Temple University
Out with Legacy Reserves, in with Efficient Integration

Their course reserves system had served for a long time, but the library staff at Temple University struggled with its inefficient workflows. Plus, the pace of upgrades had slowed, and metrics were limited. The benefits of a solution that integrated with their Alma ILS were clear. They found the switch was easier than they expected.

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Justin Hill

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About Temple University

While recognized as Philadelphia's public university, Temple University also draws people from all over the world. The Tier 1 research institution serves approximately 30,000 students with a mission mostly centered on providing high-quality education at an affordable and accessible cost. As the primary service point for the university libraries, the Charles Library plays a key role in delivering on that mission.

'Clunky' workflows and the need for an integrated solution

The Temple University library staff had big ambitions for doing more with course reserves, but it was clear that their existing solution was holding them back. As Emily Schiller, the Circulation & One Stop Assistance Desk Supervisor, explains, "It was clunky. It took us multiple steps to complete simple tasks. That made processing each single request tedious and time-consuming, and the lack of a connection to our Alma ILS added additional steps to item processing such as double checking our holdings. With the additional steps, demands for course reserve requests during peak times of the semester took a long time to process.

That put pressure on our staff and increased the wait time for instructors and students."

Justin Hill, Head of Access Services, explains the broader vision. "We wanted something that interfaced with our ILS system that would help spur more use of our locally owned materials and give the instructors more control over the process," he states. "We wanted something that would merge with our holdings better, because we were trying to encourage the use of our already purchased collection and leverage our holdings for reserves. We also wanted something with a more comprehensive analytics component. Plus, when you added in the fact that the old solution was not being developed with any speed that was viable for our use, we had to move away."

Successful implementation with support from Ex Libris

Though the staff was determined to make the switch, naturally there were some concerns. But in the end, shares Hill, "Switching to Leganto was a lot easier than I anticipated, and our implementation manager was a great help." For her part, Schiller also credits how Ex Libris personnel supported the library through the successful implementation.

She points to the significance of the ongoing discourse between library staff and Ex Libris. "It was an iterative process of identifying workflows tailored to the needs of our staff in serving our constituents," she recalls.

"Leveraging Leganto to meet the needs of our instructors and students relied on a robust dialogue between our library and the team at Ex Libris."

Maia Janssen, library assistant, is primarily responsible for all reserves processing, developing reserves workflows, and liaising with faculty reserves users. From her standpoint, "The most helpful things during the implementation were Ex Libris's online documentation and libguide and their instructional videos. I leaned on those heavily when learning to use Leganto and establishing workflows for instructors and library staff. I also appreciated the listserv so I could hear from other universities. With those online resources, I could usually find the answer to any question or problem I had."

Cutting processing time in half

The library team reports that the integration between Leganto and Alma has cut the labor required to process requests in half.

"The integration with our ILS has many benefits," reports Hill. "There's less flip-flopping between systems that don't communicate with one another. We like how Leganto integrates with our other library software packages, how it connects with Alma to leverage our holdings. With the drag-and-drop requesting, everything happens live."

Janssen has found the Leganto-Alma integration to be invaluable for better serving the library's constituents.

"I like how you can look at a list in both Alma and Leganto, so I can see exactly what the instructors are seeing," she states.

"That helps me catch issues as they occur. I no longer have to constantly switch between the old course reserves system and the library catalog in Alma when I'm processing, and that also makes it really easy if a student comes to the desk asking about a reserve. I can look in Alma, open it right there, and see the exact reading list, the professor, and all the information about the reserve."

