# How RMCAD **Enhanced Student Success** with Technology

As a higher education establishment, Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design (RMCAD) views **student success** as its success.

The Lakewood, Colorado-based private art and design school has worked to enhance student success for its campus community of 2,000 undergraduate students, using technology to prioritize the student experience.

To learn how RMCAD enhanced Student Success with technology, we had the pleasure of speaking to IT Project Manager Matt Weitzel. Matt has been at RMCAD for over a decade, serving in multiple roles, including Admissions, Financial Aid and IT.

As the college's sole IT Project Manager, his mission is to "provide the best student experience possible through technology, collaboration, and innovation within the higher education space".

Based on our conversion with Matt, this guide provides insights into how RMCAD views:
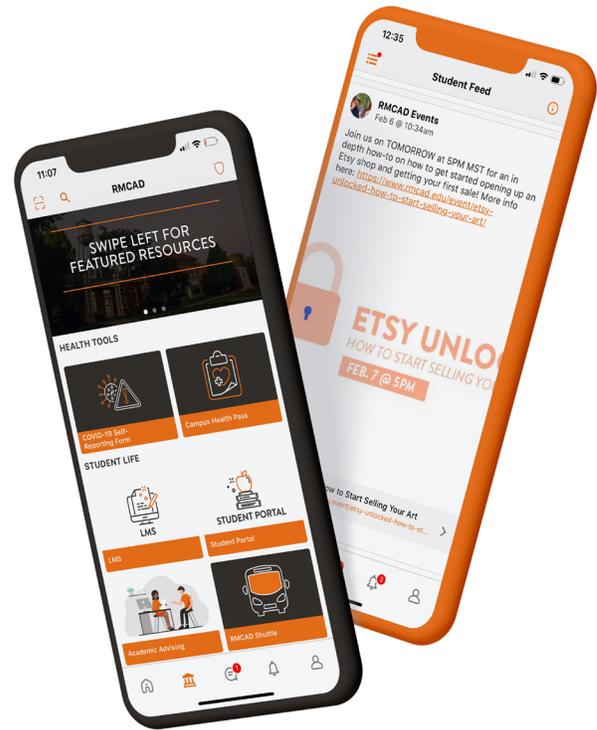
- The Importance of **Technology** in Higher Education.
- The Role of **Student Experience Platforms** in Enhancing Student Success.
- **Tracking & Measuring** Progress.

IN 1963

RMCAD was founded by illustrator and educator Philip J. Steele as a private art school. Today the college has around 2,000 students, of which 70% are remote.

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Shared Experience
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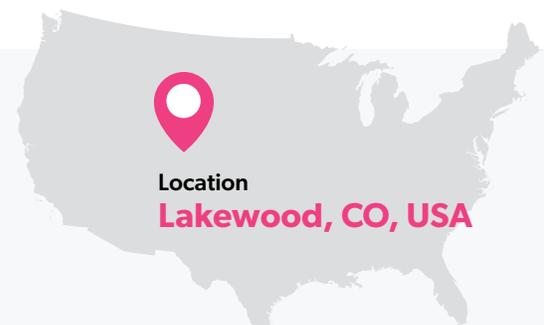
MATT WEITZEL
IT Project Manager
Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design

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Type Of Institution	Customer Since	Student Numbers	Location
Four Year Private College	**2019**	**2,000**	**Lakewood, CO, USA**

1. How RMCAD Prioritizes Student Success with Technology

In today's highly **digitized world**, student success and technology are inextricably linked. Technology frames how students learn and interact with the world.

However, let's start by defining what student success is in the higher education landscape ?

At RMCAD we define student success as:

😊
Retention

🔥
Persistence

🎓
Graduation

Technology plays a foundational role with helping students achieve these three things. Therefore, students need to be exposed to the latest and greatest technologies throughout their college experience.

They also need to have hands-on experience with real world technology. This will help them be career ready and successful post-graduation.

