Case Study:

Improving student retention and enhancing learning outcomes with detailed performance reports

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2007, the **Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine** in New York is committed to training physicians who are dedicated to addressing complex health issues, including health care disparities. The institution prepares students for clinical practice by using a variety of advanced learning tools, including a simulation center, biomedical research laboratories, and standardized patient encounters.

THE PROBLEM

The school wanted a better way to provide students with feedback and evaluate its programs, in order to retain more students and graduate more well-prepared physicians. The school recognizes how hard students work to gain admission to medical school and succeed, once enrolled, so it dedicated itself to giving its students the information and feedback they desire to make informed academic decisions, guide self-study efforts, and effectively remediate, when necessary. At the same time, it sought a solution to assess its curriculum and identify opportunities for improvement in teaching and testing.

While exams provide a direct, immediate assessment of a student's performance, the online solution the university was using only provided basic information. Faculty members could not practically create reports to measure student performance with appropriate detail, identify individual students' strengths and weaknesses, or measure curricular effectiveness.

Faculty members were unable to categorize exam questions as they desired, which limited their reporting and feedback options. The absence of specific feedback meant students often did not study the right material to address their previous problems. In the end, students who spent more time studying old material to address previous poor performance, performed progressively worse while they tried to keep up with a medical program, which continues to build on material learned earlier in the semester.

RESULTS

- Dramatically improved student retention rates
- Facilitated self-directed learning
- Improved student learning outcomes
- Increased overall institutional effectiveness

"*When students drop out of medical school, millions and millions of tuition dollars are lost. ExamSoft allows us to predict student performance and step in early, which has already reduced our dropout rate from 8 percent to 2 percent, which is 2.2 million dollars in savings per year.*"

- David Lenihan, Dean of Pre-clinical Medicine

"*Tracking basic data at the end of a term, such as percentages or exam scores doesn't really mean anything. We wanted to measure each student's ability to answer a question, and start tracking predictive values for future performance. We needed to connect to specific student performance data earlier in the semester in order to make a real difference*."

- David Lenihan, Dean of Pre-clinical Medicine

Solution →

The Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine implemented ExamSoft's exam management and reporting solution, which enabled the faculty to provide detailed and specific learning outcomes feedback to students, while generating detailed reports to evaluate their curriculum. Ultimately, the college graduated more physicians because of the improved reporting system.

> " *With ExamSoft, we have been able to unlock the hidden value of embedded exams. Using categorization, we can create reports that directly impact students, faculty, and administrators.* "
>
> - David Lenihan, Dean of Pre-clinical Medicine

With ExamSoft, faculty members use a collaborative, online item bank to enter questions, tag questions with a virtually unlimited number of self-defined categories, and create exams based on question performance and category content. Using the category framework and the vast amount of analytical data provided by ExamSoft, the college created a series of detailed reports, which break down real-time learning outcomes data for faculty, students, and administrators.

The faculty reports provide valuable data on overall class performance and individual student performance. For the first time, faculty members are able to evaluate how their instruction in class is mapping to the course's stated objectives, which enables them to make mid-semester adjustments, if needed. In addition, faculty can identify students with learning gaps and intervene earlier with customized, specific feedback for self-directed learning throughout the semester.

The real-time performance data generated by ExamSoft also empowers students and helps improve self-directed learning efforts in a variety of ways. Upon completing an exam, students gain access to in-depth information outlining performance by category. This assists students in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, and enables them to focus on improving knowledge of specific subject matter much earlier in the semester.

Finally, the data gives administrators access to the details and information they need to measure institutional effectiveness, impact student retention rates, and create reports to simplify the accreditation process.

Other Key Takeaways...

Do students like using ExamSoft to take exams?
"Yes. Many students feel that using ExamSoft helps prepare them better than paper, pens, and bubble sheets for the board exam."

How has exam security improved since implementing ExamSoft?
"We don't have to worry about someone walking off with a copy of the exam anymore because faculty members can easily store questions in ExamSoft. Faculty members also have the ability to scramble the order of exam questions, which also prevents students from cheating."

About ExamSoft
ExamSoft offers a market-leading exam management solution, which delivers powerful, actionable data to assess learning outcomes and improve student learning, engagement, and retention. Its software suite enables clients to more efficiently and practically administer exams and analyze resulting data to improve curricular design, test design, and accreditation compliance. ExamSoft has served hundreds of prominent academic, certification, and licensing institutions for more than 14 years and has successfully administered millions of exams.

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Email: info@examsoft.com
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