week on average,^{13 14} although this is expected to increase to 12 hours per week by 2029.¹⁵

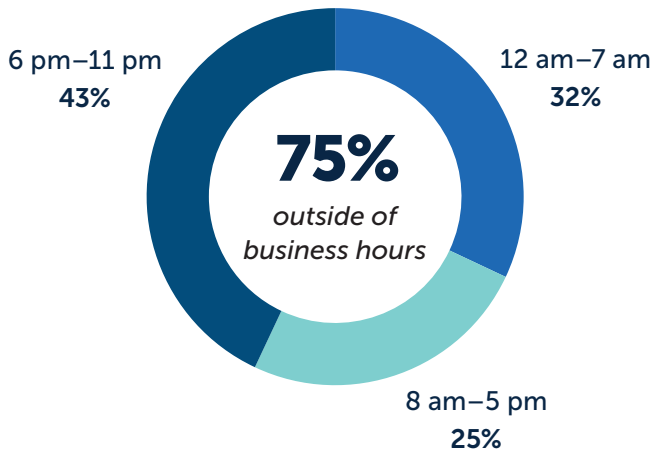
- ▶ **Content Creation Agent**
Instantly generate and personalize student outreach
- ▶ **Student Insights Agent**
Understand holistic student performance with one click
- ▶ **Report Agent**
Find the right-fit report and filters on demand
- ▶ **Course Planning Agent**
Generate best-fit course plans for students
- ▶ **Task Agent**
Conquer your to-do list by prompting actions like alerts
- ▶ **Knowledge Agent**
Quickly access your activity history and resources
- ▶ **Campaign Agent**
Launch smart campaigns in a fraction of the time

AI Navigator (for Students) is made up of several autonomous agents that answer common advising questions, prompt actions such as scheduling an appointment, and guide students through basic administrative processes. In this regard, they serve a role similar to a phone bank or help desk. One university participating in the Navigate360 AI Beta found that three-quarters of student inquiries occur outside regular business hours, so perhaps the most accurate way to view the AI Navigator is as a “night shift” that is working when human staff are not available.

- ▶ **Course Planning Agent**
Give students the ability to generate course plans and access 24/7 course planning guidance
- ▶ **Knowledge Agent**
Provide instant responses to student and prospect questions in 90+ languages as early as recruitment and orientation



Student Use of Navigate360 AI Knowledge Agent



What Are Students Asking?

"What's my GPA?"

"Do I need to take this course?"

"Where do I find my advisor?"

"How do I find clothes for an interview?"

"How do I change major?"

"How do I get an on-campus job?"

"How do I fix a registration hold?"

"When is fall break?"

Scaling Student Support with AI and Automation

Louisiana State University

LSU



LSU's Navigate360 AI ("GeauxBot") **automatically flags keywords** such as fee, bill, major change, and advisor.



Flagged questions **prompt personalized follow-up emails** directing students to visit the LSU Student Success OneStop



7,000 first-year students are supported through this system, **creating efficiencies for both students and staff**



How to Get Started: Strategies for Bringing Automation and AI to Your Team

Taking the first step is often the hardest part of adopting automation. Most teams are locked into their routines, and many are already stretched thin. Adding one more project—even one that promises significant time savings—can feel overwhelming. Yet, there are practical ways to break through inertia and begin implementing time-saving automation.

1

Hold an afternoon staff retreat. Sometimes, the best way to kick off change is to simply block off an afternoon, gather your team in a conference room, and order some pizza. Use this time for a “hackathon” competition to see who can come up with the most creative or useful automations. Encourage your team to think big and have fun. The payoff is more time for everyone to focus on meaningful, student-facing work.

2

Appoint an automation lead. Designate someone as your automation “czar”—responsible for meeting with everyone on the team, talking through their workflows, and identifying opportunities for automation. With their growing expertise, this person can set up new automations much faster than someone starting from scratch, accelerating progress across the team. Often, the right person for this role will emerge naturally from a retreat or team discussion, especially if they show enthusiasm for automation.

3

Update open job descriptions. When a staff member leaves, take the opportunity to review their job description before redistributing tasks. Are there responsibilities that could be automated or eliminated entirely? If so, the workload for the team shrinks, and the new hire’s role can be refocused on higher-value, human-centered work.