I don't think that the importance of technology in the college experience will change any time soon! It will continue to be the **primary tool** students use to learn, communicate, and contribute on a daily basis.

This has been the case for some time now and will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future. However, what is changing is technology itself. To be successful, higher education establishments need to keep up with technological changes.

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2. Supporting Student Success at RMCAD with Ready Education

Ready Education's student experience platform created a **digital community** at RMCAD. It helped foster that shared **sense of belonging** that is critical to student persistence and retention.

This is particularly important at RMCAD because roughly 70% of our student population is online.

Prior to implementing Ready, our online community had a very different student experience compared to the on-campus population. We believe that this was likely hindering our growth as a higher education establishment for online students, and therefore impacting student success.

By creating a shared experience for all students, the Ready mobile app's social and interactive features helped level the playing field. We believe that the creation of a digital community has also helped us grow as an institution by boosting **student enrollment**.

Prior to implementing Ready, we were only using our proprietary Learning Management System (LMS) for our online only and hybrid student populations, with limited student engagement features. While our LMS has some discussion and messaging features, we wanted to implement an augmented student engagement platform and app with **multiple social channels**.

The goal was to create a unified student experience for all our students, whether on-campus or online. Campus Cloud and Campus App filled this gap with its events calendar, community feed, notifications, leaderboard, and many other engagement and analysis tools.

3. What Tools Most Improve the Student Experience at RMCAD

Events are one of the biggest drivers to the app. Each event is built within Campus Cloud with its own QR code for a seamless event check-in.

To drive a higher population of students to events we use a **reward system**. Students that attend a certain number of events can qualify to receive give-aways. These range from campus branded bumper stickers and notebooks to VR headsets.

The **community channels** are the top engagement drivers. They provide all students with a central location like a virtual town square. Private channels are also a newer feature that we are exploring.

The app is now the number one place where students access our LMS. It provides an easy and convenient way to check assignments or message instructors on the go.

During Covid, the app was used to create daily attestations, to access health recommendations for accessing buildings, and as a contact tracing tool.

The system's analytics are also great. As administrators we get a weekly report that builds a **leaderboard for event attendance**. We also analyze which features or communications get the most clicks and open rates and adjust our engagement strategies accordingly.

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4. How RMCAD Tracks and Measures Progress

Initially, our goal was to help students make connections and create **shared experiences**. Instead of just being a means to get a degree, we wanted to make the college experience a way to make life-long connections with faculty and peers.

The Ready app helped us achieve this goal. The fact that students can track upcoming events and get push notifications on the app is key. As a result, in-person and online **event attendance** has grown, as reflected in the number of check-ins and the leaderboard!

Prior to this, students had to go to the event page on our website to browse events, or be notified via email or through flyers around campus.

Year-on-year we had a **40% increase** in **graduating students** from 2022 to 2023. While it is difficult to quantify improvements in the student experience, any department manager at RMCAD would say that the app has definitely played into student resilience and retention.

The system's community features have helped create a sense of belonging among students. Its communication tools, including push notifications and a central place to get information saves time and effort.

5. Why the Student Experience Matters at RMCAD

Higher education establishments around the world are prioritizing student success. Like RMCAD, many seek to do this by investing in technology to enhance the student experience.

In this day and age, creating a digital community is critical to fostering that shared sense of belonging that is critical to student persistence, retention and graduation.

We go one step further by stating that it is also key to helping students be career ready and successful post-graduation.

Are you looking to prioritize student success?

We would love to see how our technology solutions can enhance the student experience on your campus.

Request a Demo

Increased Student Success

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MATT WEITZEL
IT Project Manager
Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design

Version 1

Ready to start harnessing the student voice at your institution? Learn more about partnering up with Ready Education to do just that.

READY Education

Want to learn more about us?
readyeducation.com

Reach out via **+1 (877) 588-7508** or email **info@readyeducation.com**