

How Gwinnett Tech scaled student support with Text and Web Chat

Overview

Gwinnett Technical College, a public two-year college in Georgia, serves just under 13,000 students and has grown enrollment more than 40% in five years. A Mongoose partner since 2017, Gwinnett Tech added AI-powered Web Chat, which students know as “Griff,” to support admissions, registration, financial aid, and student success.

INSTITUTION	Public two-year college
LOCATION	Georgia
STUDENTS	~13,000
GROWTH	40%+ in five years
PARTNER SINCE	2017
CHANNELS	Text, Web Chat

The challenge

Enrollment was outpacing staff. Students missed deadlines and sent urgent questions after hours while teams juggled call volume and siloed systems. “We all know students don’t read their emails,” said Betsy Harris-Brackett, Executive Director.

- More students than staff
- Email falling short
- A past chatbot built on rigid, hand-made scripts

Why Mongoose

Gwinnett Tech started with Text for orientation, deadlines, and registration reminders, using segments, CSV uploads, and scheduled Smart Messages. Then it added AI-powered Web Chat trained on the college’s own website.

4

call center staff and a manager cover phones and chat for thousands of students.

“We use Mongoose daily in our interactions with students, replying to text messages and engaging. It has become integrated into what we do across the Division of Student Affairs.”

CAROLYN DUVEN · EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Web Chat grounded in Gwinnett Tech's own content

A past chatbot “was not smart,” Carolyn said, and there was “a lot of fear around getting another smart bot.” Generative AI built on the college’s own website changed the conversation.

“When we had the demonstration, we created our website called ‘Break the Bot’ to test it. We started asking questions to see what we would get. That really sold us on the quality of the product and how easy it is to train it.”

CAROLYN DUVEN · GWINNETT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

01

Answers from the college's own content

Griff pulls from Gwinnett Tech's website, not the open internet. “That makes us feel really comfortable because we have control over how the bot is being trained and what information it has access to,” Carolyn said.

03

A mirror for institutional content

When chat revealed gaps, the team sent training documents to departments to update their information. “We can use the bot as a reflection of what students have access to,” Carolyn said.

02

24/7 support without more staff

Web Chat handles routine questions, from registration timelines to financial aid, before handing off to a person. “Students don’t have to talk to folks to ask basic questions,” Carolyn said.

04

Metrics that matter

The team watches opt-outs, response rates, and long-term engagement, and uses Mongoose reporting to make the case to leadership. Students still reply to Smart Messages a month later.

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THE GOAL FOR GRIFF

“My goal would be that Griff, our bot, is not another chatbot that doesn’t answer the question. We can use the tool and the training to ensure the bot provides an accurate, clear, and concise reflection of information students have access to.”

Carolyn Duven

A first-day crisis, handled by text

When a new registration system kept students from reaching the learning management system on the first day of classes, no single department had the full picture. Leadership needed to reach thousands of students at once, and Microsoft's cap of 10,000 emails per sender per day made email unworkable.

“Our IT folks were unable to send out 13,000 emails in a day because the system simply would not allow it. And so we, of course, immediately turned to Mongoose.”

CAROLYN DUVEN · GWINNETT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Staff monitored the shared inbox, tagged conversations, searched by student name, and answered in real time. Students reported issues by text and chat, which gave leadership data to act on. “I don't think we would've been able to respond or feel nearly as competent if we had not had Mongoose,” Carolyn said.

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE

- **Teams.** “I can message a student, and I may have meetings all afternoon. Carolyn will see that the student has responded and take that interaction over the finish line,” Betsy said.
- **One consistent voice.** Students hear one voice, even when several staff members are involved.
- **A real partnership.** “They're very responsive. There's never a stupid question,” Betsy said.
- **Plain-language support.** “The Mongoose team translates jargon very easily,” Carolyn said.



LOOKING AHEAD

Gwinnett Tech sees AI as an assistant, not a replacement. Next up: help drafting texts, which now take three people to finalize, and Web Chat on more pages and in more departments.

“If it's our choice, we'd use Mongoose forever and always.”

Carolyn Duven

Want to see what Text and Web Chat could do for your student support teams?

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