4

Design new initiatives with automation in mind. Even in tight-budget times, innovation doesn’t stop. As you launch new initiatives, make automation a core part of your planning. Automate as much as possible from the start. If you’re facing a hiring freeze, look for ways to free up current staff by automating routine processes, allowing them to take on new opportunities without adding to their workload.

About Navigate360

Recruit, Retain, and Empower Students in College and Beyond

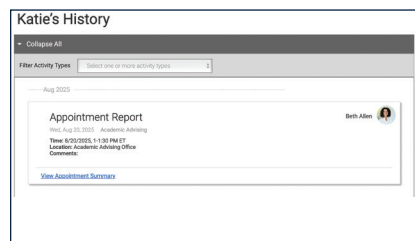
Navigate360 is the leading student CRM for community colleges, a powerful technology that unites administrators, faculty, staff, and students in a collaborative network that supports the entire student experience, from recruitment to career. Navigate360 is powered by more than a decade of student success research honed from billions of student interactions—and now, it's also amplified by AI.



Staff Workflow and Automation

Empower staff to proactively engage with prospective and current students

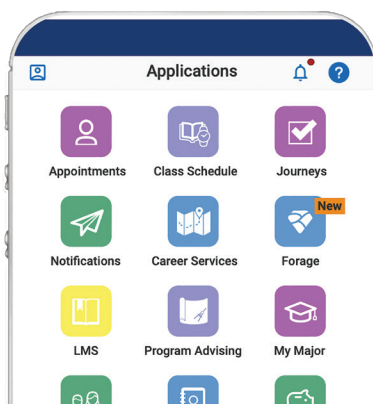
- ▶ AI Content, Campaign, and Student Insights Agents
- ▶ Complete Student Profile
- ▶ Coordinated Care Network
- ▶ Cases and Referrals
- ▶ Automated Alerts and Messaging
- ▶ Two-Way SMS
- ▶ Campaigns and Template Library
- ▶ To-Dos
- ▶ Appointments and Surveys
- ▶ Events
- ▶ Notes and Attachments
- ▶ Faculty Progress Reports
- ▶ Prospect Application Management



Student Engagement Hub

Provide your students with a one-stop shop for self-service resources

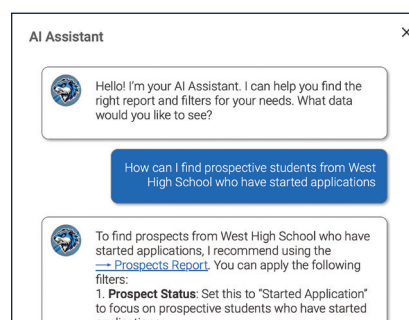
- ▶ AI Course Planning and Knowledge Agents
- ▶ iOS and Android Apps
- ▶ Student Success Network
- ▶ Campus Resources
- ▶ Appointment Scheduling
- ▶ Class Schedule
- ▶ In-App Messaging, Notifications, and Surveys
- ▶ Career Match and Journeys
- ▶ Study Buddies
- ▶ Financial Planner
- ▶ Prospect Portal



Reporting and Analytics

Proactively identify opportunities for better student support

- ▶ AI Report Agent
- ▶ Advanced Query Builder
- ▶ Data Visualizer
- ▶ Templated and Scheduled Reports
- ▶ Automated Workflow from Reports
- ▶ Population Health Analytics
- ▶ Activity Analytics
- ▶ Intervention Effectiveness Analytics
- ▶ Historical Analytics
- ▶ Predictive Model
- ▶ Analytics Data Exports



OUR PARTNERS

850+

Partner Institutions

10M+

Students Served

OUR IMPACT

3.5%

Typical improvement in graduation rate

5:1

ROI based on 500 partner value stories



PART 2

Committing to Better Data Management



Data Management Is a Strategic Imperative for the Future of Student Success

The landscape of student data has shifted dramatically over the past decade. The Student Information System (SIS), once the undisputed source of truth, now exists alongside a growing constellation of platforms—each capturing unique dimensions of the student experience. For most institutions, these include the Student Success CRM, Learning Management System (LMS), Enrollment CRM, and potentially a myriad of point solutions and shadow systems.

Colleges and universities take a huge leap forward when they adopt strong data management policies and infrastructure allowing them to break down data silos and connect their core platforms into a single integrated data system. Student success teams benefit tremendously from integration that gives them access to more and better data from across academic affairs, student affairs, and enrollment management.

