Connected Campus &
School Experiences

Teaching &
Learning

Academic
Research

Student Lifecycle & Success Management

Microsoft

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It starts with the very first contact your institution makes with a prospective student.

It may be an online presence, an event, a marketing campaign – whatever that first "touch" is that leads them to take further action and eventually enroll.
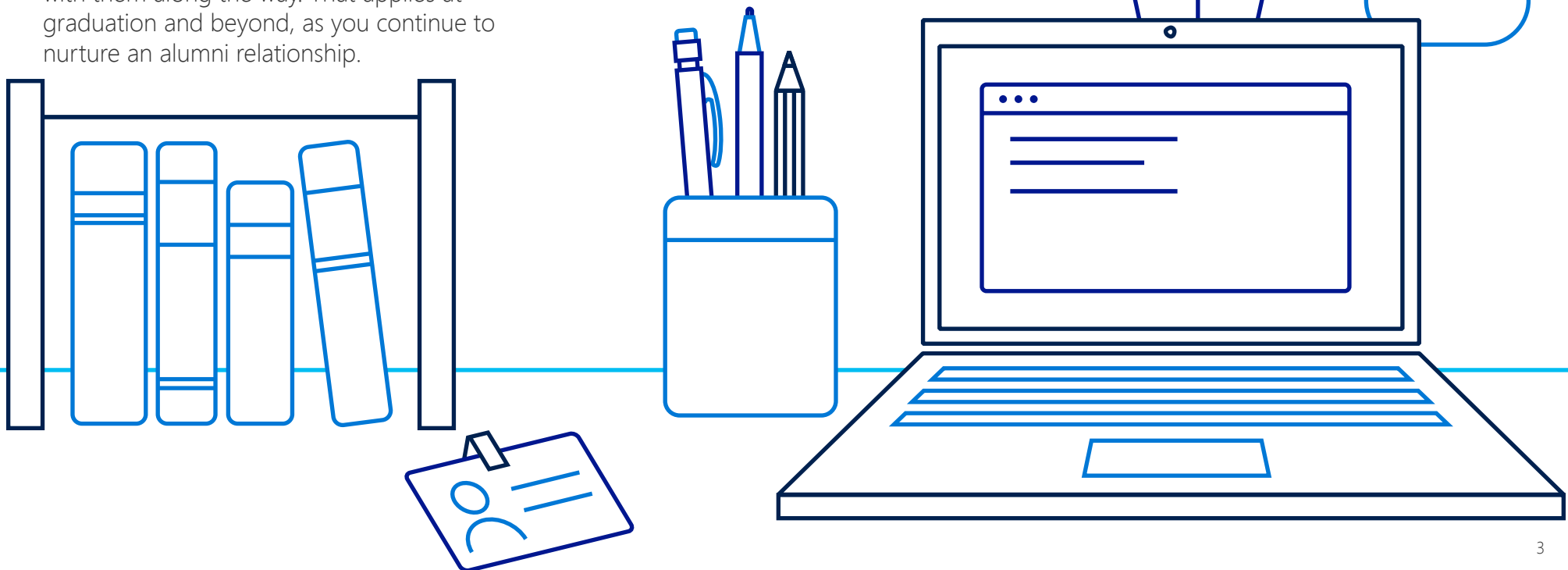
Once a student becomes part of your community, your college or university has the awesome responsibility to help these individuals reach their education goals, nurturing and growing your relationship with them along the way. That applies at graduation and beyond, as you continue to nurture an alumni relationship.

But this track doesn't end with the student. Because every college or university must be looking forward and growing to meet the needs of future students, there must be a process to assess institutional performance. Doing so provides actionable data so that your learning institution can attract the next generation of students, and evolve to meet changing education needs.

At Microsoft, we call this path described above Student Lifecycle & Success Management. In this e-book, we'll explore the challenges higher learning institutions have in executing on this journey. Then we'll look at three keys that can help you successfully manage the entire student lifecycle, taking a peek at a few colleges and universities that have figured out the best way forward for them.

Finally, we'll end with today's best solutions for executing on this lifecycle journey for your higher learning institution.

Challenges colleges and universities face today

The student lifecycle goes from student enrollment through creating the optimum learning environment in their academic years, and seeing them through as alumnus, ultimately landing on institutional performance. Effectively managing that lifecycle is the key to great learning outcomes.

Yet, higher education leaders are forced to deal with a number of larger issues that sometimes can take the focus away from the student lifecycle. Realities such as rising costs, greater competition, regulatory compliance, new technologies, and more can shift attention away from students.

But, despite the challenges, the fact remains that students are the core of every learning institution.

Leaders and administrators that make managing the student lifecycle the highest priority must ask themselves several key questions…

Do we have the meaningful and actionable data to make smart decisions that can elevate our institution's performance?

Are our enrollment efforts identifying the best students for our institution?

