

Providing Enhanced Student Support at Providence College with First Day[®] Complete

In 2020, Providence College sought to provide additional support for students and families as they navigated challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The college turned to longtime partner Barnes & Noble College for a solution that would offer immediate relief as well as long-term benefits. The partners implemented First Day[®] Complete, Barnes & Noble College's course material model that provides affordable and equitable access for students. The program not only delivered greater savings and convenience – it reinforced the caring environment and sense of community that is the foundation of the “Friar family” at Providence College.

CHALLENGE

Providence College creates a distinctive campus environment with its warm, tight-knit community and widespread school pride. It's part of a small, vibrant community of colleges and universities in Rhode Island, where the absence of professional sports in the state has built an even stronger affinity for collegiate athletics. Over time, the college has cultivated a large and passionate “Friar family” of students, alumni, parents, fans and community members. Providence College is also the only college or university in the United States founded by and conducted under the auspices of the Order of the Preachers, known as the Dominican Friars – the inspiration for the college's mascot.

In 2020, Providence College found itself working to uphold that feeling of community and bolster school spirit from a distance, as the onset of a global pandemic prompted a rapid shift to digital and hybrid learning environments. After navigating the initial effects of the pandemic and wrapping

the spring semester, the college wanted to take bold steps to provide additional student support and help ease the financial burdens many families faced.

The college drew on its longtime relationship with Barnes & Noble College for collaboration and support. Working together since 1982, the partners had decades of experience serving the campus community and staying on the forefront of new technology and solutions. While any new measures would need to provide immediate relief, the strategic intent was to create meaningful, lasting value for students – and reinforce the shared commitment to delivering an exceptional student experience.

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

- Roman Catholic, four-year, liberal arts college in Providence, Rhode Island
- Founded in 1917 by the Dominican Friars
- 4,824 undergraduate, graduate and continuing education students



SOLUTION

To create greater cost savings and convenience for students, Providence College decided to implement First Day® Complete, Barnes & Noble College's course material model that addresses affordability and equitable access for students. The program bundles course material costs into student tuition or applies them to the student account, providing all students with their required materials before the first day of class.

For Providence College, it was important to level the playing field for students, ensuring that regardless of how they pay for their education, they have the materials they need to be successful. First Day Complete removes students' stress of getting textbooks each term. All of their required course materials are bundled and available to them before the first day of class. Students no longer face barriers like financial aid disbursement, which can delay them from getting their course materials and cause them to fall behind in class. All students get the right course materials at the right time.

First Day Complete also delivers significant savings – an average of 35-50% each term – while recapturing course material market share for the institution.

As the impact of the pandemic grew, the partners accelerated conversations around implementing First Day Complete on campus. Providence College introduced the idea of taking the program to a new level by providing its undergraduate students with their rental course materials free of charge. With these benefits, the college could help meet student needs in a difficult time – and improve the student experience for years to come.

"First Day Complete fits right into Providence College's holistic approach to supporting students. Once you're part of the Friar family, you're truly part of the family," said John Sweeney, Chief Financial Officer, Providence College. "We strive to provide all

the experiences of a larger institution in a caring and supportive environment with a high level of touch. This program helps us deliver that caring and high-touch, even within the limits of a difficult time like the pandemic."

Wanting to get much-needed assistance and support to students as soon as possible, the college decided to implement First Day Complete rapidly for a Fall 2020 launch. The partners' strong, long-standing relationship provided a solid foundation to meet a tight deadline.

"Providence College and Barnes & Noble College have been partners for decades, and we've worked together in many different ways on many different projects in support of our academic programs, our student activities and our athletic programs," said Sweeney. "This was just a natural extension of that partnership."

FIRST DAY® COMPLETE

Course material model that provides affordable and equitable access for students

STUDENTS

- Have all materials before the first day of class
- Save between 35%-50% (on average) on the cost of course materials each term
- Receive highly personalized, concierge service

FACULTY

- Maintain full academic freedom and choice
- Know students are prepared on the first day of class

THE INSTITUTION

- Supports student success
- Recaptures market share and revenue

RESULTS

In its first year, First Day Complete was a big hit with students and families. The reaction to saving on course material costs was unsurprisingly positive, but students also responded enthusiastically to the convenience of the program. The experience of getting course materials was simpler and less stressful, both for returning students and for those navigating college life for the first time.

Faculty also have received the program well, playing a vital role in its success by submitting course material adoptions on time. It's designed to make the adoption process easier – and support faculty choice. "First Day Complete has reduced the stress and angst for faculty about assigning course materials. I think they take comfort in knowing that every student in every class has access to the same materials, regardless of their financial situation," said Sweeney.

"It's really about giving faculty freedom to select all the course materials they need to teach their course effectively and support student learning, without worrying about the burden of cost."

Most importantly, First Day Complete has equipped Providence College to show their appreciation for students with an enhanced experience. The collaboration with Barnes & Noble College is an example of how the partners stay at the forefront of new technology and solutions – while keeping the focus on their communities' needs and wellbeing.

"The implementation of First Day Complete shows innovation, but I think it shows character even more. It shows connection. It shows we're here to support our students in as many ways as we can," said Sweeney. "It's an innovative high touch, that's still about serving and connecting with our students. That's what drives why we implemented the program. Not just to do something different or as something to market, but to respond to our students and families and really show that we care."



"This program is another way of saying that Providence College cares about you, we're in this with you, and we're supporting you. Barnes & Noble College is truly our partner in bringing all of that to life, and that level of partnership is why we've had such a long relationship."

– John Sweeney, Chief Financial Officer, Providence College

For more information visit www.bncollege.com