

Colleges, the Cloud, and Digital Transformation

During a time of sweeping social and technological changes, colleges have turned to innovative digital solutions for help in recruiting more students, better educating them and helping them stay on a path to graduation, as well as in operating more efficiently and inexpensively. With the overwhelming number of digital options available today, where are college leaders putting their focus?



During a series of 11 in-depth interviews with college leaders, Amazon Web Services, Inc. (AWS) learned that institutions are ready to embrace the cloud and its many benefits.

Colleges understand the value of the cloud



Institutional leaders laud the cloud's ability to improve the services and education they offer students, as well as the chance it offers to run their institutions more affordably. They see cloud computing as a boon to student enrollment and retention, internal and external communications, and consolidating campus business operations.

Students demand more digital fluidity

Colleges are responding by using technology to reach student prospects and to enhance student support and services. As time goes by, more and more of those services reside within the cloud.

Students are also clearly ready to receive digital help that can keep them on the track toward success.

9 in 10

college students found value in student services aided by chatbots and other tech tools.

Source: [IvyAI report](#)

Cloud technology help colleges recruit students and keep them on track

Institutions take note of the vital role cloud technology plays in monitoring and guiding student success.



“Colleges and universities need to live up to the expectations of students. When it comes to technology, I would say that 90 percent of our focus is on student improvement.”

— Celeste Schwartz, vice president of information technology and institutional effectiveness at Montgomery Community College, PA

Data helps colleges personalize student experiences — and helps them succeed



Using cloud services to generate and store more relevant student data can give colleges a clearer picture of what their students need. Putting that picture to work can be especially valuable as colleges look to retain students facing barriers.

“If colleges are going to be able to respond and close the equity gap, we’ve got to start taking a better look at who the students are and not just see the outside of them, we don’t do a good enough job of that now.”

— Official from a California community college

Institutions remain concerned about maintaining privacy and security

Several college officials expressed worry about the cloud's ability to protect their institutions against a recent onslaught of ransomware attacks and phishing scams. Privacy has also become a major issue for them.

But in fact, the cloud can provide several high levels of security to protect personal data and research activity on campus.



The cloud will help colleges weather an uncertain future

Colleges are looking to attract a more diverse student population in anticipation of a drop in freshman prospects in 2025.

Getting to know students better via data analytics fueled by cloud-based technologies will help colleges guide them toward success. Customization of an institution's specific tech solutions and needs is key.

“If Amazon can use their database and predictive analytics to predict what you may be interested in or what you should purchase next, we should be able to do that for education, right? We should be able to create a data infrastructure that will allow us to not only describe things that are happening but be a step ahead of the game.”

— Provost from private university