These benefits are easy to imagine. Student profiles in CRMs become more valuable to advisors and faculty when the data that populates them becomes more robust. Communications teams can develop more sophisticated automated messaging that is

prompted by a wider range of student actions and attributes. Dashboards and reports include more fields and enable more sophisticated analyses. Artificial intelligence does a better job answering questions and performing tasks when it is taught more about students.

Student success leaders need to make data integration a strategic imperative. Institutions that act now will unlock immediate efficiencies and long-term advantages in the rapidly changing landscape of student success. Those that delay risk falling behind as automation and AI reshape the way we do work.

Benefits of Better Data Management

- ▶ Simplify your data pipelines, making it easier to bring new systems online
- ▶ Consolidate duplicate systems and reallocate spend
- ▶ Gain budget predictability by sunseting systems with variable costs
- ▶ Simplify new staff training and on-boarding, while mitigating knowledge loss
- ▶ Establish a golden record for accurate reporting of accountability metrics
- ▶ Accelerate strategic decision support

Barriers to Effective Data Management

Why hasn't this happened already? The benefits of data integration seem clear, yet most institutions encounter significant obstacles on the path to modern data management. These barriers are all too familiar to CIOs, who oversee the complexities of data management on a daily basis. Increasingly, however, data management is becoming a priority not just for IT but also for leaders across the entire institution. For student success leaders, developing a deeper understanding of these barriers is critical to forming effective partnerships with their CIOs and advancing data integration efforts. By learning to see these challenges from the CIO's perspective, campus leaders can position themselves to make meaningful progress and unlock the full potential of integrated data systems.

Barrier 1: Ineffective Data Warehousing

The most immediate challenge for many institutions is the lack of data warehouses purpose-built for higher education. Most available solutions are designed for corporate environments and carry high costs. Because these systems are not tailored to the unique workflows, compliance requirements, and reporting needs of colleges and universities, they require extensive—and often expensive—customization. This increases implementation complexity, introduces data errors, and frequently results in a patchwork of unreliable integrations. The outcome is a data environment that is fragile, difficult to scale, and ill-suited to support modern student success initiatives.

Barrier 2: Cumulative Legacy of Poor Data Governance

Years of inconsistent data governance have led to widespread and persistent issues with data quality and assurance. Inconsistent definitions, duplicate records, and manual entry errors are common. Each new system added to the campus ecosystem increases complexity, making it not uncommon for reports to produce conflicting results depending on the data source and reporting parameters. This inconsistency erodes trust in institutional data and breeds strife between campus entities. Most concerning, the longer these governance issues persist, the more intractable they become. Every day spent collecting new data under poor governance deepens the challenge and increases the eventual cost of remediation.

Barrier 3: Lack of Leadership Commitment

Perhaps the most significant obstacle is the absence of sustained leadership commitment. While awareness of the importance of data management is growing, few institutional leaders have made it a strategic priority backed by ongoing investment. Data governance is too often treated as a onetime project to address a specific issue, rather than as a continuous institutional commitment. IT staffing shortages and competing priorities further impede progress. Without a clear vision, robust governance structures, adequate resources, and efforts to unify student data are likely to stall—leaving institutions unable to fully support students or capitalize on the promise of automation and AI.

Overcoming these barriers requires a coordinated, institution-wide approach anchored in shared leadership. CIOs cannot solve these challenges alone; progress depends on active engagement from student success leaders, academic affairs, and other campus stakeholders. By prioritizing purpose-built data infrastructure, committing to rigorous data governance, and fostering a culture of shared responsibility, institutions can create the conditions necessary for effective data integration.

What Data Sources Need to Be Integrated for Student Success?

Core Student Systems

Approximately 80%–90% of student success processes rely on data housed in four core systems. These are the essential building blocks for any integrated data environment:

- ▶ **Student Success CRM:** Tracks student interactions, advising notes, alerts, and survey responses—providing a record of engagement and support.
- ▶ **SIS/ERP:** Maintains basic demographics, academic records, financial information, on-campus employment data, and official student transactions.
- ▶ **Learning Management System (LMS):** Captures gradebook data, course participation, and engagement metrics, offering insight into academic progress and risk.
- ▶ **Enrollment CRM:** Documents admissions activity, communications history, and prospective student data, supporting recruitment and yield efforts.