Do our staff, teachers, and other educational influencers have all the analytical tools they need to get the best results?

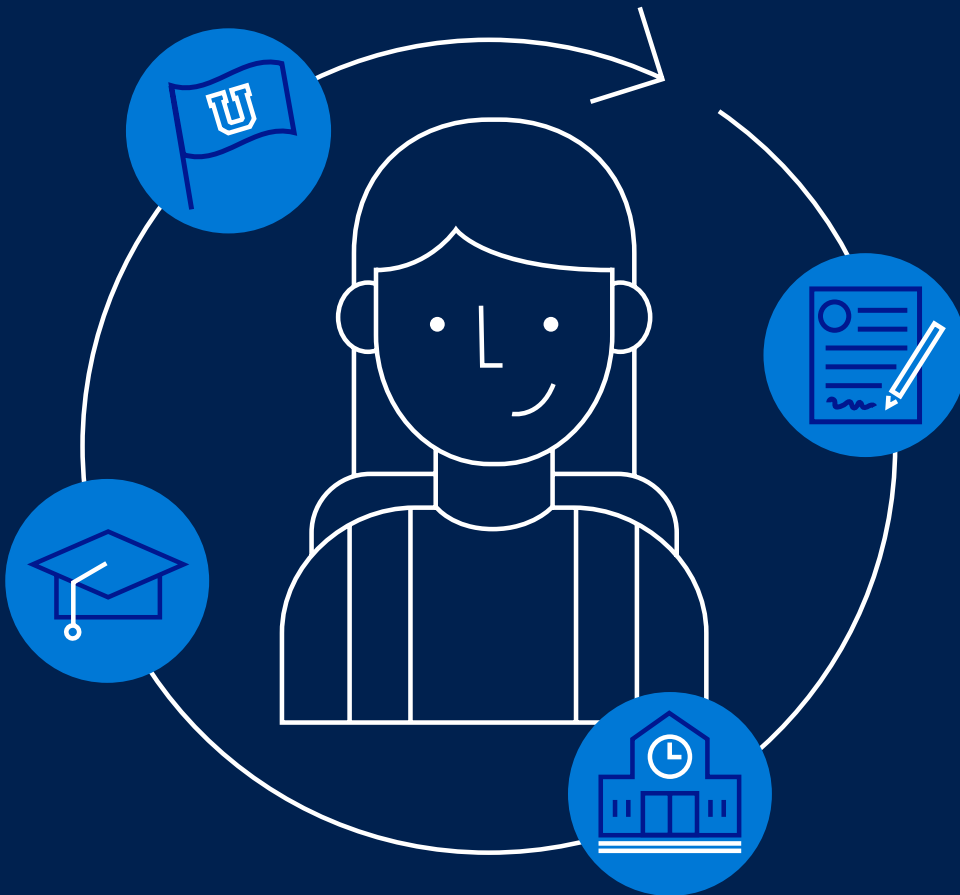Are we taking advantage of the latest technology?

Are we seizing on all the opportunities to help create the best results for current students and alumni success?

The reality today is that the technology environment of many higher learning institutions is ill-equipped to successfully manage the student lifecycle.

That's commonly due to a piecemeal approach that hasn't been able to keep up with advancements, new needs, seasonal demands, or shifting priorities. Typically, many colleges and universities are facing obstacles such as:

- An infrastructure sporadically pieced together as technology has advanced
- Siloed assets and applications that don't necessarily work well together, if at all
- Power-hungry and costly network assets based only on peak demand, instead of seasonal usage
- Inability to accommodate the myriad of devices – smartphones, tablets, laptops
- Lack of adequate protection from data loss
- Weak security in avoiding viruses, malware and other malicious attacks

For higher learning institutions, overcoming these and other challenges isn't just about keeping pace with the speed of technology. It's much more about keeping up with the evolving and growing needs of the student lifecycle.
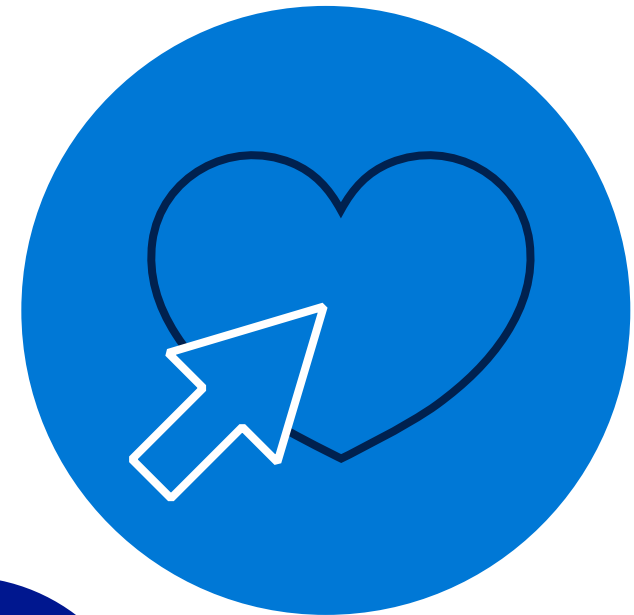
Student Relationship Management

During student recruitment and enrollment efforts, the goal is to attract the right students and effectively manage everything.

