Colorado State University (CSU) Global

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

- **45,000 questions answered** in one year

- **2,200+ staff hours saved**

- **50% engagement rate**

- **Increased staff efficiencies** and quantitative projections

- Helped understand why students were disappearing after enrollment

About CSU Global

Colorado State University Global (CSU Global) is a public, not-for-profit state institution that offers online undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs. It was founded in 2007 and is part of the Colorado State University System. CSU Global is the first independent, fully accredited, 100% online state university to be established in the United States. Its student body is representative of all fifty states and more than 50 countries.

The Challenge

As a fully online institution without a physical campus, building connections with students at CSU Global is uniquely challenging. The school's Director of Student Experience, Jerid Counterman, was finding it was especially difficult to re-engage those students who enrolled at CSU Global but then vanished after a semester or two without a trace.

Looking to keep existing students on track and get those "disappearing students" back to class, the university wanted to find a better way to reach out and provide accessible answers to questions when students had them.

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> **The footprint makes it really easy for students to fall off** and just quietly disappear. We didn't have any actual data about what students' intentions were as far as returning within the near future, distant future, whether students were unable to return and why or whether students hated us and were done,"
>
> **Jerid Counterman**
> Director of Student Experience
> CSU GLOBAL

Effectively reaching students across a disperse geography, however, can be resource intensive. Proactive efforts via email often went unnoticed by students and phone channels were becoming increasingly costly to staff to maintain adequately.

While CSU Global had looked to chatbot solutions in the past, the team found it challenging to manage consistency and integrate in-portal systems with those assisting prospects on public-facing channels. Counterman found that managing disparate chatbots that were not integrated required staff hours that CSU Global simply didn't have.

It was imperative CSU Global found a way to proactively connect with students and prospects in a personalized, efficient, and integrated way using channels they paid attention to, utilizing data the university already had.

The Solution

It was clear increasing engagement via texting would be key in ensuring CSU Global was connecting with students and bringing a more personal touch to communications.

Counterman and his team looked to Ocelot's AI-powered Communication Platform (specifically its Two-Way Texting and Chatbot solutions) to automate CSU Global's student engagement strategy — reducing the amount of low-level, repetitive questions staff received and communicating with students through targeted text messages, a method much more likely to garner their attention and response.

But for a multi-channel communications strategy to be effective, it had to be integrated. Ocelot's unique multi-tenant architecture provided one universal AI knowledge base for external and in-portal chat experiences. This ensured all answers were consistent across the board. And by seamlessly integrating with other campus systems including Salesforce and Zoom, Ocelot helped streamline and personalize the student experience. Text message campaigns and student interactions could be fueled by the

SIS data sitting in Salesforce, ensuring answers were tailored to the specific students engaging. Prospective student lead data generated from chat and text interactions could be piped straight into Salesforce for the admissions office. And when the system was not able to answer a question, a live chat agent could be pulled in to engage students via Zoom.

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> **Ocelot's integration with Salesforce delivers a tailored student experience that supports both enrollment and retention goals.** Prospective student leads are piped straight into Salesforce for the admissions office, while current students get personalized answers to their questions from SIS data wherever they happen to be interacting with us."

The Impact

The results are palpable. In less than a year, Ocelot has helped CSU Global answer 45,000 questions for students via the chat and texting solutions in the AI-Powered Communication Platform. That's more than double what CSU Global's previous chatbot was answering. This equates to thousands of hours of staff time which can now be spent focusing on more complex engagements, leading to more successful student experiences which drive retention and enrollment.

With Ocelot's Two-Way Texting, CSU Global could not only personally engage the "disappearing students" but also find out why they left in the first place — critical insight to inform how the institution could improve the student experience in the future. In one text campaign, CSU Global sent out a one-question survey over text with seven possible reasons a student could choose for why they hadn't returned. 50% of the 1,700 students who were messaged responded, returning a wealth of meaningful data.

"[The survey] gave us the ability to go into that student's record ... and start to dig a little bit more about the experience we were providing to our students — possibly why they were moving on from us and what we could be doing differently as well."
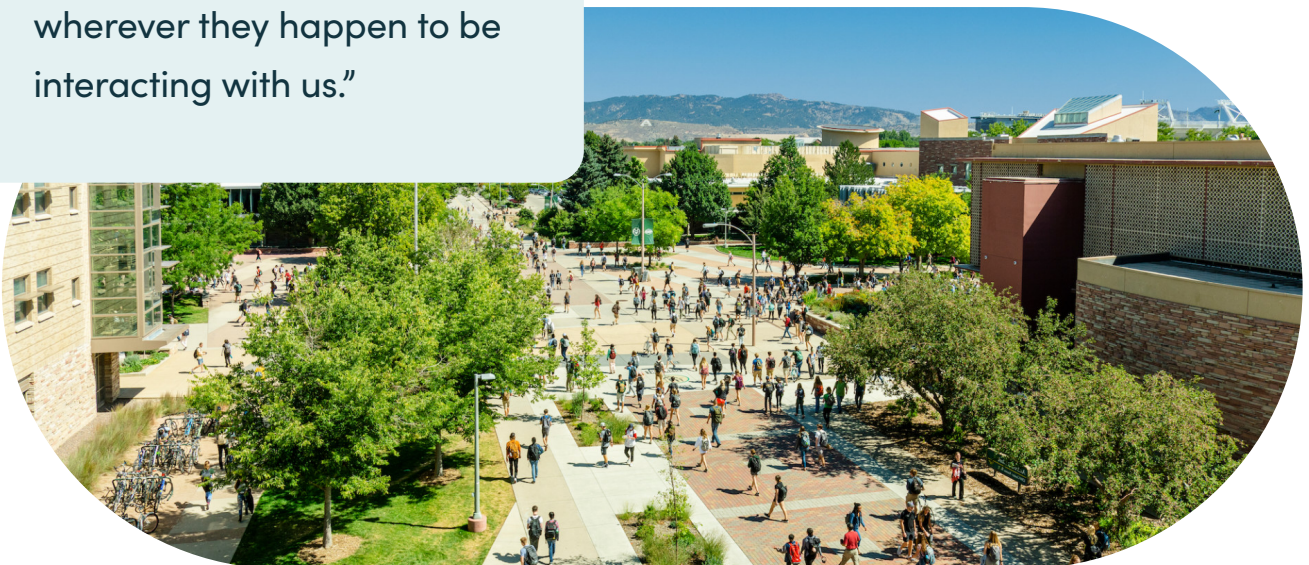
The #1 AI-Powered Communication Platform

Chatbot | Two-Way Texting | Live Chat

500+

Colleges &
Universities
Trust Ocelot

15.6M

Questions
Answered

864.5k

Staff Hours
Saved