

Customer Success Story

The University of Mary Increases Gross Tuition Revenue by \$268K With Jenzabar One

About the University of Mary

Founded in 1959, the University of Mary is a Christian, Catholic, and Benedictine school located in Bismarck, North Dakota with extension sites elsewhere in North Dakota as well as in Montana, Arizona, and Rome, Italy. The school enrolls 3,800 students and offers 57 undergraduate majors, 17 master's programs, and 5 doctoral degrees. www.umary.edu

Pre-Implementation Challenges:

- ▶ Finding time in advising sessions to set goals and build relationships.
- ▶ Creating an easily accessible, centralized resource for advising materials and tools.
- ▶ Managing the degree planning and tracking processes without using "homemade" advising tools.
- ▶ Communicating and collaborating with students on advising-related concerns.
- ▶ Resolving the high rate of unmet requirements when it came time for degree conferral.

Jenzabar Student's Advising Module Helped the University of Mary to:

- ▶ Increase expected gross tuition revenue by \$268K.
- ▶ Increase conferral processing efficiency by 2900%.
- ▶ Increase graduation rates by 5%.
- ▶ Increase freshman retention by 6%.



Though its student retention rates were already well above the national average, the University of Mary wanted to reexamine its retention strategies. Knowing that academic advising can play a pivotal role in promoting student success, decision-makers at the university turned their attention to increasing the quality of the institution's academic advising program.

The university already had a robust advising program in place. Advisors consisted of both professional advisors and faculty, and students were required to attend several academic advising sessions per year. These sessions were not only meant to help students develop and maintain a course of study, but also to help them build critical mentor/mentee relationships, practice information literacy skills, and develop academic self-efficacy.

Wondering if there was room for improvement, the university's Office of Academic Affairs created the Advising Quality Initiative, which aimed to identify, understand, and address the challenges advisors faced.

In speaking to faculty advisors, administrators found that students would often arrive without a plan, and meetings would be spent reviewing course curriculum, selecting and registering for classes, and the like—actions students should be taking on their own. As a result, little time was left in the sessions to set academic goals or build important relationships.

The Initiative also found that advisors had trouble locating advising materials and sharing important student information with other stakeholders who could help struggling students persist in their degrees.

The university developed a plan to improve the academic advising process across campus. As the institution already leveraged Jenzabar One, staff turned to the Advising module in Jenzabar Student to modernize their strategy.

Creating Opportunities for Advisor Development and Student Agency

Since the 2017-18 school year, the Office of Academic Affairs had focused on increasing the advisor onboarding and training process. With the Advising module, staff developed several new methods to support advisor onboarding.

Where faculty had previously used spreadsheets, the Advising module enabled them to leverage more advanced, automated online tools with which to help students work through degree plans. Students could access these documents too, making it far easier for them to realize their degree requirements and stay on track. Additionally, the Advising module's ability to integrate with Jenzabar Communications meant that advisors could now easily reach out to students and task them with completing drafts of their 4-year degree plan prior to their advising meetings.

Centralizing Resources and Sharing Information With Campus Stakeholders

When a student is struggling academically, that student often needs more help than an advisor alone can give. The Advising module allows advisors to work with staff across campus to help students persist. Advisors can document interactions and keep more detailed track of student progress. They can also set highly specific, FERPA-compliant permissions for key student success stakeholders. If permitted, a student's dean, major department chair, and other essential administrators can access critical advisor documentation and possess more information with which to help that student succeed.

"The ability of deans and chairs to access any of their students' advising records on demand, without having to wait or ask the Registrar's Office, has been widely celebrated and greatly increased the ability for faculty and administrators to work together when addressing student issues," said Dr. Melissa McDowall, Registrar and Retention Committee Co-Chair at the University of Mary.

Since the University of Mary implemented the Advising Quality Initiative using Jenzabar Student's Advising module, advisors have become more proactive in their prioritization of and approach to advising, building more rewarding and fulfilling student/faculty relationships. The institution also drastically increased the rate of conferral processing. Where the process once took 4 people 45 days, it now takes 3 people 2 days—improving efficiency by 2900%. Undergraduate graduation rates have increased by 5% and freshman retention rates have increased by nearly 6%. For the university, this means over \$268,000 in gained gross tuition revenue for Fall of 2022.



Only one of an advisor's objectives is to advise on course selection; advisors are also there to help guide students through college life and prepare them to become alumni. We want to assist students in gaining autonomy and gaining ownership over their academic journeys. Jenzabar Student's Advising module is helping us teach our students how to fish."

Melissa McDowall, PhD
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Find out more

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