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Customer Spotlight
Fanshawe College

Enhancing the student experience with data driven insights at Fanshawe College

FANSHAWE

Fanshawe College of Applied Arts and Technology, often shortened to Fanshawe College, is a public college in Southwestern Ontario, Canada.

As one of the largest colleges in Canada, Fanshawe has approximately 43,000 students and campuses scattered across Southwestern Ontario. As well as offering more than 200 programs to their student body, Fanshawe also plays an important role in providing re-skilling and skill upgrading opportunities for mature learners.

It is clear to see by looking at the statistics that Fanshawe put their students' experience at the forefront of their strategies and continuously exceed the provincial rates in student satisfaction, graduate outcomes including employment, graduation rates and satisfaction. Their success in student experience is echoed through many of their graduates becoming employed at the College itself; around half of the current IT department comprises of alumni.

"Focus on students, involve our communities, utilize resources wisely, embrace change, engage each other."

– Fanshawe's Values

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Fanshawe has remained firmly anchored to its values and the impact of COVID-19 did not stop that. Historically, Fanshawe has had a very traditional way of delivering software to their students on campus-based computer labs. This method of delivery has its restrictions. from a technician's point of view, it is incredibly challenging and time consuming. From a student's point of view, it is extremely restricting and doesn't meet their daily requirements. As a result, this forced Fanshawe to review their options.

Delivering IT equity to students

Fanshawe's students found the traditional software delivery method restricting. Upon further inspection, Fanshawe discovered that students were struggling with their timetables both for lab space availability and usability.

Timetables were created around multiple factors such as: when the classrooms are free; the type of software available in those classrooms; and availability of professors among others factors. Fanshawe needed to find a way to deliver the software they needed directly to them, anytime, anywhere.
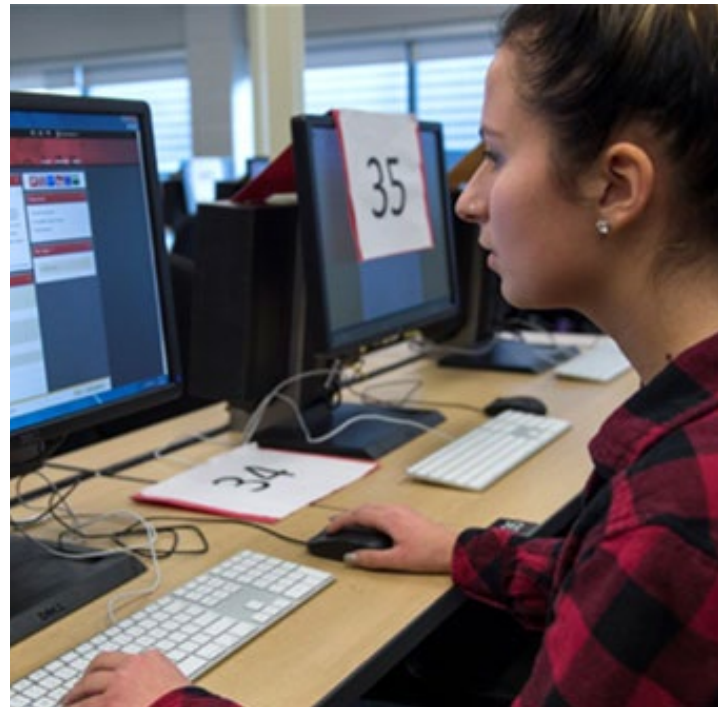
"I think the streaming of software is key. You don't have to schedule a precise time to do that anymore, you can do it at your leisure, do it at a time that fits you. So students who have a part-time job in the evening after they get home from work, they'll be able to do that now. I think it adds to the quality of their time table which leads to the quality of their overall experience."

Stepping back from a VDI environment

The College's first step was looking at a VDI solution and signed up for a pilot scheme. However, this wasn't quite what they were looking for as it was going to be costly and cumbersome to support. A solution was found, thanks to The Ontario College Council of Chief Information Officers (OCCCIO).

The OCCCIO is a collaborative member-run organization created to help enhance its members' ability to strategically and effectively lead information technology support across Higher Education. Among many other aspects, it provides a forum for the exchange of ideas, best practices and technologies.

As Fanshawe is a member of the organization, members of the IT department attended a OCCCIO conference held at Seneca College. At the conference, Seneca demonstrated how it had overcome the issues surrounding software delivery by using AppsAnywhere. Having seen this software in person, being actively used by students in a Higher Ed environment, had a huge impact on Fanshawe, and they decided that this was the software they needed.

Monetary Savings - Consortium Agreement Framework

Despite the many benefits, completely changing the way a college delivers their IT service isn't something to be taken lightly. Thankfully, as a member of the OCCCIO they were able to lean on the community involvement to aid with the implementation of the software. Being a public sector organization, they would typically have to go through the lengthy Request for Proposal (RFP) procedure. However, as a consortium, they benefitted from the agreed upon framework between AppsAnywhere and the OCCCIO, meaning a pre-agreed price among many other benefits.

"AppsAnywhere was one of the easiest procurements that we did."

The Power of Analytics

Once the software was in place, they need to ensure that it was working for their students in the way they wanted. Fortunately, AppsAnywhere provides a fitting solution in the form of built-in analytics. Fanshawe used this feature not only to track the progress of their investment, but also to build upon their relationship by delivering the information directly to students.

"We want to deliver the results to them and it's not enough just to say we think it worked well. We want to be able to say these many packages were used by this many unique students and so on. It simply gives us great information to affirm that we're heading in the right direction."

Embracing change: 60-day implementation

It's 2021: we cannot talk about Higher Ed without mentioning COVID-19, and with a value all about embracing change, Fanshawe certainly stepped up to the plate.

Thanks to the simple procurement process and once COVID-19 hit, Fanshawe was able to be up and running in **two months** with around 100 packages ready for fall 2020. Having this software meant fewer students needing to be on campus, in line with the college's goal of minimizing risk of transmission of COVID-19 by reducing on-site activity. The college is proud that there have been no known transmissions on campus throughout the pandemic.

Conclusion

Fanshawe has shown that through being part of a consortium means so much more than just being part of an organization. They were able to come together and collaborate on best practices, learning experiences and most importantly, their resources. In doing this, they have moved mountains by progressing through the procurement process in a record time and implementing AppsAnywhere within two months, resulting in an enhanced student experience throughout the campus and internationally.

"AppsAnywhere enabled us to thrive as a College despite the challenges of COVID-19. As a College of Applied Arts and Technology, software plays a critical role in the academic success of our students. AppsAnywhere allowed us to deliver software anywhere in the world, enabling our students to continue their education while remaining distanced from our campuses for their safety. In addition to our students' success, the College remained in a fiscally healthy state which positions us well as we begin to emerge from COVID-19 restrictions."

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