

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

Sandhills Community College



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—Jonathan Garrison, Scholarship Coordinator

Sandhills Community College automates and simplifies its scholarship process, transforming the way the college manages its scholarships with Blackbaud Award Management.

Sandhills College selects a sophisticated online scholarship application system to automate processes.

Although Sandhills Community College knew that an online scholarship application was essential to making the process more efficient, the simple tool that their IT department built quickly proved that it was unable to cope with the idea's popularity. While the tool provided an online experience for students to apply for scholarships, it automated nothing for administrators.

“Our award committees met at least eight times a semester, and each meeting required an IT person to compile access databases just to find applicants,” said Jonathan Garrison, scholarship coordinator at Sandhills Community College. As more scholarships were made available to students and applications increased, it was apparent that a more sophisticated system was needed.

Sandhills Community College is powered by:

Blackbaud Award Management™

Sandhills Community College chose Blackbaud Award Management to help further automate its scholarship process because it offered the flexibility that administrators and reviewers wanted. “We loved the idea that Blackbaud Award Management would help us get rid of paper award letters and allow us to notify students directly via email,” says Garrison.

The Blackbaud Award Management automation brought immediate results for administrators. “We were thrilled when we entered all the scholarship qualifications in Blackbaud Award Management, and we knew we wouldn’t have to do it again in the future,” says Garrison. “It’s great to have one place to house every scholarship qualification.”



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Another improvement has been the flexibility and functionality that end users experience with Blackbaud Award Management. When an application, question, or scholarship requirement needs to be updated or changed, Garrison notes, “I can take care of it myself, instead of submitting a request through IT.”

Blackbaud Award Management functionality has increased awarding efficiency, too. Since implementing the solution, committee meetings have gone from nine each year to two. Now, Garrison looks at the applications and pulls together the top students for each award, which could be based on need, academic performance, or other criteria.

Garrison meets with each committee, and they review the applicants within Blackbaud Award Management. Smaller scholarship opportunities sometimes do not have a committee and are decided upon by staff from financial aid and the foundation.

The college tries to spread scholarship money among many different students, rather than giving all the awards to a select number of them. Blackbaud Award Management lets decision-makers see the current scholarship offers for each student, so over-awarding does not happen. The final decision-maker for each award is a joint effort between the financial aid office and the foundation.

Improving student access to awards

Students learn about available scholarships through the efforts of the marketing and communications team on campus. This past year, the team created a campaign around the “scholar pig” theme that showed up on campus posters and fliers promoting their Blackbaud Award Management scholarship website. The school website and emails banners are also used to encourage applications.

For students, the application process is easy because they have single sign-on with the student information system. The college also provides students with “how to” resources—such as “How to Write an Essay”—to help them submit the best applications they can. Higher quality applications help donors feel good about awarding scholarships to deserving students and allow them to create a personal connection to award recipients. Their efforts have paid off. As Garrison notes, “Not only have applications increased, but their quality has also increased.”

Planning ahead

Sandhills Community College is working to continually improve its scholarship process through the Blackbaud Award Management platform. For example, in the past, the college had students send their thank you letters directly to donors. “In the future, we are looking forward to asking students to submit thank you letters directly through Blackbaud Award Management, so we can track them and improve donor stewardship efforts,” says Garrison.

Simplifying Scholarship Management

Blackbaud Award Management is transforming the way Sandhill Community College manages its scholarships. Please contact us to see how we can assist your campus.

[Contact us](#)



Both the number and quality of the applications have increased



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About Blackbaud

Leading uniquely at the intersection point of technology and social good, Blackbaud connects and empowers organizations to increase their impact through software, services, expertise, and data intelligence. We serve the entire social good community, which includes nonprofits, foundations, corporations, education institutions, healthcare institutions, and the individual change agents who support them.