Common Point Solutions

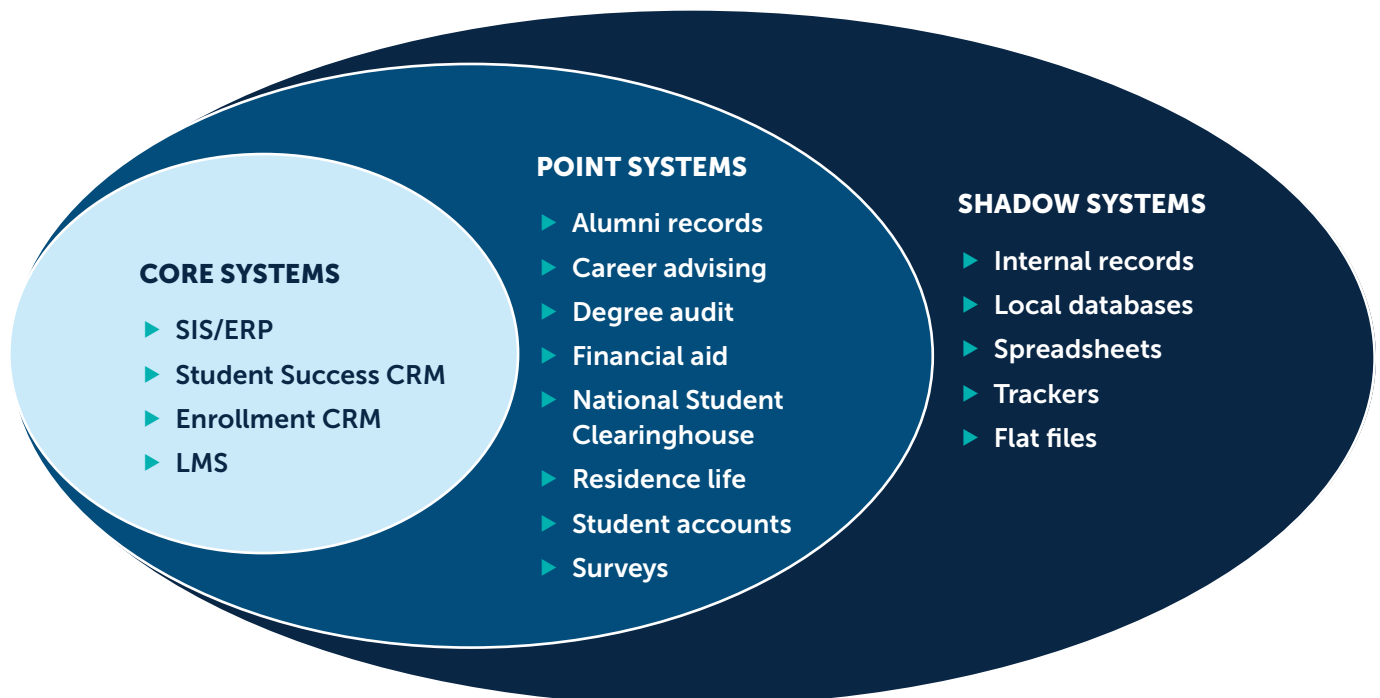
Beyond these core platforms, valuable student data resides in an array of specialized systems. Consider integrating data from any of these possible sources your institution might use:

- ▶ National Student Clearinghouse reports
- ▶ Degree audit and academic planning systems
- ▶ Career services platforms
- ▶ Residence life management systems
- ▶ Student accounts and billing systems
- ▶ Financial aid records
- ▶ Survey platforms

Shadow Systems and Flat Files

A third, often overlooked, category consists of shadow systems—spreadsheets, local databases, and other informal records maintained by staff across campus. These files can contain hidden insights about student needs and experiences. Integrating these files can add valuable data elements for targeted projects.

Visualizing the Student Success Data Landscape



Case Study: Integrating Data to Reenroll Stop-Outs at the University of Montana



The University of Montana is showing how integrating disparate student data can address an urgent educational and workforce need. Many UM students have accumulated enough credits for an Associate of Arts (AA) degree but have stopped out before earning a credential. This issue is particularly acute given the anticipated future demand in Montana's workforce for employees with at least an associate's degree. In response, the university launched a targeted strategy to identify, reengage, and support "some college, no credential" students who have left UM, aiming to guide them toward degree completion and workforce participation.

At the heart of this initiative is Edify, a data integration and analytics platform. Montana needed a reliable, scalable way to identify eligible students, which required cross-referencing multiple data sources. The university partnered with EAB to develop a custom

workspace within Edify to bring together and analyze four relevant data sources: transcripts and the degree audit to find students with sufficient credits, alumni records for up-to-date contact information, and the National Student Clearinghouse to ensure that students who left had not earned degrees elsewhere.

