Gaston College

Dallas, North Carolina

Gaston College embodies a commitment to continuous improvement. Offering more than 170 programs of study, they promote student success by responding to community economic and workforce development needs. When they needed to keep local control of their data, deliver using multiple options, and support a variety of survey types, they turned to Scantron's Class Climate.

Challenge

About three years ago, Gaston College decided to move their course evaluations online. They chose a vendor, initiated their evaluations, and began collecting data. Then, their provider went out of business, taking their questionnaire, evaluation schedule, and—most importantly—their historical data with it.

They developed a home-grown stop-gap measure and immediately began looking for a replacement. "Once you lose your data even one time, you're a little scarred," says Apriale Neill, Ed.S., Institutional Research (IR) Coordinator at Gaston College. "We needed a solution that wasn't going to disappear on us."

Gaston College wanted a solution that was locally installed on servers they controlled, provided by a company with a long and solid track record of reliability. They also needed a solution that could deliver online *and* on paper to support their different programs. Further, they needed a solution that went beyond solely evaluations to also support a wide variety of survey types.

"We needed a system where our IR office could retain the results data regardless of who requested the survey," states Neill. "In addition, we're

proud participants in the Community College Undergraduate Research Initiative. We needed a survey tool for our students to use to participate in this program."

Enter Class Climate, Scantron's automated course evaluation and survey solution, with Blackboard integration, paper and online delivery, and a local install option.

Solution Snapshot

Supports 400 instructors and 8,000 students.

One-stop survey shop: All campus surveys conducted using Class Climate.

Surveys and evaluations delivered online AND on paper.

Application and database locally installed; all data owned by Gaston College and stored on their servers.

"Scantron is more than a vendor, they're a partner for us. Class Climate was a great match to our needs, and Scantron's experts are always available to help us."

Apriale Neill, Ed.S., Institutional Research (IR) Coordinator, Gaston College

Implementation

"We chose Scantron because Class Climate's local install and paper delivery option was a great match to our needs," says Neill. "We needed to know that we owned the servers and our evaluation data."

Class Climate connects to Gaston College's Blackboard installation, where course evaluations are opened via a timed-release process and remain available for 26 days. For the first time, reports will be delivered to instructors immediately and automatically after the evaluation period expires.

"We're getting better and better," notes Neill. "This term, we're closing evaluations on December 18 and delivering reports to instructors on December 19."

Beyond course evaluations for their curriculum and continuing education programs, Gaston's Office of Institutional Research assists with and administers a wide variety of other surveys regarding:

- **Graduate application, exit, and education experience**
- **Student satisfaction**
- **Facilities Master Plan opinion**
- **Regulated evaluations for credentialing programs**

Neill needed a solution that could corral "rogue" surveys. "We had a variety of folks outside IR performing surveys with any tool that came to hand," she notes. "While they do need that information, it was hard for students to tell whether surveys were 'real' or not, and that poses a security risk. Class Climate made it easy for us to bring them back in-house and maintain our brand standards."

As the college continues to gather data over time, Neill plans to begin including more longitudinal reports. For example, these reports would provide an excellent way for instructors on an improvement plan to track their progress.

Gaston College is enjoying the piece of mind that comes from owning their data. "We looked at several options, some of which were initially less expensive," says Neill. "However, in the long run, their maintenance costs added up. With Class Climate's local install option, the total expenditure is comparable, but at the end, *we* own the hardware, platform, and data."

Scantron is proud to help Gaston College transform their course evaluation and survey process by providing a reliable, flexible one-stop-shop for campus surveys and evaluations.

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