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Emily Schiller
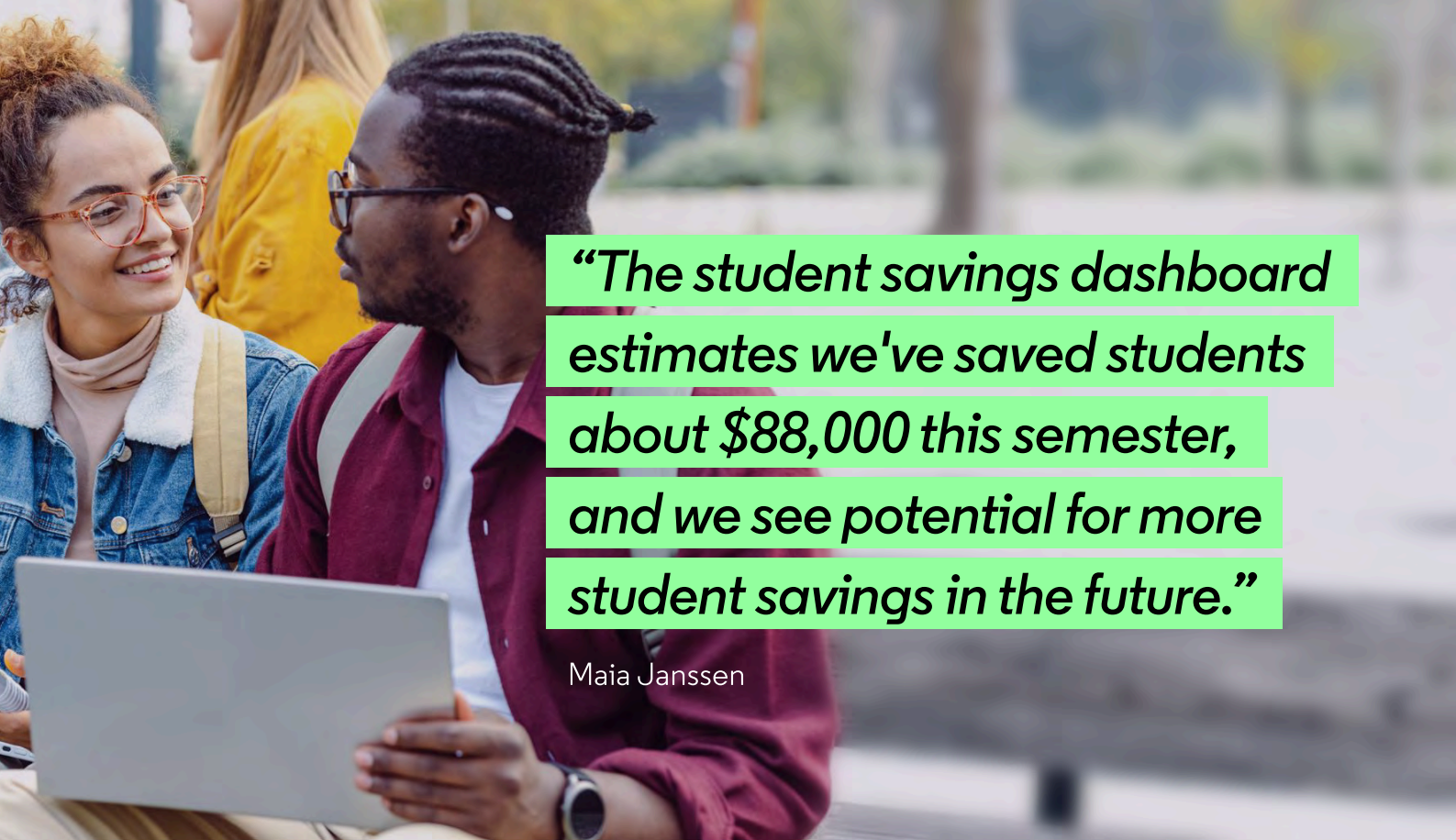
"The student savings dashboard estimates we've saved students about $88,000 this semester, and we see potential for more student savings in the future."

Maia Janssen

Driving higher use of course reserves

The move to Leganto has provided an opportunity to drive more use of course reserves in general. As Janssen reports, "I'm trying to press the 'it saves you time and effort' angle to the instructors, and they seem to appreciate the support we're providing.

They just provide us with the title and other bibliographic information and we at the library source the material, whether it comes from our own collection, interlibrary loan, or purchasing it.

I tell them, 'You just give me the list, and we'll do the rest of the work for you.' They seem to be receptive to that."

Adds Hill, "Since we're adopting this new program and we're pushing out a lot of information about Leganto specifically, it's given us an opportunity to reach new people that weren't using reserves at all. We have been very public about the adoption of the new system and we've been able to leverage the publicity. We're signing up new instructors who likely never used the old system."

About Ex Libris, part of Clarivate

Ex Libris, part of Clarivate, is a leading global provider of cloud-based solutions that enable institutions and their users to create, manage, and share knowledge. In close collaboration with its customers and the broader community, Ex Libris develops solutions that increase library productivity, maximize the impact of research activities, enhance teaching and learning, and drive student mobile engagement. Ex Libris serves over 7,500 customers in 90 countries. For more information, see our website and join us on LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter.

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