ONSOLVE®

South Plains College

Building Trust, Maintaining Operational Agility in a Post-COVID World

South Plains College in Levelland, Texas, caters to 10,000+ students, employs 900 faculty and staff and is planning to add a fifth campus in 2022. The College holds a reputation for preparing students to go into the workplace or transfer to university baccalaureate programs that are second to none. Students are educated to be self-confident, trained and capable in a rapidly changing world.

Challenge

South Plains College Executive Director of Administrative Services, Nickolis Castillo, is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of nearly 11,000 stakeholders over four College campuses in Levelland, Texas. During Castillo's time in his previous role, Chief of Police, the College's previous emergency notification platform could not reach stakeholders during a severe weather incident. Castillo began looking for a solution to help him manage emergency notifications and communications surrounding faculty news, events and other pertinent information. The faculty and campus safety used two platforms, one for emergency communications and another for non-emergency messages. Castillo's challenge was to find the right tech stack that catered to all faculty needs.

10,100

population communication in minutes during the 2021 Texas Freeze

11,000

students and faculty received customized message

Easy to use

communications platform to support College expansion

SOUTH PLAINS COLLEGE

Industry
Higher Education

Size
10,000+ students, 900 faculty and staff and 4 campuses

Main Campus
Levelland, Texas

"We needed a platform that was very fast, that could be accessed in an instant by a number of administrators, who would have various roles and permissions," Castillo explained. "We needed something that was very mobile and scalable — moving from one system that just didn't have the features we were needing."

South Plains College also needed to send communications to specific groups, by campus, classes, faculty teams, even by dorm, which was essential to scaling South Plains' broader communications infrastructure as the College grew.

Solution

South Plains College turned to the OnSolve® Platform for Critical Event Management to support their multifaceted communications and crisis management needs.

"We were trying to meet needs for different departments that were using our communication tool for various critical information-sharing needs. Originally, we thought we would need several different platforms. Then we came across OnSolve, and it really checked all the boxes for what we needed," said Castillo.

Rapid Adoption of the OnSolve Platform by All Faculty and Staff

Being ready for a crisis that can happen at any moment is challenging when you don't have a communications system readily in place. Transitioning to a new system needed to be fast and seamless. South Plains College were replacing two communications platforms with one, so they also needed a simple and easy-to-understand onboarding process that enabled adoption across all faculty.

"Onboarding was pretty instant. We were able to send messages right away and then began crafting it to our needs," Castillo recalled.

Targeted, Accurate and Relevant Communications to Students and Faculty

Being able to target specific students and faculty, down to the dorm hall, was something Castillo wasn't even sure was possible until switching to OnSolve Critical Communications.

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— Nick Castillo
South Plains College Executive Director of Administrative Services

Using OnSolve, data on new students, faculty and students transitioning to another dorm was instantly updated in the system, so the communications were always targeted and accurate.

To take it a step further, any department could upload a list of student ID numbers and transform them into tailored messages about an unpaid bill, or maintenance notification, with almost no work at all.

"Communication is one of the most important things that we can do as a college to improve our student experience. OnSolve helps us achieve that."

OnSolve was also used to perform active assailant training. With OnSolve, Castillo sent targeted messages to selected students who participated, using the actual system that will be used in a time of crisis, in real time.

Effective Rollout of Vaccine Clinics on Campus

Being able to offer students COVID vaccinations on campus was just another way South Plains College wanted to protect their students. But how feasible was it to host pop-up clinics and would students even show up?

"With OnSolve Critical Communications two-way messaging feature, we were able to send out targeted messages to specific dorms or areas of campus to find out how many planned to attend the clinic," Castillo explained.

Protecting students, faculty and the community during the Texas Freeze:

- In February 2021, a severe snowstorm caused most of Texas to lose power. South Plains College was able to maintain their power, and communicated to those without power — via text, calls and email — about the campus Warming Station for the community.

- "I was able to sit in our Warming Station with a laptop and update that [list] as needed, very quickly. The process took less than a few minutes," Castillo said.

- "Being able to help not only our students and faculty, but also the rest of the community, in a time when they needed us most was a great feeling. It brought me huge peace of mind to know that we are able to create a sense of trust between us and the community," Castillo beamed.

Results

OnSolve has helped South Plains College build trust with students and faculty and, ultimately, keep people safe, informed, assured and productive. With OnSolve, South Plains College leadership:

- Gains greater clarity on communication effectiveness across student and faculty.

- Improves the student experience and maintains student retention with daily, targeted communications that keep a 10,000-student population informed of critical and business-as-usual events that impact them.

- Ensures peace of mind knowing entire groups and the local community could receive a critical message in seconds.

- Keeps students safe in a post-COVID world, with targeted and reliable communications about evolving risks.

Visit OnSolve.com to learn more

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