

How Montcalm Community College supports the whole student journey

Overview

Montcalm Community College, a rural two-year college in Michigan, supports students from application to graduation. Its Student Success team made Mongoose the center of its success coaching model, using real-time texting to reduce melt and keep students on track academically and personally.

INSTITUTION	Public community college
LOCATION	Rural Michigan
DEPARTMENT	Student success and advising
PROGRAM	Success coaching
CHANNEL	Text

The challenge

Email and phone calls drew low response, and students missed important messages. “Students weren’t checking emails promptly, or they’d get overwhelmed and ignore them,” said Lisa Gardner, Director of Student Success and Advising. A student survey showed strong interest in texting.

- Low response to email and calls
- Students overwhelmed by messages
- No way to track interactions

Why Mongoose

Montcalm put one-to-one texting ahead of mass messages. Every student gets a success coach, an introductory letter, and a first text, followed by weekly “Monday Messages,” check-ins, deadline reminders, and campus updates.

Low

opt-outs and higher-than-average reply rates in quarterly benchmark reviews.



“We focus on the relationship. Texting through Mongoose feels personal and consistent. Students know there’s a real person on the other end.”

LISA GARDNER · DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND ADVISING

What changed for Montcalm's coaches and students

Coaches guide students through financial aid, placement, registration, and daily support. "We were hesitant about automation at first, but we've learned how to keep it personal," Lisa said.

01

Timely, actionable prompts

Smart Messages offer students options, like "Reply 1 if you've submitted your FAFSA, 2 if you need help," and each reply triggers a tailored response.

02

Engagement beyond academics

Coaches promote Welcome Week, clubs, and library programs with images. "We just sent a FAFSA reminder with a graphic that students could screenshot. They love that," Lisa said.

03

Consistency across the team

Lisa shares weekly messaging themes, and shared inboxes and archived messages let coaches pick up where a relationship left off, even after time away.

04

Easy for a busy team

Scheduling, segments, and templates save time. "It's easy to train new users, and the platform's flexibility makes it ideal for part-time staff," Lisa said.

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE

- **Relationship-based texting.** "We don't want students getting random blasts from multiple people."
- **Low opt-out, high response.** Students see value in the texts.
- **Segmentation and scheduling.** Group students by program, term, or need.
- **Responsive support.** "Mary helps us problem-solve quickly and shows us things we didn't even know we could do."



LOOKING AHEAD

Montcalm plans to expand Smart Messages and multimedia outreach and keep refining segments. As more departments ask to use Mongoose, the team is protecting its coach-led approach.

"Mongoose makes communication feel personal. That's what makes it so effective."

Lisa Gardner

Want to see what coach-led texting could do for your students?

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