Solution Brief
Gamification for Colleges and Universities

Use Gamification to Improve Student Engagement and Performance

Colleges and universities thrive when students are active, involved and informed. But building a vibrant community of engaged learners is more difficult than ever. As part of today's global digital “village,” students are bombarded 24/7 by a cacophony of distractions and often have trouble determining where to devote their energy and attention. Many schools have tried establishing digital student portals to improve distribution of the resources used to onboard new students; some have also tested portals to improve teacher-student communication and drive student community. But despite their promise, these remedies are proving ineffective. Connecting with new students is a challenge, as is maintaining their participation long-term.

How can universities do better? How can they engage students, retain their interest and facilitate their success? Gamification can help. Gamification leverages interactive design, big data analytics and the latest research about universal human motivators to influence student behavior. It applies the same principles that have always inspired people — goals, status and rewards — so that students are motivated to accomplish high-value actions.

Use gamification to:

- Get the most from your investment in your student portal
- Educate students on the features and resources available through the portal
- Encourage regular usage, as opposed to only at class signup and for checking grades
- Improve use of lesser known resources: assessments, job placement, health resources, etc.
- Ensure participation and effectiveness of training programs
- Accelerate ongoing use of learning management resources
By adding gamification to the student portals already in place, universities can encourage a wide range of activities, from resource use and self-driven learning to knowledge-sharing and participation in campus groups and activities.

Could gamification improve student engagement and performance at your university? Answer these key questions to help you gauge where you stand:

1. **How effective are the student portals you currently use?** Conventional information systems can be effective for tracking and automating certain processes in the university setting; however, traditional portals tend to fall flat when it comes to motivating and engaging students on an ongoing basis. In fact, the number one complaint we hear from our customers is that the resources they've created are underutilized and fail to provide adequate ROI. Adding gamification to your current system will help motivate consistent, meaningful interactions specifically designed to improve communication, nurture community and drive student success. You’ll also be able to promote use of lesser known resources, such as assessments, job placement, health resources, etc. As a result, new students can be onboarded quickly and cost-effectively, while upperclassmen stay involved, even as their needs change.

2. **What is your student retention rate?** Retention rates vary from school to school, but one study\(^1\) found that as many as one in three freshmen do not return for sophomore year. Clearly, universities need effective strategies to mitigate attrition. Start by taking inventory of your current communication and engagement tools. How are they impacting your retention rate? Do they have any impact, at all? Studies about human behavior have repeatedly shown that to improve involvement and drive the long-term behavior changes that become the foundation of vibrant, collaborative communities, you need to implement a consistent, ongoing strategy. For universities, this long-term approach needs to continually guide, reinforce and increase student participation across a variety of different campus groups and activities.

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1. \(^1\) US News College Compass, 2012.

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**Increase student retention and recruitment**

- Learn what motivates different student groups
- Provide students with visibility into how to be successful
- Offer real-time feedback on performance
- Personalize online experience tailored to their needs
- Accelerate onboarding of freshmen and transfer students
- Establish the foundation of a loyal alumni network

**Drive student performance and graduation rates**

- Cultivate student community and association/pride
- Connect students to resources more effectively
- Enhance self-driven learning and knowledge sharing
- Improve participation in non-required but beneficial online and offline activities/courses
Because gamification uses big data analytics, personalization and transparency, it provides not only goals to accomplish, but also recognition, real-time feedback about progress and rewards that matter. With gamification, students become more engaged and retention rates rise — plus, you establish the foundation of a loyal alumni network.

3. Where would you like to see improvements in student performance? With gamification, you decide which high-value interactions to promote and reward. For some universities, the top priority is to cultivate student community and association/pride. Others want to connect students to resources more effectively or improve participation in non-required, but beneficial, online and offline activities/courses (workforce training, etc.). Most are working towards multiple goals in parallel.

Find out more at www.bunchball.com
About Bunchball

Bunchball is the leader and innovator of engagement technology powered by gamification. Purpose-built for the enterprise, Bunchball’s proven engagement solutions motivate employee, partner and customer behaviors while delivering the performance intelligence needed to drive business results. An early visionary, Bunchball wrote the book on gamification with the 2013 best seller **Loyalty 3.0**, and is widely credited for numerous market innovations, including a patent for **Gamification as a Service**. More than 400 enterprise customers rely upon Bunchball for the company’s expertise, innovations and proprietary analytics that deliver proven business results, and Bunchball is the partner of choice to industry leaders including Jive, SAP, Salesforce.com and NICE Systems. Bunchball’s investors include Parallax Capital Fund, Granite Ventures, Northport Investments and Correlation Ventures. For more information, visit [www.bunchball.com](http://www.bunchball.com), read the blog at [www.bunchball.com/blog](http://www.bunchball.com/blog), or follow @bunchball on Twitter.