

Engagement matters:

How campusM supports retention and student success in U.S. higher education

The link between campusM and student success in U.S. higher education

With growing scrutiny around student outcomes, institutional value, and digital equity, North American higher education is increasingly focused on two critical metrics: retention and graduation rates. These metrics aren't just compliance numbers—they're strategic indicators of student success and institutional sustainability.

Clarivate's recently analysed the publicly available U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard data—which compiles institutional-level performance metrics such as retention and graduation rates for all accredited postsecondary institutions in the United States.

The analysis reveals that institutions using campusM consistently outperform non-users in both retention and completion.



The headline finding: A measurable uplift in retention and graduation

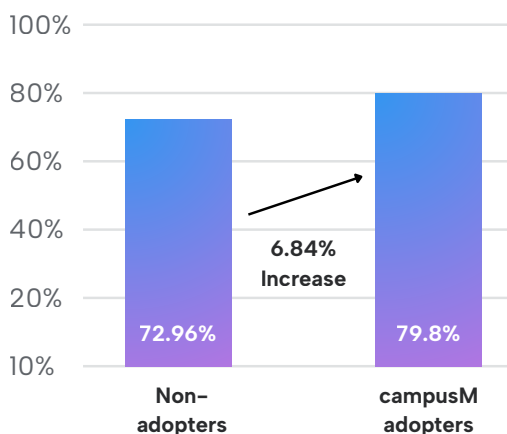
Adopters of campusM show a **+6.8 percentage-point** retention advantage and an **+11.3 percentage-point** graduation uplift compared to peers. These gains are not just statistical; they reflect meaningful improvements in institutional outcomes and student success.

Analysis of retention and graduation rates across U.S. institutions reveals that those

using campusM show statistically significant improvements in both areas. While causality cannot be confirmed, the data suggests that campusM may be contributing to these positive trends in student success.

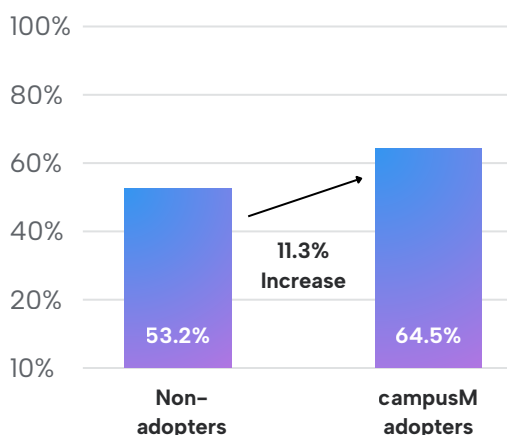
These are substantial results. Even small increases in either metric can translate into **millions of dollars in retained tuition revenue**, improved institutional rankings, and stronger equity outcomes.

Chart 1: First-Year Retention Rate



Metric	campusM adopters	Non-adopters
Institutional Numbers	49	1963
t-statistic	3.70	-
p-value	0.00051	-
Cohen's d (effect size)	0.40 (medium)	-

Chart 2: Graduation Rate (150% Time)



Metric	campusM adopters	Non-adopters
Institutional Numbers	49	1963
t-statistic	4.45	-
p-value	0.00005	-
Cohen's d (effect size)	0.55 (medium)	-

Why these results matter for institutions

+\$1M

Preserved annually from a **1% increase** in student **retention**.

11%

Higher **graduation rate** — campusM adopters outperform **peers nationwide**.

A 1% increase in student retention at a 20,000–student university can equate to over \$1M in preserved tuition and funding. That gain represents not only financial sustainability but also improved student satisfaction, equity, and reputation—key drivers in today’s competitive higher education landscape.

An 11–point increase in graduation rate—such as that seen among campusM institutions—can elevate a university’s profile in national

scorecards, impact performance–based funding allocations, and enhance institutional accountability metrics increasingly monitored by state and federal bodies.

These findings suggest that mobile–first engagement platforms like campusM can play a strategic role in supporting student success, reducing churn, and strengthening institutional outcomes.



