



# Implementing a Human Centered AI-Powered Student Communications Strategy



## IMPACT SNAPSHOT

- **90%** of student inquiries resolved using chatbot alone
- **230+ hours** of staff time saved
- Call volume **reduced by 1/3**
- Average call hold time **reduced by 2 minutes**
- Students **2x more likely to register** for classes with personalized text message reminders

## About FSW

Florida Southwestern State College (FSW) in Fort Myers is a Florida public college, offering two- and four-year undergraduate degree programs. At FSW, AI is not only a topic studied but an innovative strategy implemented. As a visionary in blending AI innovation and education, FSW is actively integrating some of the latest technology into their curriculum and systems.



## The Challenge

Like many institutions across the country, the pandemic shifted FSW's student communications strategy. The need for on-demand support increased with the growth of virtual learning. Students were looking for personalized answers to their questions and phone lines were not able to keep pace with the need. Staff was stretched thin and hold times were increasing. On top of that, individuals were spending less time on campus and needed to be reminded to attend advisor meetings and meet enrollment deadlines.

Reactive support was not enough. FSW knew it had to implement a more proactive approach to communications that would move students away from the overburdened phone channel and toward SMS texting and live chat for support – and AI was going to be key to achieving that goal. The AI strategy though, had to be integrated and controlled. The right tool had to leverage AI innovation but in a way that made certain answers to students' questions were accurate, compliant, and personalized.

## The Solution

FSW looked to Ocelot's AI-powered Communication Platform for its multi-channel communications strategy with the goal of moving students from the phone channel to SMS texting and then to chatbot and live chat. Ocelot gave FSW a way to automate answering student inquiries in a controlled way while maximizing existing technology investments to create a single source of truth across student communication – providing accurate, compliant answers to student inquiries no matter the channel or department they engaged. Chatbots were trained on a knowledgebase built with human oversight and that same knowledge base was made available to live agents to get real-time recommendations based on what students were asking.

It was important to FSW that the student experience was the center of its Ocelot implementation. As such, a critical part of the roll out was activating a robust marketing campaign to increase awareness of the new support options. Also fundamental was the platform's ability to integrate with on-campus systems. By integrating with Banner, FSW's student information system, Ocelot's Communication Platform could more effectively personalize interactions with students and prospects in every channel – providing individualized guidance across engagements and instantly accessing key insights to guide conversations.

## The Impact

By rolling out a human-centered AI communication strategy, FSW was able to better support students and help them over the hurdles that often cause challenges throughout the application, enrollment, and advising process. The proactive, multi-channel approach gave students options, helped train agents faster and enabled staff to spend more time on complex phone inquiries. With one unified AI brain, it also simplified IT and security management while streamlining cost structure and compliance processes.

FSW found that students who were proactively engaged through the system were more likely to attend advisory meetings and meet important deadlines. Students who had completed all enrollment steps but were not yet registered were 2X more likely to register when receiving a text compared to those who did not receive a proactive text. 90% of FSW's student inquiries were resolved using the chatbot alone, saving staff hundreds of hours and reducing call volume by a third. With a unified communication system powered by Ocelot, FSW is actively realizing their goals of more engaged students and more students at graduation!

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**Our campuses were devastated in 2022 by Hurricane Ian, the Ocelot solutions were critical to connecting with students. We saw a huge uptick in the chatbot use and a direct decrease in Zoom calls coming in. Integration with Banner is key as we really see the ability to offer personalized, integrated support helps not only to make the student experience better but also lets our staff focus on dealing with more complex phone inquiries.**

**Jason Dudley**

CIO  
FLORIDA SOUTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE

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# The #1 AI-Powered Communication Platform

Chatbot | Two-Way Texting | Live Chat

500+

Colleges &  
Universities  
Trust Ocelot

15.6M

Questions  
Answered

864.5k

Staff Hours  
Saved