



# Elon University Customer Spotlight



How Elon University met student demands for more access to software.

Elon University took a student-centric approach toward innovation to improve student experiences on and off campus. Elon improved student outcomes through digital means with the implementation of AppsAnywhere.

After running a pilot, Elon's student government association requested that unlimited access to software be made available university-wide with AppsAnywhere.

This case study will cover:

- The restrictions of legacy technologies
- Leading the way with a strategic, student-centric approach
- Meeting demands with AppsAnywhere
- Being prepared for remote access in a global pandemic
- The future at Elon University

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## A globally renowned university in the heart of North Carolina

Globally renowned university, located in the heart of North Carolina, Elon University has taken a student-centric approach towards innovation to improve the student experience on and off campus.

Elon is an award-winning, leader in student success, liberal arts university sitting with a comfortable 7,000 undergraduate students and 800 graduate students. U.S. News & World Report Rankings has Elon sitting at #10 for innovation, #1 for learning communications, #2 in teaching excellence, and many other impressive ratings. Elon's approach for success has always focused on the needs and wants of their students. This tactic maintains their student retention rate well above 90% and their graduation rate within 4 years at 79%. AppsAnywhere is a solution that aligns with Elon's strategic goals and has helped them bounce-back efficiently since campus closures.

Like most colleges across the US, during the spring of 2020, when the pandemic hit and campuses had to close, IT departments were hard pressed to find the best solution to deliver software to their students. Elon University, however, did not have to scatter. Prior to campus closures, Elon implemented AppsAnywhere in computer labs across campus. Their journey toward innovation started small but grew quickly when the demands of their students grew as well. The Student Government Associate caught wind of AppsAnywhere and pushed for immediate change.

## Challenging the status quo: the restrictions of legacy technologies

As all universities do, Elon faced IT challenges long before the pandemic forced them to close their doors last spring. At the time, remote access was not possible. They were delivering their applications and software through traditional means such as imaging in designated labs. Some VDI was also being used, but it was not scalable due to cost. Given 30-40% of students are Mac users, this proposed another challenge for their IT department: inability to deploy software to student owned devices. This was a huge obstacle when trying to support any BYOD initiatives.

“You need be where your customers are, and our customers are our students. It is essential to keep an eye on the modern student so we can keep up with the latest trends in technology. When our students are happy, it results in their academic success”

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Patrick Donohue - ACIO & Director of Campus  
Technology Support, Elon University

## Leading the way with a strategic, student-centric approach

Given these limitations, students were frustrated with when and where they could access software, which in turn influenced their student experience and a potential effect on outcomes. Pat Donohue is Assistant CIO and Director of Campus Technology support at Elon University. When tasked with creating a more innovative student experience, he turned to the students and asked them what they needed to be successful, not only did they request access to their software across campus, but they asked for AppsAnywhere by name.

Elon first implemented AppsAnywhere in a handle of computer labs to test how their students and faculty would react. After just a few short months, the positive feedback spread like wildfire and all students wanted full access on and off campus like their peers. The student-centric approach towards innovation propelled Elon to be ranked #1 in the US for academic experience.

## A recipe for (student) success: meeting demands with AppsAnywhere

Since their implementation of AppsAnywhere, students have been able to access their coursework and university software with ease. Whether students are on campus, at home, or in their dorms they no longer need to worry about how they are accessing their applications. Pat Donohue also explains that “students just want their tech to work. They don’t want to have to think about how they’re getting their software, they just want it. AppsAnywhere allowed us to give our students access to technology that works”.

The student body echoed Donahue’s sentiment about AppsAnywhere. Chemistry major and criminal justice minor, Hayley Clos (Elon class of 2022), describes AppsAnywhere as “a really cool and easy way to access class work. I am taking classes in various departments so having everything I need all in one place has made it convenient for me. I don’t have to go to different computer labs anymore which has made my life a lot easier”.

When it comes to the IT department, AppsAnywhere has improved their experiences as well. AppsAnywhere has helped their IT team with easier lab management and streamlined processes. The IT helpdesk has reduced its response time to only 5 minutes when assisting students with various tech problems. Most importantly, this solution has “broken down the barriers to BYOD access” explains Donohue, “with AppsAnywhere, we have enabled students to work from their own devices. When we had to send student’s home after spring break, they didn’t skip a beat when classes started up again. AppsAnywhere made classes accessible to students and professors”.



“The paradigm of IT In higher Ed has changed. No longer is the focus on providing campus-centric IT services such as bricks and mortar labs and physical desktop devices, but increasingly we’re seeing universities like Elon take a forward thinking student-centric approach to refocus on what’s important: student success and outcomes, made possible by programmes like byod and open access, equitable learning.”

**Peter Cooke - Chief Commerical Officer, Software2**

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## In the right place at the right time: being prepared for remote access in a global pandemic

Elon has successfully kept their campus doors open to allow students to attend their classes in-person. With about 90% of their students on campus, they altered their campus environment to abide by social distancing rules and regulations. For example, their computer labs allow for a 50% occupancy. Elon remains fully prepared for a hybrid, virtual, or in-person semester, at any point now or in the future. Equity of access to technology will continue to increase to keep up with their students' demands. The future for Elon will continue to revolve around innovation. Donohue mentions that "for some time now, we thought about reducing computer lab footprints. We wonder if there could be a future where we don't have campus computer labs at all". Students are bringing their own computers to campus each semester. AppsAnywhere enables colleges to use that free hardware.



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**Pat Donohue, ACIO and Director of Campus Technology Support** leads and manages technology support operations for education. He develops and executes strategy consistent with goals and demands. Pat establishes and improves procedures for operational excellence whilst engaging with employees, students, and the community to understand and deliver desired outcomes and levels of service. Pat guides and assists in developing the skills of others to achieve a well-rounded and engaged team for their mutual success".

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