



Unify and streamline payment processes

Monmouth University simplifies payment and reconciliation processes through partnership with Ellucian and TouchNet



Before 2016, Monmouth University—a private institution in West Long Branch, New Jersey—worked with multiple vendors to manage bill presentation, payment plans, e-commerce, and student refund processes. The result was a time-consuming and disjointed payment system for staff and students alike. Then, the university received word from their existing vendor that it could no longer process their student refunds due to new federal cash management regulation changes.

Campus administrators decided to take advantage of this opportunity to identify a partner that could serve their entire business office, while more efficiently meeting student needs. A fully integrated payment platform would ideally serve the entire institution, so when Monmouth invited three different vendors to present potential solutions, they had representatives from all departments to weigh in.

“After the demos, we sent out questionnaires to our campus representatives, and TouchNet was the overwhelming favorite,” says Tease Gould, enterprise application specialist at Monmouth University. “We didn’t realize it at the time, but TouchNet’s partnership with Ellucian ended up being an even bigger win for us.” Monmouth has used Ellucian Colleague™ as their ERP system since 1990. By integrating the Ellucian Payment Center by TouchNet® alongside other solutions, they not only solved an urgent need for a new vendor, but ultimately transformed their billing and payment to work seamlessly with their other systems.

“Ellucian aligned with TouchNet because their company stands out as a leader in the e-commerce space with the most comprehensive solution to unify payments on campus,” says Loretta Clayton, product manager at Ellucian. “Eliminating the need for multiple providers while ensuring industry regulatory and PCI compliance, TouchNet has solutions to meet all of your campus payment needs.”



Main challenge

- Replacing an outdated system and unifying payment processes

Solution

- Ellucian Payment Center by TouchNet®

Results

- Improved user experience with real-time dashboard updates and SSO technology
- Eliminated the need for multiple vendors
- Ensured compliance when distributing refunds

One-stop shop improves the experience for all constituents

In the past, payment plan batch files were sent to Monmouth once a month. Once these were in the system, staff had to alert students through a custom process, creating a significant lag between when a payment was made and when it became outwardly visible. TouchNet simplifies this and improves transparency. “We can provide real-time integration, and every payment actually hits both the student and GL accounts immediately,” says Gould. “TouchNet makes it easier to see and resolve GL posting exceptions and errors.”

Additionally, students no longer have to worry about remembering numerous logins or URLs. The student bill and payment center can be accessed seamlessly with single sign-on. “Students simply click a button and are taken to their student account and can see all of their information in one spot, including recent activity, financial aid, and, if they’re on a payment plan, their scheduled payment,” says Gould. “If they’re not enrolled in a payment plan, they can sign up from their student account.”

With intuitive dashboards, students can easily find the information they need whenever they need it. “We used to constantly receive calls at the business office from families and students asking, ‘Where can I access my payment plan?’ or ‘Where do I pay my bill?’” says Gould. “But not anymore.”

Ensuring efficiency and compliance

With TouchNet, payment processes become easier for everyone involved. A unified platform frees the IT department from constantly troubleshooting a myriad of integrations, while helping students understand and manage their payment plans in real time.

At the time of enrollment, students can see tailored plan offers displayed based on their eligibility and choose the option that works best for them. Estimated balance plans are then generated and—once assessed by staff—roll over to term balance plans. These include and display every charge and credit from Colleague when calculating installments.

Automatic adjustments to payment plans help students track their obligations, while ensuring refunds are processed in a timely manner. For the latter, Monmouth implemented eRefunds PLUS with TouchNet, providing invaluable reporting functionality to isolate the unclaimed property and alert the proper recipients.

“This works extremely well,” says Gould. “Last year, we were able to use eRefunds to distribute the Federal CARES Act funding. Our students benefited and quickly received funds.”

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Monmouth University

Driving real value for students and staff

Monmouth University's strategic partnership with Ellucian and TouchNet has modernized their payment processes under a single, reliable, future-ready platform. "The real value is TouchNet and Ellucian come together and work on all sides whenever we have an issue to quickly resolve problems in a timely manner," adds Gould. "We cannot be happier with the partnership we have with TouchNet and Ellucian."

An investment in a fully integrated payment platform is an investment in a unified campus, bringing together all constituents—including students, family, and staff—under a streamlined and secure user experience. Through this partnership, Monmouth University will continue supporting efficiency and transparency for institution-wide commerce.

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