Why might campusM make the difference?

campusM integrates a suite of services into a single, personalized engagement platform. From Learning Management System (LMS) access and library search to room booking and timetable updates, it helps students interact with the university ecosystem from their mobile and digital devices – a user experience that’s especially valuable for commuting students, those balancing study with work, or anyone navigating a complex academic schedule.

The platform supports student retention in several ways. It increases students’ sense of connectedness and belonging by centralizing communication and key services in one place, making it easy and accessible to get help when they need it.

Just as importantly, campusM’s integrated Attendance feature enables institutions to learn about missing classes, so support staff can reach out before small issues become big problems

While no dataset directly asks about the use of student apps, the correlation between campusM adoption and improved outcomes points to the value of consistent, mobile–first access to academic infrastructure.

What this isn't saying

This analysis does not claim causation. It's possible that institutions who adopt campusM are also more digitally mature or student-focused in general. However, the significant uplift in both retention and graduation rates, alongside medium effect sizes, suggests this isn't purely selection bias.

What we do see is targeted, meaningful uplift in performance metrics that matter.

What is campusM?

campusM is a mobile-first student experience platform developed by **Ex Libris**, part of Clarivate. It serves as a **custom-branded, central gateway** to key university services – all accessible from a single app or web portal.

Built on trusted Ex Libris Higher Education infrastructure, campusM empowers institutions to:

- Mobilize access to key campus services and information on the devices students use most
- Personalize the user journey based on roles, preferences, and behaviours
- Integrate seamlessly with campus systems, from timetables to student records
- Engage with all user types—from applicants to alumni—through rich communication tools
- Understand student sentiment and behaviour with powerful analytics and feedback tools
- Evolve continuously through agile updates, custom development options, and flexible configuration tools

From the native app to a fully responsive web portal, **campusM provides a unified, cross-platform experience that connects your community, boosts satisfaction, and supports student success** – securely, reliably, and at scale.

What's next?

If you're already using campusM, these findings can help you:

- Make the case internally for continued investment
- Benchmark your own retention and completion trends
- Leverage the app to unify and simplify student experience further

See how your institution compares, book a campusM demo to explore how these outcomes could be replicated for your students.

Get in touch with the campusM team to:

- See how leading universities are streamlining digital access for students
- Explore a demo of current features and integrations
- Understand what implementation could look like in your context



campusM is already helping institutions boost student success—why not see what it could do for yours?

Discover What's Possible →

Appendix

Methodology and data sources

Dataset

U.S. Department of Education, College Scorecard, [Most Recent Cohorts All Data Elements](#)

Metrics Used

RET_FT4 First-year full-time retention rate

C150_4: Graduation rate at 150% for 4-year institutions

Sample

49 institutions identified as campusM customers

1963 non-customer institutions

While causation cannot be confirmed, the analysis controls for institutional scale and highlights a statistically significant correlation between campusM use and student outcomes.

Statistical Method

Welch's t-test for significance

t-statistic:

Measures how different two group means are relative to the variation in the data. A higher value means a bigger difference. Think of it as a "signal-to-noise" ratio.

p-value:

Tells us how likely it is that the result happened by chance. A value **below 0.05** is typically considered **statistically significant** — meaning it's unlikely to be random.

Cohen's d for effect size interpretation

Cohen's d of 0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, 0.8 = large

Both results indicate medium effects, statistically significant at $p < 0.001$

Limitations

Observational data only; cannot infer causality

Does not control for confounding variables (e.g. size, funding, demographics)

Scorecard dataset may include private and for-profit institutions not evenly distributed across sample

These findings should be interpreted as strong indicators of correlation, not proof of impact.

Metric	First-Year Retention Rate		Graduation Rate (150% Time)	
	campusM adopters	Non-adopters	campusM adopters	Non-adopters
Average continuation rate	79.80%	72.90%	64.50%	53.20%
Difference	+6.84 percentage points		+11.3 percentage points	
Institutional Numbers	49	1963	49	1963
t-statistic	3.7	-	4.45	-
p-value	0.00051	-	0.00005	-
Cohen's d (effect size)	0.40 (medium)	-	0.55 (medium)	-