From initial touch points, to admissions and approval, and everything in between, the ultimate goal is to do everything right so that you don't miss a prospective student. In this age of globalization and fierce competition, it's vital that learning institutions put in the appropriate resources that will draw the finest students and help you remain competitive.

Higher education institutions must adapt to the modern student journey.

This modern student journey is dominated by mobility and social media, and the onus is on institutions to attract these students during this new mobile age.

That means institutions must embrace social media and mobility to effectively attract and engage students. In addition, technology tools are needed to bring robust insight and intelligence to your recruitment campaigns and marketing efforts. The right solutions can help you achieve:
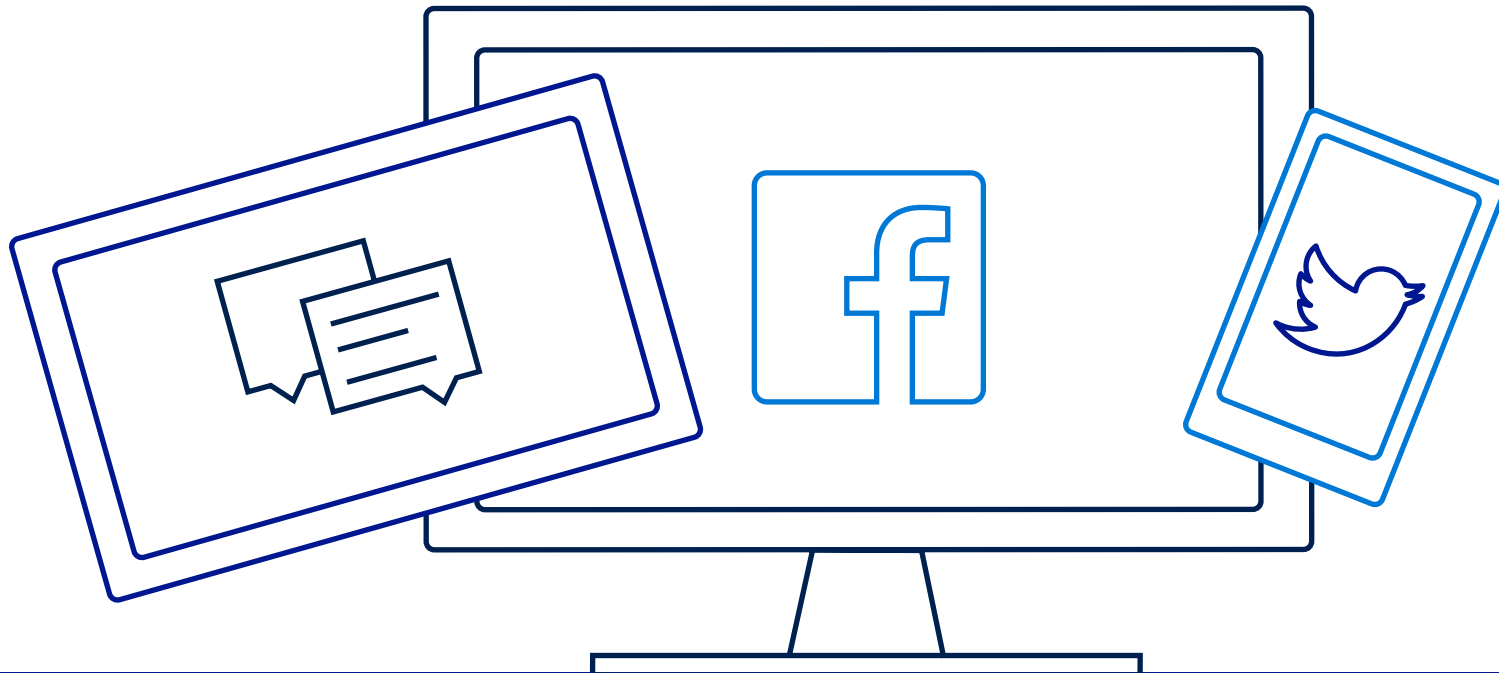
Campaign monitoring
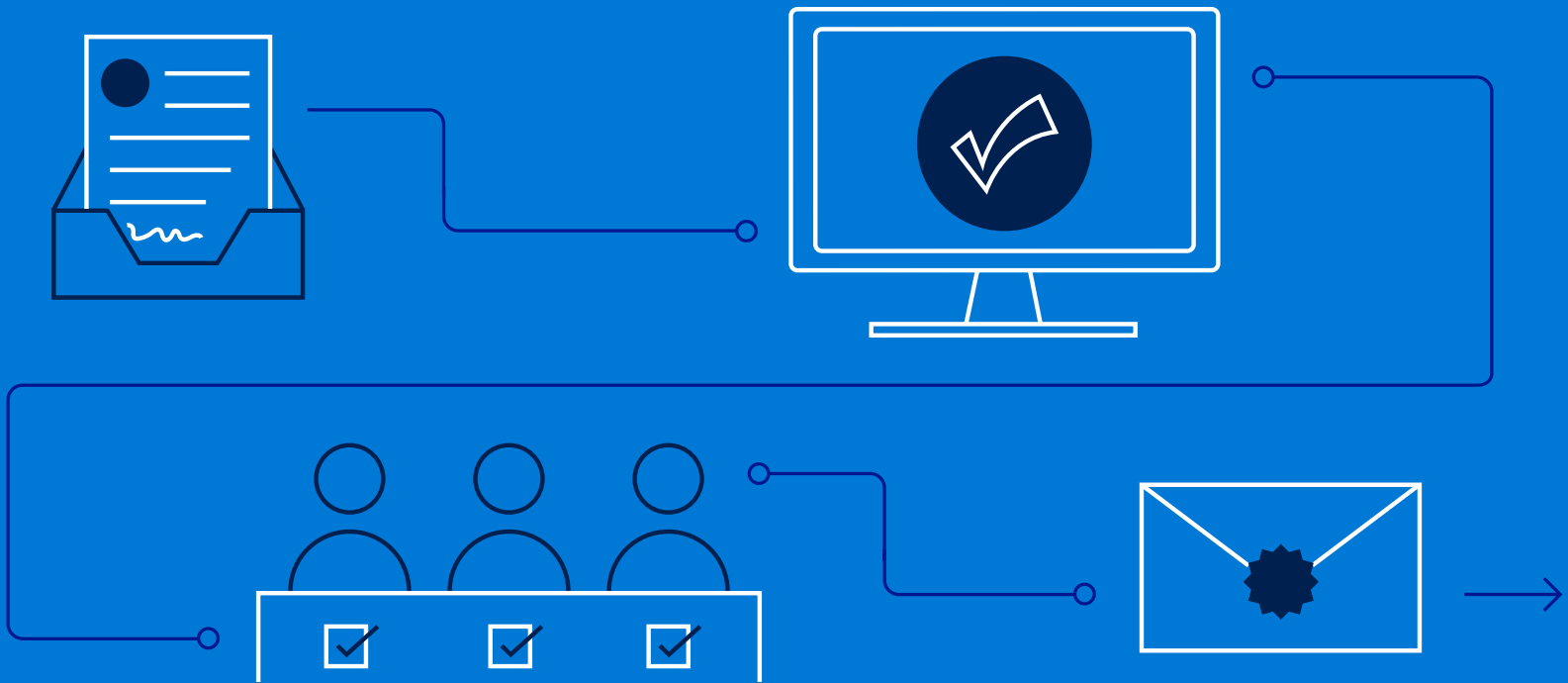Measure the effectiveness of the university's marketing campaigns in real time.