Once eligible students are identified, the university deploys a multifaceted outreach campaign using CRM tools in Navigate360, phone calls, and email. The outreach is personalized and coordinated by dedicated advising and career coaching teams, who guide students through the degree-awarding process and connect them to career resources. To further reduce barriers, the university waives fees associated with degree conferral and transcript evaluation and is exploring additional scholarships for students who wish to continue to a bachelor's degree.

The university will measure the initiative's impact by tracking AA degrees awarded, reenrollment rates, and employment outcomes for recipients. This data-driven approach ensures continuous improvement and sustainability. By aligning institutional strengths with state workforce needs and leveraging Edify for ongoing data analysis, the University of Montana is positioned as a leader in student success and workforce development.

Edify Is Your Path to a Data-Informed Campus

Make Better Decisions with Data Management Designed for Higher Ed



Access, Warehousing, and Integration

Cloud-native, secure, infinitely scalable data lake and warehouse to support critical initiatives

Data Governance

Higher ed best-practice rules and validations to ensure a single source of truth

Reporting and Analytics

Self-service, custom, and pre-built analytics to drive efficiency and support decision-making

Extend Your Team's Capacity

NEW: AI

Interact with Edify in plain language to find, access, and report on trusted data in minutes

Professional Services

Work with experienced higher education data experts who understand your environment and goals

OUR IMPACT

\$115K

Year-one savings reallocated to student-centric initiatives

Oregon Institute of Technology

75%

Reduction in time required to make a data change across all systems

John Carroll University

3%

Increase in admit-to-enrollee conversion rate after identifying and addressing financial barriers

University of Montana

“The ability to extend the value of my team is priceless.”

Jim Burke, Chief Information Officer
John Carroll University

“Without the infrastructure of Edify, strategic analyses are too labor-intensive. You're saving us having to hire a lot more staff.”

Associate Vice President of Strategic Planning
University of Montana

Learn more and request a demo at eab.com/edify.

Conclusion



The technological transformation in student success strategy is underway. Embracing automation and robust data management will be foundational for sustaining effective, high-touch student support despite constrained resources. The early stages of the AI revolution have already demonstrated the value of aggregating large data sets to power AI-driven tools. Even with basic capabilities, progressive student success teams are using AI to transform their daily work, designing automations to streamline tasks and improve connections with students.

It is urgent that student success leaders and teams adapt to this new reality. Artificial intelligence tools are becoming more sophisticated at an astonishing rate, and the volume of student data that feeds them will only continue to grow. Existing data sources will soon be joined by huge amounts of new information from social media, virtual classrooms, and emerging digital learning platforms. Higher education's ability to keep pace in this environment will hinge on enabling staff make the most of their "humanity" just as much as it will on adopting new technology and data management practices.

Three Takeaways for Student Success Leaders

1 Confront the reality of staff capacity and morale. Your teams are likely overburdened with repetitive, low-value tasks that sap morale and limit their ability to engage meaningfully with students. Begin by auditing daily workflows. Identify the nonhuman tasks—scheduling, reporting, logging—that can be automated using your student success CRM. Treat these tools as virtual assistants, not just databases. Even modest automation can yield dramatic time savings. This is time your team can reinvest in coaching, mentoring, and problem-solving that only humans can provide.

2 Prepare your people for the future. Technology will not replace the human dimension of student success, but it will redefine roles and expectations. Help your staff recognize and develop the uniquely human skills—empathy, judgment, adaptability—that cannot be automated. Communicate a clear vision of how automation and AI will elevate, not erode, the purpose of their work. Help staff see technology as an ally, not a threat.

3 Recognize that automation's value is only as strong as your data foundation. Fragmented, unreliable data will undermine even the most sophisticated technological solutions. Prioritize the integration of your core student systems into a unified data environment. Invest in data infrastructure purpose-built for higher education and commit to continuous, institution-wide data governance. Make it a strategic priority, championed by senior leadership and reinforced by cross-campus collaboration.

These changes aren't easy or quick. Institutions that thrive in the coming decade will be those that act now. By adopting automation and AI, integrating your data, and investing in your people, you will position your institution to deliver student support that meets the demands of tomorrow.

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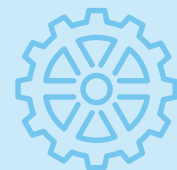
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