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eComm Allows UCCS to Target Students for Pandemic-Related Financial Assistance [1]



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Brooke Koenig Allen, Program Manager of Processing, UCCS Financial Aid

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, CU communicators faced many challenges that were incredibly urgent in nature. The rapid pace of change associated with the pandemic and

its effect on students made it crucial that communications were delivered to the correct audience at the correct time, and that the path to action was clear and understandable. While some messages revolved around guidelines for isolation, hybrid learning models, and safety precautions, one message on the UCCS campus was a bit different: an offer to assist students with pandemic-related financial issues.

When UCCS received grant monies through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, the financial aid team knew they needed to inform qualified students in a timely way that would allow them to distribute funds as quickly as possible. That's where the eComm program was able to help.

Brooke Koenig Allen, program manager of processing, was already an eComm user but knew that this message was of particular importance to students facing immediate financial need. She was able to identify just over 7,000 UCCS students who were eligible to apply for the one-time relief funds and then target that audience with a call to action via Marketing Cloud.

"This was truly a joint effort both within the Financial Aid Office and with University Marketing," Koenig Allen states. "With the support of our Sr. Executive Director Jevita Rogers and the technical skills of our Systems Analyst Nicole Spear, I was able to create an eye-catching, informative email to our students which Kayla Gronseth Boyer in Marketing was able to quickly vet and send."

Once the message was delivered, it was clear that students were receptive and responding accordingly: open rates soared to over 57%, and click rates weren't far behind at over 38%. But the best part? Within just an hour, over 1,000 UCCS students had applied for this one-time, emergency financial assistance.

"Using our experience and knowledge gained from prior CARES email notifications to the entire student body, we were able to streamline the process in not only getting the information out to students but in how we handled the backend processing of those thousands of requests that came to our office," Koenig Allen recalls. "Marketing Cloud flowed into OnBase which flowed into CU SIS for a seamless experience to the student."

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