Brand sentiment analysis
Gain insight and learn what students, alums, and parents really think and feel about your university across the globe.

Competitive Intelligence
See how you measure up against other institutions. Identify differentiators, strengths, and weaknesses.

When a new student interacts with your institution, there are certain common touch points that are critical to whether your prospective applicant takes the next step and, ultimately, becomes a member of your community.

These interactions include:
- Visiting the school website
- Requesting school information
- Requesting a campus visit
- Submitting an application for enrollment

Your institution's technology infrastructure will play a significant part in every one of these crucial initial touch points, so the quality of your communication, content, and execution will have a direct impact on enrollment.

In addition, once a prospect has submitted an application, that process is just as critical and can be greatly enhanced with the right technology solution.

For example, MS offers a CRM solution that tracks, monitors, and manages the applications process in your system through each phase:
- Application receipt and confirmation
- Review of requirements met or unmet
- Routing to board for approval
- Final approval or rejection

CRM for higher learning: lessons from the corporate world

CRM software is certainly nothing new in the business world – corporate executives know full well the value of managing and nurturing relationships with customers effectively through the long term, and understand how beneficial the right solution can be to executing on that. In the universe of higher learning, your "customer" is the student travelling the student lifecycle journey.

Colleges and universities can leverage the significant lessons from the corporate world by using a CRM solution to:
- Create compelling and timely initial interactions with prospective students
- Make their first day on campus go smoothly and enjoyably
- Ensure students are consistently engaged throughout their academic years
- Continue to communicate with graduates and nurture alumni relationships

Learn more
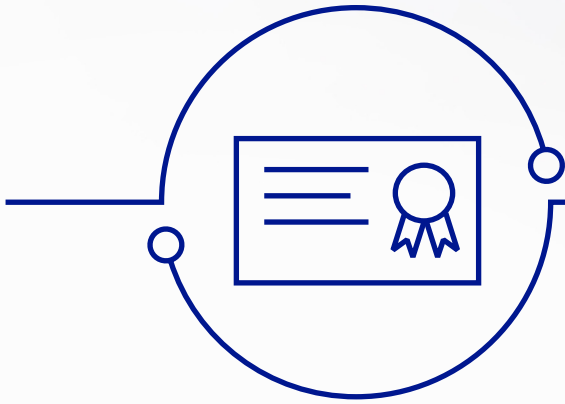

Grand Canyon University

Situation
- Based in Phoenix, the university has experienced dramatic growth in the last few years
- Within the next five years, the student population is projected to reach 25,000
- Growth and complex education formats require a better way to manage student needs and expectations

Solution
- University proactively uses Dynamics CRM to anticipate and fulfill student needs
- Solution allows for managing the entire student experience – recruitment through graduation
- System is also used to track alumni and faculty, allowing comprehensive lifecycle management
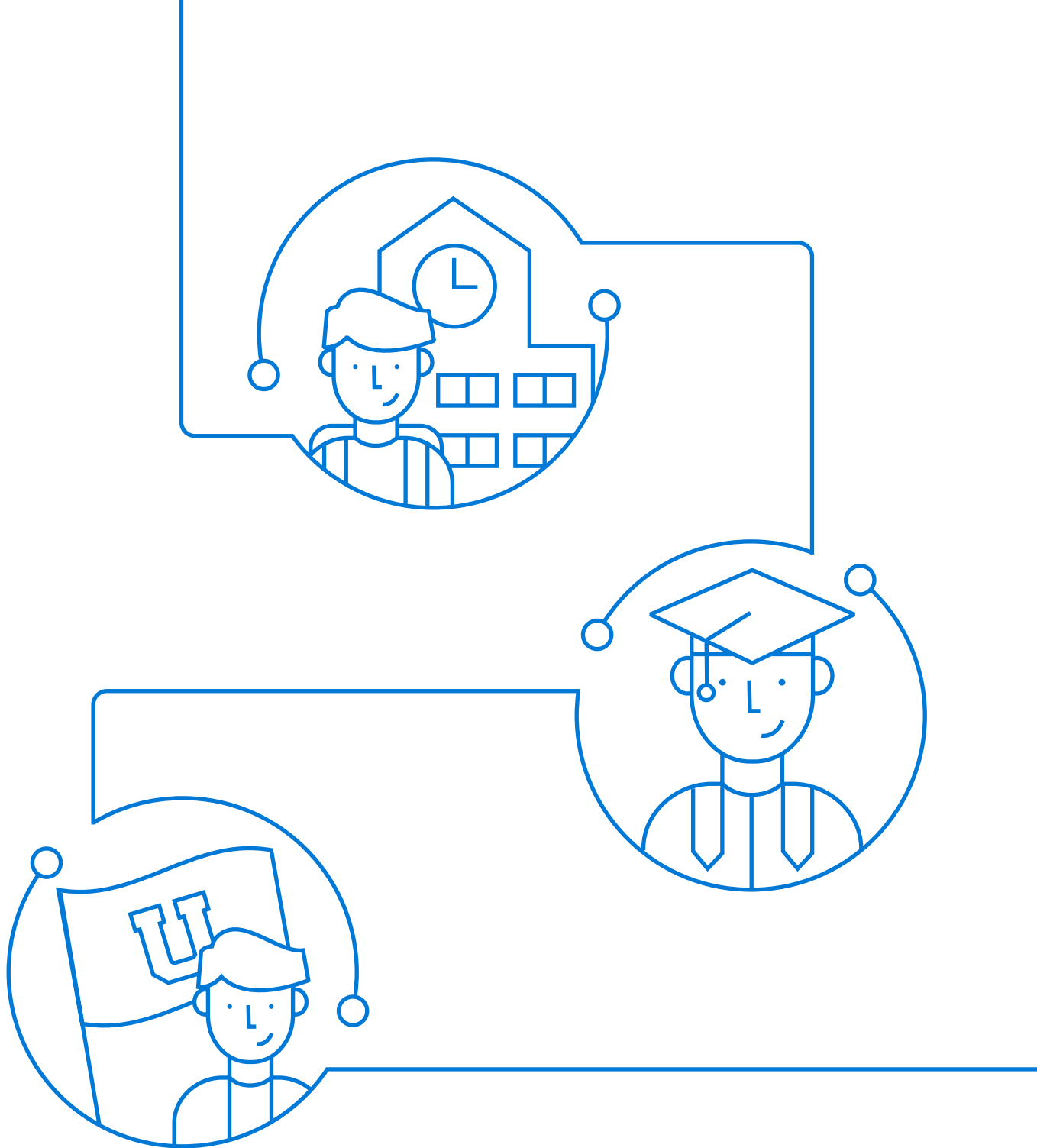
Learn more

Predictive
Analytics

So, once you have the best students, how do you help them succeed?

