



How to overcome 4 common work execution challenges in higher education with Smartsheet



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Introduction

Higher education institutions today are under tremendous pressure, operating amidst reduced government funding, volatile enrollment, outdated legacy systems, ever-increasing cybersecurity threats, and increasing compliance and reporting standards. In addition, growing remote and hybrid operations have exposed the need for institutions to persistently strive to be more flexible, agile, and collaborative in order to improve student, staff, and faculty experiences while advancing their academic missions.

To remain competitive, colleges and universities need the right tools and processes in place to align teams around shared goals, increase operational efficiency, improve collaboration between departments, and provide administrators with visibility into getting work done — all while maintaining a high degree of flexibility, security, and ease of use to scale with agility.

That's where Smartsheet, The Enterprise Work Management Platform, comes in. Smartsheet allows higher education organizations to innovate and achieve results quickly, securely, and at scale by powering effective collaboration and streamlined workflows across campus — and beyond.

In this e-book, we'll discuss four common challenges to getting work done in today's ultra-competitive higher education landscape, share concrete tips for overcoming them with Smartsheet, and look at how different institutions have implemented Smartsheet to achieve their goals.

CHALLENGE #1

Outdated, legacy systems

Higher education institutions have historically relied on a mix of manual and disjointed legacy systems to document information and communicate across departments. Without a centralized system, institutions often experience inefficiencies, including miscommunication, version control issues, and limited visibility into day-to-day work.

These inefficiencies often leave employees feeling frustrated and burnt out. In turn, they struggle to be productive, meet deadlines, and deliver successful programs across campus.

SOLUTION

Smartsheet increases efficiency by centralizing work on one platform.

With Smartsheet, you'll successfully align your people, priorities, and purpose and gain the following benefits:



Improved visibility: Smartsheet combines all information — across different departments and tools — into a real-time, single source of truth. This eliminates version control issues, and provides greater insight into project and process status, minimizing miscommunication and enabling you to make better, more data-driven decisions.



Increased productivity: Smartsheet saves everyone time by automating repetitive tasks. By eliminating the need to manually update multiple, disparate systems of record and constantly switch between tools, you'll regain time to focus on the work that matters. The result? Delivering exceptional outcomes for students, faculty, and staff.

Learn how the University of the Western Cape increased productivity with Smartsheet

The University of the Western Cape needed a single, centralized platform to consolidate IT processes and improve reporting. To do so, ICT Director Raymond Crown introduced Smartsheet.



“Smartsheet gave us the ability to really see what people did and when,” says Crown. As a result, productivity has increased by 20% through automating processes, reducing the need for employee overtime and leading to a happier workforce.”

[Read more](#)

Raymond Crown
ICT Director at University
of the Western Cape

CHALLENGE #2

Tensions implementing new technology solutions

Many higher education institutions are in the process of digital transformation. This is a major and critical step toward enhancing organizational efficiency in today's fast-paced, technology-driven world.

But each exciting new solution adds increased pressure and demand on IT to implement, integrate, and maintain a growing number of systems. Schools need solutions that help facilitate and streamline this transition — not tools that add to IT's already-full plate.

SOLUTION

Smartsheet empowers users to build custom work solutions — without burdening IT.

Smartsheet helps institutions accelerate digital transformation and reduces the barrier to work execution by empowering anyone to take control of their work and providing the following:



Flexible, easy-to-use solutions: Tools must be flexible and easy to use for institutions to easily implement them. As a no-code solution, Smartsheet helps teams get started quickly and allows non-technical teams to customize processes and workflows to meet their needs — all without burdening campus IT.



Integration with other tools: Smartsheet integrates and connects with a variety of tools and platforms commonly used in higher education, such as Google, Microsoft 365, Box, and Anthology. This means you won't have to overhaul your existing systems to get the most out of the Smartsheet platform.

Learn how Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) seamlessly adopted Smartsheet in and out of the classroom

The SIUE School of Business first introduced Smartsheet into its curriculum as a project management tool within a management course. Over the next six years, it spread organically throughout the program. Ultimately, both student groups and faculty adopted Smartsheet to better manage their work both in and out of the classroom.

“Smartsheet is easy to use and super intuitive. You hardly need any training on it at all,” says Tim Jacks, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Computer Management and Information Systems. “After piloting Smartsheet, we formally adopted it as a standard at the School of Business.”

