Blake Austin College Takes Default Prevention In-House with Action Center

Lisa Suchon, Default Prevention Coordinator at Blake Austin College, has been using Portfolio Navigator’s Action Center since May 2015 when she moved from working in the school’s financial aid office to a new full-time role dedicated to managing default prevention. With this change, the college was able to reduce expenses by revising their contract with a third party vendor.

Figure 1. Using Portfolio Navigator has freed up time for Lisa to provide students one-on-one financial aid counseling at Blake Austin College.

With the implementation of Blake Austin College's internal default prevention program, Lisa researched and began utilizing Portfolio Navigator as an additional resource. She states, "It seemed to do everything I needed to do—upload National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) data, filter students by different stages of delinquency, and support email, letter, and phone outreach." Since she has worked with her Great Lakes representative to set it up, Lisa notes, “I've learned so much, and Action Center does so much of my work, I've been able to expand my role to include more in-depth financial counseling to students in regards to federal loans and repayment.” In addition to using Portfolio Navigator for school-branded outreach, Lisa handles billing for Blake Austin College’s in-school loans.
Tailoring Actions to Default Prevention Goals

Each month, Lisa uses fresh NSLDS data to initiate targeted email, letter, and phone outreach to students who are:

- In the high-priority delinquency group (students who are 90 days or more past due and have yet to make a payment).
- In late and middle stages of delinquency.
- In early stages of delinquency, when time allows.

Lisa also filters NSLDS data from the Portfolio Navigator homepage, creating a report of all their students in grace. She adapted her own outreach for these students and touches base with them at a couple of different points before repayment.

Enjoying User-Friendly Resources

Lisa finds Portfolio Navigator and Great Lakes’ other website resources easy to find, use, and print out. “I learned how to do email and letter mail merges from a document in Portfolio Navigator that walked me through the process.” She customizes some of her outreach to add that students can call her, as well as their servicer, with questions or for help—and she fields a variety of calls as a result. Through Great Lakes’ website, Lisa also found (and completed) all of the free SmartSessions™ webinar training related to topics such as default management.

Reinforcing Servicer Communications

In her delinquency outreach calls with students, Lisa helps them set up an account online with their servicer. When students do this, it often triggers memory of other communications they’ve received from that company, and establishes recognition of them as their servicer. “I help students set up preferences for how they receive communications, and many of them love the option of receiving texts,” adds Lisa. “It's important that students interact with their servicer and know that their role is to help—since this relationship will be there for many years, and through many changes.”

A recent discovery was Action Center’s Servicer Awareness Campaign and Early Engagement Social Media Resources, which help foster the servicer relationship for students over social media while they’re in school. Lisa plans to add the campaign’s documents to her efforts and use them to help current students access loan and repayment information and budgeting, borrowing, and credit resources.

Want to Get Started or Share Your Story?

If you want to learn more or get started with Portfolio Navigator, contact your Great Lakes representative. Want to share your story of how you use Portfolio Navigator’s Action Center, or how it’s impacted you or your students? Email us.