Imagine if you could:
- Proactively identify students needing additional support
- Provide students the means to effectively plan, connect, collaborate, research, and gain insight from others
- Resolve critical education challenges faced in your schools using data

Leveraging the power of analytics can help you make what you imagine for your higher learning institution into a reality. Ultimately, the goal should be to use the analytics to empower student success throughout these critical years and beyond.

Using analytics doesn't just have implications for the student.

There are many potential benefits to different roles throughout your institution, all which ultimately impact the quality of the student lifecycle experience.

Students
Get feedback on their pattern of performance in learning systems

Instructors
Get detailed reports on all students, as well as relative effectiveness of lessons and content, freeing them from low-order assessments to focus on more complex feedback

Content designers & curriculum managers
Get data on content usage and relationships between content and learning
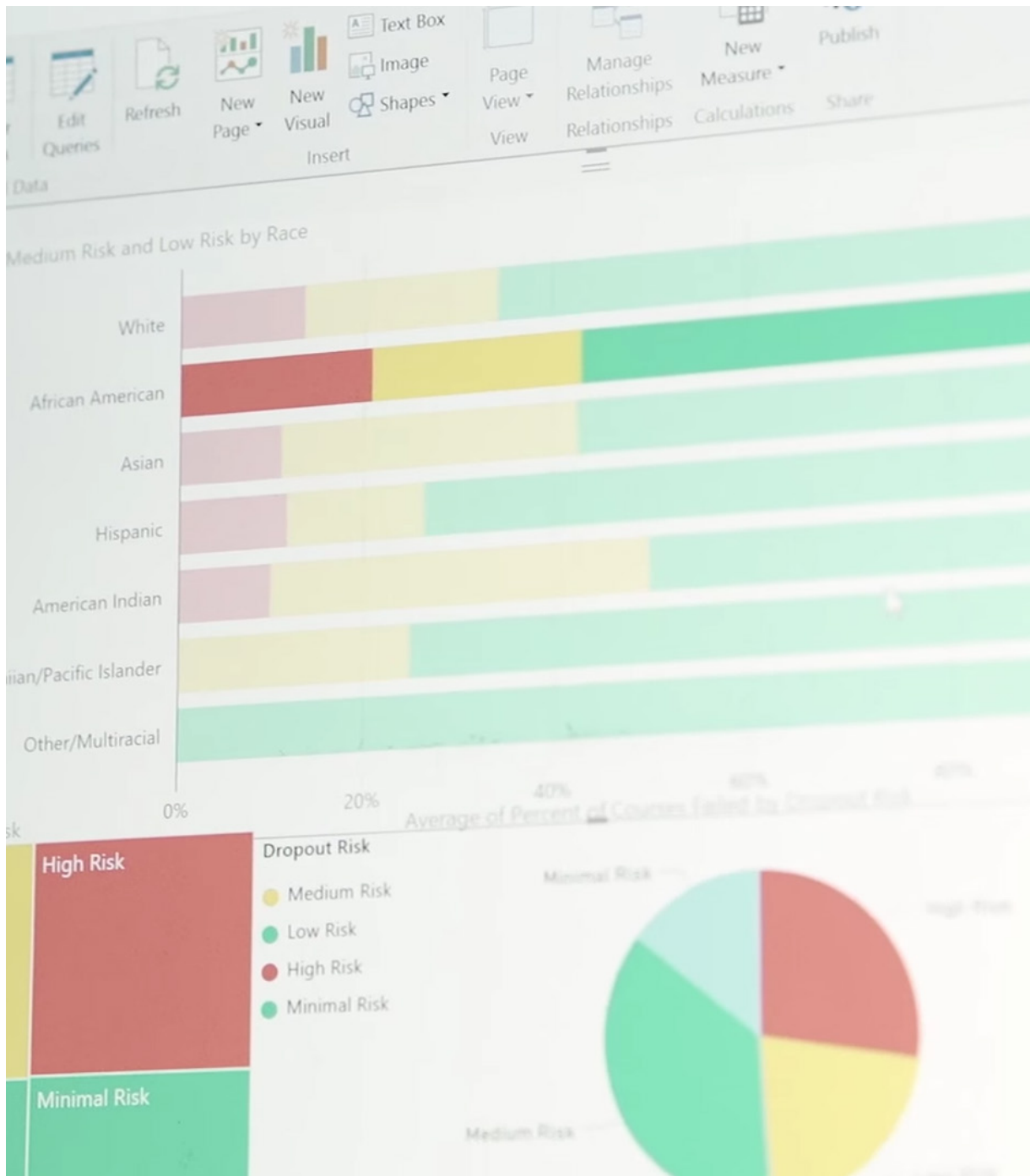
School system leaders
Get data across campuses year to year School leaders – get student progress data, teacher effectiveness data, and school level outcomes