[Read more](#)

Tim Jacks, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Computer
Management and Information Systems

CHALLENGE #3

Trouble scaling and driving repeatable outcomes

Without a unified platform for managing work, people struggle to develop repeatable processes and deliver consistent results. The information needed to make faster, more informed decisions is scattered, creating a lack of visibility that hinders growth.

As a result, institutional leaders are unable to easily measure performance, prioritize work, and identify a path forward. All told, this creates an environment of slow and inefficient decision making that makes it nearly impossible to scale.

SOLUTION

Smartsheet unifies processes and data to drive consistent and repeatable outcomes.

Smartsheet can help you make smarter decisions at scale with the following capabilities:



Data-rich dashboards: Easily roll up data across projects into visual dashboards that highlight key metrics and provide real-time visibility into project and program performance at a glance. This makes it easier for campus leaders to identify – and align on – priorities, goals and next steps, increasing operational efficiency.



Consolidated program views: Manage and measure work across projects, departmental and educational programs, and portfolios with templated, easy-to-use sheets and reports. This empowers decision makers to rapidly measure results, optimize processes, and drive performance at scale.

Discover how RMIT University uses Smartsheet to synchronize stakeholder decision-making

Before discovering Smartsheet, RMIT University, one of Australia's largest universities, struggled to coordinate within large stakeholder groups. Now, the university utilizes Smartsheet to make choices amongst dozens of stakeholders who can now see project status and resource allocation at a glance, as well as make strategic decisions about staffing and execution based on real-time data.

[Read more](#)

CHALLENGE #4

Difficulty creating seamless experiences

Ultimately, every institution wants to improve student outcomes, drive meaningful change, and create the best possible experiences for all. But without the right resources, colleges and universities struggle to attract and retain students and faculty.

Unfortunately, expenses continue to outpace revenues, causing additional resource strain, which leads to burnout and faculty and staff resignations. Conclusively, universities must find ways to do more with fewer resources.

SOLUTION

Smartsheet helps streamline operations to deliver the best possible experiences for students, faculty, and staff with fewer resources.

With Smartsheet, you'll realize the following benefits:



Fewer manual tasks: Automate repetitive tasks to lessen the day-to-day burden on faculty and staff. This will enable everyone to focus on what matters most: delivering successful programs, improving student experiences, and generating high-quality research.



Cross-departmental communication: Smartsheet eliminates silos across departments with a flexible, reliable platform that makes it easy for anyone to securely share their work, collaborate with colleagues, and get more done.



Improved resource management: Smartsheet provides visibility into schedules, budget, and timelines, enabling institutions to optimize campus resources to scale the most important initiatives. Plus, real-time reporting helps teams to better forecast hiring and budgeting needs down the line.

Learn how St. Edward's University uses Smartsheet to manage resources and reinvest in important initiatives

Without the ability to standardize and automate repetitive workflows, St. Edward's University struggled to manage resources efficiently and create top-notch student and staff experiences. According to Danny Lorenty, the school's Associate Vice President for IT Resource Management, structuring their financial data in Smartsheet has allowed the university to reinvest over 25% of its IT services budget to absorb escalating costs, upgrade to best-in-class services, and strategically augment its capital projects budget.

[Read more](#)

Class dismissed

Between siloed departments and processes, shrinking budgets, volatile enrollment, outdated legacy systems, ever-increasing cybersecurity threats, and compliance and reporting standards, higher education institutions face the considerable challenges of attracting the top faculty and students while remaining financially viable. To create the best-possible experiences for students, faculty, and staff, colleges and universities need to be able to execute work more efficiently, reliably, and successfully than ever before.

Successful institutions embrace new technology to address today's needs. Smartsheet, The Enterprise Work Management Platform, empowers higher education organizations to innovate and achieve results faster, securely, and at scale through effective collaboration and streamlined workflows.

By uniting people, content, and work, Smartsheet provides powerful capabilities that revolutionize the way teams operate. Smartsheet makes outcomes reliable, keeps your data safe, and ensures everyone is consistently on the same page, so your school can create more meaningful change in the world.

[Contact our team](#)



About Smartsheet

Smartsheet (NYSE: SMAR) is the enterprise work management platform. The foundation for managing projects, programs, and processes for millions of global customers, Smartsheet empowers everyone to work better, at scale.

To learn more about Smartsheet for higher education, visit www.smartsheet.com/solutions/education.