

Defiance College Cuts No-Shows in Half and Achieves 100% Housing Form Compliance with Mongoose

Overview

Defiance College, a private liberal arts institution in Ohio, is committed to creating a high-touch, student-centered experience. To help students navigate everything from housing to conduct meetings to re-enrollment, the college adopted Mongoose in Fall 2019. What began as a tool for Admissions quickly expanded to departments across campus, including Residence Life, Academic Support, and Student Accounts. Today, Mongoose's Conversation Intelligence Platform powers nearly all of Defiance's student communication, helping teams reduce no-shows, increase housing form compliance, and minimize summer melt. Students view it as a primary communication channel, and staff rely on it for timely, efficient engagement.

Challenge

Before Mongoose, Defiance struggled with low student response rates and high no-show volumes. Critical communications like conduct meetings, housing sign-ups, and registration reminders often went unread in email. Staff relied heavily on emails, phone calls, and voicemails, which overwhelmed front desks and slowed down response times.

Meanwhile, there was no centralized system to track communications or segment students by location, enrollment status, or need. Departments operated in silos, and teams needed a platform that could enable both one-to-one and group outreach while maintaining consistency and compliance.

Solution

Mongoose was first implemented in 2019 by the Admissions Office. After recognizing the need for broader campus-wide impact, Defiance moved to an enterprise contract just ahead of the COVID-19 shutdown. That timing proved critical.

Using Mongoose Conversation Intelligence, staff across Student Affairs, Residence Life, and Housing Operations began engaging students in real-time. Departments created detailed segments (e.g., students in specific halls or graduating seniors) and standardized communication workflows to reduce friction and confusion.

Incoming students are introduced to texting during orientation and opt in manually each year, ensuring near-universal participation. **Lisa Marsalek, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Defiance College**, said,



We get fewer than six opt-outs a year, and most of them are by mistake.

LISA MARSALEK

Implementation & Impact

Reduced No-Show Rates for Meetings

Before Mongoose, conduct meetings had a 50% no-show rate. Now, staff email the formal invite, send a calendar event, and schedule a reminder text. Nearly all students show up the first time.

100% Compliance on Housing Forms

Students now respond promptly to housing assignments, roommate agreements, and room selection processes. Staff rely on text reminders to close the gap for students who miss email prompts. **Noel Barrera, Assistant Director of Housing Operations at Defiance College**, said,



Housing form completion is no longer a guessing game. We reach 100% compliance because we can track and follow up quickly.

NOEL BARRERA

Campus-Wide Usage and Efficiency

Mongoose's Conversation Intelligence Platform is used across nearly every student-facing department:

- Residence Life and Housing
- Student Conduct and Student Affairs
- Academic Support Services
- Student Accounts
- Registrar and Career Services
- Admissions and Enrollment

Each department uses Mongoose differently, from birthday messages to housing updates and registration nudges. Shared inboxes and segments keep messages relevant and prevent students from being overwhelmed.

Improved Retention and Budget Planning

With better communication and follow-up, Defiance no longer faces last-minute surprises during the summer melt period. Staff know who is returning, who has withdrawn, and where housing needs to be allocated early enough to plan accordingly. Lisa said,

“ We don't get surprised over the summer anymore. We know who's coming back before spring ends.

LISA MARSALEK

The Mongoose Difference

- **Smart Segments** for housing, class year, and special populations
- **Manual Opt-Ins** ensure engagement and buy-in from students
- **Shared Inboxes** for staff coverage and timely responses
- **Scheduled Texts** for birthdays, reminders, and follow-ups
- **Personalized Culture** where texting is seen as the norm, not a novelty

Future Plans

Looking ahead, Defiance plans to expand texting into even more workflow touch points across the academic year. Housing and Residence Life will continue refining segments and support plans, and Academic Support Services is exploring new ways to use texting for proactive outreach. Noel said,

“ Texting is now our primary communication tool. It's integrated into everything we do, from move-in to graduation.

NOEL BARRERA

Conclusion

Defiance College has fully embedded Mongoose into its student success strategy. By empowering staff to reach students where they are—with clarity, speed, and empathy—the college has improved retention, reduced no-shows, and strengthened its campus culture of communication. For small campuses with big goals, Mongoose offers a simple, scalable solution. Lisa concluded,

“ Especially for small schools, this is the tool that helps you work smarter and faster.

Mongoose Conversation Intelligence Platform

Learn more

hellomongoose.com