Solution Spotlight: MS Analytics Architecture

Our solutions architecture specifically designed for higher learning institutions focuses on three aspects: data, intelligence and action. Using a set of Azure products and tools designed to provide information management, big data stories and machine learning and analytics, the solution features:
- Dashboard and visualizations with Power BI
- Cortana, a personal digital assistant
- Perceptual intelligence, in the form of face, vision, speech and text
- Business scenarios with recommendations, forecasting, and more

Tacoma Public Schools

Situation
- District with 30,000 students experienced very high drop rates across five high schools
- A graduation rate of only 55 percent in 2010 was well below the 81 percent national average
- Hoping to turn things around, administrators sought to identify at-risk students proactively

Solution
- Administrators turned to data analytics, partnering with Microsoft Consulting Services (MCS)
- A data warehouse solutions was developed, allowing for 72 different ways to view student data
- MS-driven data analytics helps district achieve a dramatic 82.6 percent graduation rate in 2016.

Learn more

Institution Performance

It takes greater systemic information to help improve institutions today and tomorrow, plus help with accreditation and **analytics is the right tool for the job.**

Leaders in higher education institutions are under pressure to achieve strategic goals in several key areas, from government compliance to funding to return on their investment.

For example, specific performance requirements may be needed to ensure funding. Of course, institutional performance is also being assessed by students and parents – they consistently need to know and feel that they are getting the most value from their tuition dollars.

In this highly pressurized environment, leaders need to gain actionable insights and visibility into all major areas of data that reflect the programs, activities, and metrics aligned with a higher learning institution's strategy in each of these areas.

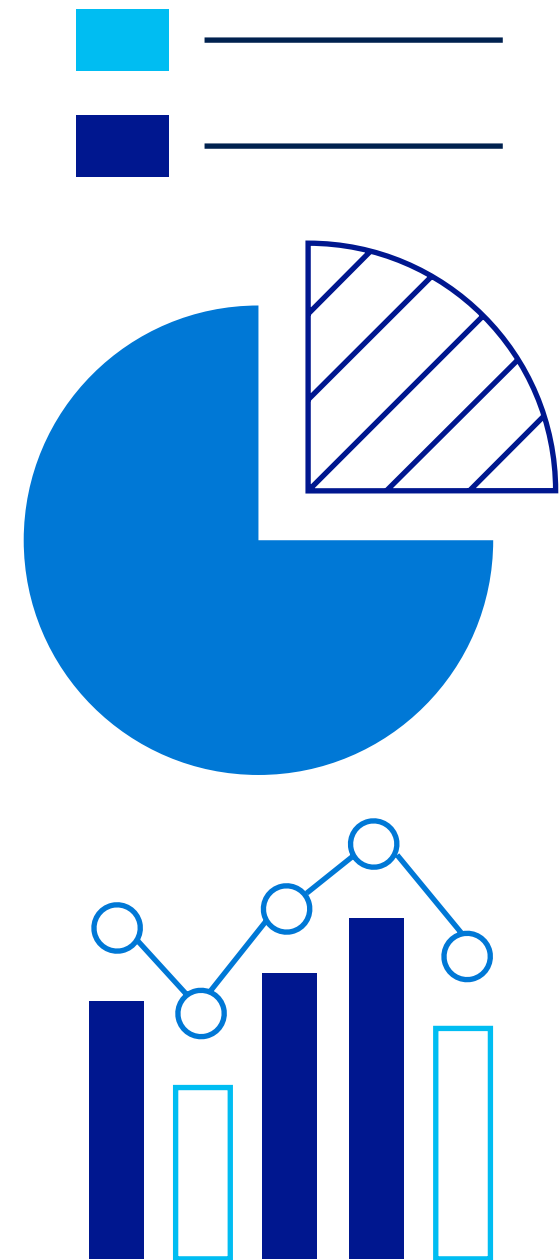Bottom line, decision makers need a way to collect, report, and analyze data to foster a culture of performance, giving them the information they need to make the best choices and take decisive actions. There needs to be a way to use data systematically to get the outcomes they need in every major performance area, and that align with the objectives of the college or university. That way is education analytics.

Enhancing your performance capabilities through analytics

Leaders can build on education analytics to also enhance institutional performance going forward.

The right institutional performance analytics solution consolidates multiple streams of data, and ties aggregated data to your strategic plan and designated metrics, ideally all in real time.

A solution such as this can result in five key capabilities...

Microsoft offers a solution that can help you consolidate data and align it with your organization's strategies and desired metrics, all in real time. Just some of the features of our Institutional Performance solution can help leaders.

