

# Redefining Financial Aid to Support Non-Traditional Students

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY CASE STUDY



## Challenges

- Lacked a financial aid solution that could automate both non-term and term-based enrollment models without customization
- Manual processing demands affected staff's ability to deliver personalized, efficient service
- Manual processing, increased compliance risk

## Regent Solutions

- Regent 8 and Regent Review

## Key Benefits

- Supports multiple enrollment models, including CBE
- Increases staff efficiencies and productivity through automation
- Improves ability to counsel & support students
- Reduces processing errors and compliance risk
- Improves student experience

## Customer Profile

Brandman University is a private, non-profit institution that offers more than 50 accredited undergraduate and graduate degrees, certificates, teaching credentials and professional development programs both online and on-campus at 26 locations. Brandman enrolls over 12,000 students annually per session, and focuses on providing flexible programs and schedules to meet the needs of the non-traditional student. Committed to excellence, the university's online programs have ranked consistently among the best in the nation by U.S. News and World Report.

## Chasing Perfection

Brandman University takes immense pride in helping working students achieve their career goals. The university's robust offerings of online and on-campus programs are designed to support non-traditional students who need to pursue their studies on their own schedules. Flexibility is key.

"I'm drawn to a Vince Lombardi quote when I speak about our mission," says Greg Ball, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Financial Aid at Brandman. "'Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.' It truly embodies our approach." It's through this lens that Ball and the leadership team assessed Brandman's financial aid solution.

## Success Metrics\*

- Over 13,000 people hours saved annually with process and document automation
- 20% reduction in central financial aid office workload
- Over \$15,000 saved in improper scholarship awards
- Enhanced compliance capability for Title IV programs
- Reduction in average award processing of complete applications from 5 days to 1 day
- Reduction in revising award tasks from 15 business days to 1 day
- 82% six year graduation rates

## Regent 8 Features

- Only system which natively automates financial aid support for traditional and non-traditional enrollment models (including non-term, BBAY, CBE, standard and nonstandard term and SAY models)
- Enables institutions to operate multiple enrollment models concurrently
- Ability to calculate the entire student academic plan for the life of the program
- Extensive automation
- Faster awarding, faster process times
- Student tracking
- Timely regulatory updates that are automatically managed via SaaS model
- Advanced student service portal
- UX designed by financial aid experts for financial aid experts
- Integrates with any SIS

Brandman is the only institution currently approved by the U.S. Department of Education to offer direct assessment Competency-based Education in a non-term calendar. Yet, the legacy financial aid system the university had been using simply could not accommodate these non-term, CBE enrollments. The system was failing both the university and its students thereby diminishing the team's ability to deliver excellence.

**"Our university wants to help people get access to higher education. Regent enables us to do this more effectively."**

**-Greg Ball, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Financial Aid**

## Assessing Options

Although staff recognized the limitations of the university's legacy system, they also felt a certain degree of familiarity with it. Moving to a new system would require a level of effort, as well as a confidence that the new solution would address Brandman's challenges.

Ball and his team sought out six prospective providers and began an evaluation process. Each solution was graded on its ability to meet the institution's goals, including:

1. Support multiple enrollment models, including Competency-based Education (CBE)
2. Create efficiencies around financial aid packaging and re-packaging
3. Reduce compliance risk

After thoroughly vetting their options, it quickly became clear that Regent 8 was the obvious choice for managing financial aid for both Brandman's term and non-term enrollment models.



## Catching Excellence

Success can be measured. Just ask the team at Brandman, who have chronicled the changes that have taken place at the university since implementing Regent 8.

Brandman has reported impressive efficiency metrics (see page 2 sidebar, "Success Metrics") for processing both the non-term and term-based financial aid. Regent 8's automated processing, document management, and automatic tasks that alert the team when action needs to be taken have, "enabled the financial aid team to increase the complexity of managing two enrollment models, reduce staff, and increase disbursements," shares Ball.

Brandman counts student service improvements among its successes as well. Students can gain real-time access to their accounts via a self-service portal, which offers a level of immediacy and transparency that wasn't there before. And when a student does need to reach a financial aid officer, someone is available and has the time to spend counseling that student.

**"We are now processing faster and more effectively – saving more than 13,000 hours annually – time we've reallocated towards higher-value student financial counseling and a reduction of financial aid staff by 13 percent," shares Ball.**

Instead of focusing on unnecessary workarounds, staff members are now free to deliver the personalized support that a community of students from diverse backgrounds with diverse needs requires. And that investment is paying off: The university's retention rate is quickly approaching 85 percent.

Automation via the cloud has simplified Brandman's processes on multiple fronts. On the regulatory side, federal updates are regularly run in the background, eliminating the margin for human error and reducing costly compliance risks. And on the usability front, Regent 8's intuitive navigation means that the average staff member can become an expert with less than a day of instruction.

Brandman's leadership praises Regent's implementation team as well. "Moving to Regent was the seventh implementation of my career—and by far the easiest," says Ball. "They had a wonderful team come out to manage everything step by step and help us hit our timeline."

If Brandman University's early results are any indication, Ball and his team are well on their way to achieving their goal of "catching excellence."

### **About Regent Education**

Regent Education is a leading provider of software solutions that have revolutionized financial aid management and enrollment processes for schools using non-traditional enrollment models. Regent's financial aid management system is the only solution that provides seamless, end-to-end automation for non-term, non-standard term, and standard academic years. Regent's cloud-based suite of financial aid solutions helps institutions increase enrollment, improve retention, speed student processing, mitigate compliance risks, and deliver bottom-line results.

For more information please visit <http://www.regenteducation.com>.

\*As reported by Brandman University