You can ensure your data is real time and current.

- Continuous data flows
- Data origination from multiple sources
- Real-time views

You can match your institution's objectives to both individual and departmental performance.

- Tracking and measuring activities in real time
- Continually assessing progress
- Fostering a high-performance culture

You can make the best possible decisions.

- Understandable and actionable data
- An honest and complete view of institutional performance
- Data that helps determine if changes are needed to better align with programs and goals

You can get an integrated view that gives context to data.

- A simple dashboard tool
- Views of integrated data streams
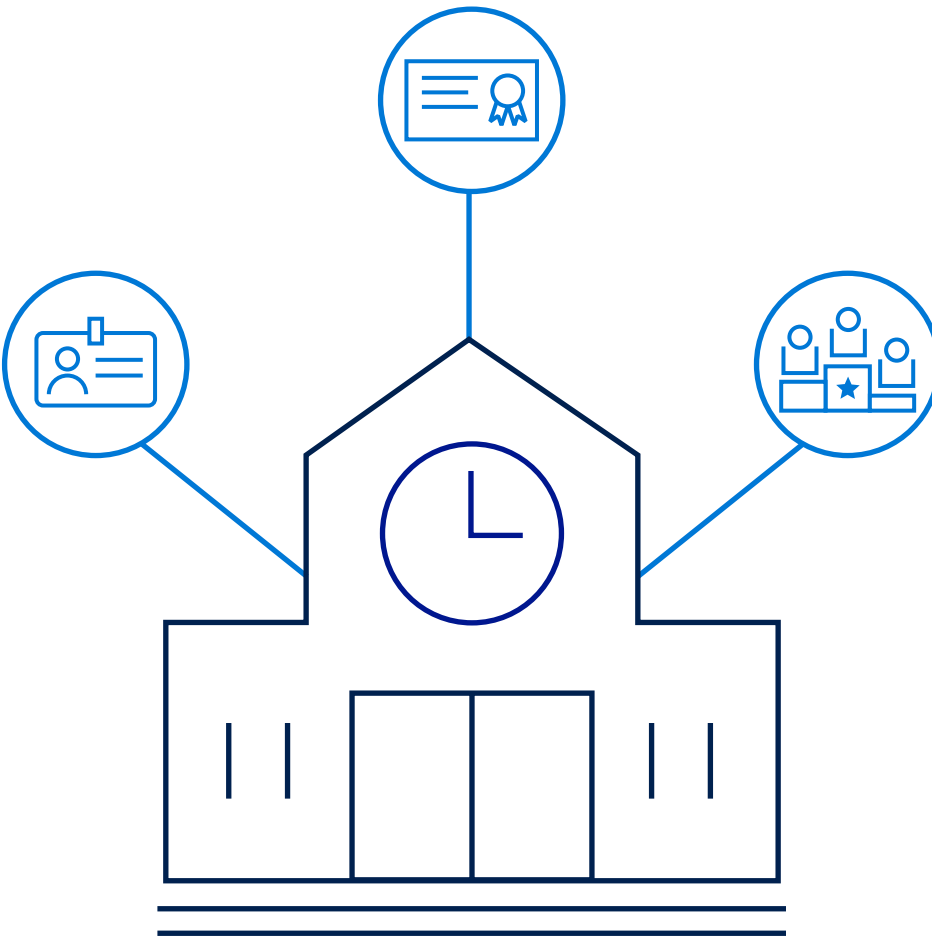
You can foster a high-performance culture.

- A result-oriented solution that's data-driven
- Matching data to strategic objectives on many levels
- Performance snapshots that your team can use to plan, measure, analyze and adjust programs

Why Microsoft?

At Microsoft, we provide the technology that can help you successfully manage the student lifecycle and institutional performance.

This can have a significant impact in all three vital areas for your institution: student recruitment and enrollment, education analytics, and institutional performance. Microsoft can help solve your critical education challenges with enterprise-level IT solutions that help school leaders meet evolving and growing needs during the student lifecycle journey and beyond.

We've explored the student lifecycle, and the challenges higher learning institutions must overcome in order to effectively manage all phases of it.

From recruitment through enrollment, on through the academic years and into alumni relationships, and capped off by an honest and thorough assessment of performance, what we call Student Lifecycle and Success Management goes to the heart of what it means to offer an optimum educational experience long term, and well into the future.

We've detailed three specific keys to success in managing the student lifecycle. Each one brings a unique focus and potential capabilities to your college or university, providing the right technology and infrastructure is in place.

Get Started

If you're a college or university administrator, and would like to have the tools to effectively and successfully manage the student lifecycle, all it takes is three steps...

1 Identify your priorities.

2 Choose solutions that best fit the needs on your campus.

3 Talk with your Microsoft rep who can connect you with the right partners.