An AppointmentPlus Case Study

An Online Scheduling Solution for Academic Advisors

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The academic advising office at the Dietrich College of Humanities & Social Sciences at Carnegie Mellon University knew that their manual process for scheduling advising appointments needed an overhaul. After hearing that another department at CMU was using AppointmentPlus® scheduling software with great success, they were ready to make a change.
Carnegie Mellon’s use of online scheduling resulted in:

- 24/7: Students can book appointments anytime
- 3 – 5: Staff hours saved on average weekly

About Carnegie Mellon University’s Dietrich College of Humanities & Social Sciences

Carnegie Mellon University is a private research university located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Its student body comprises approximately 6,100 undergraduate students and 5,700 graduate students.

The Dietrich College of Humanities & Social Sciences provides academic advising services for approximately 250 students. From creative writing and neuroscience to behavioral economics and bioethics, the Dietrich College is home to eight departments, as well as many programs and research centers that often cross disciplines to solve real-world problems.
Manual Process Deterred Students From Using the Program

The Dietrich College of Humanities & Social Sciences schedules an average of 15 to 20 academic advising sessions each week. A single advisor is responsible for scheduling and managing the appointments, as well as for conducting the academic advising sessions.

Students were booking academic advising appointments by either emailing the senior academic advisor, or selecting a time on a signup sheet available in the advising office. Both methods were burdensome and time-consuming for all involved. With the email scenario, often the advisor and student would be trapped in a “back and forth” scenario when trying to identify an appointment time and confirm it.

In both cases, the advisor had to manually add the appointment details to an electronic calendar, which was used to manage the advising calendar and to create the necessary forms.

In short, the scheduling process in its previous state was “too manual, too cumbersome, and too difficult for students.”

“AppointmentPlus software allows academic advisors to make better use of their time.”

Carnegie Mellon University
Online Scheduling Brings Relief

The senior academic advisor at CMU’s Dietrich College learned about online scheduling software while conversing with a colleague in another department that had just started using AppointmentPlus software. After speaking with another colleague at the University’s College of Engineering, the advisor determined that an online scheduling software solution would prove beneficial.

The advisor participated in a coaching session to plan for the perfect scheduling solution for the office’s appointment-booking needs. In the session, it was decided the college would benefit from a system that would allow students to schedule their own appointments, outside of the office’s normal office hours. So what they needed was an online solution.

The college would need a system that could restrict students from making same-day appointments. And the winning software would have to meet the school’s budgetary needs.

After researching several other scheduling software providers, the advising office determined that AppointmentPlus software would be the best option.

Since the scheduler was configured and launched during the summer, the advisor emailed students to announce the launch of online scheduling for advising sessions. A “Book Now” button was added to the office’s web page, and the advisor added the link to her email signature. When students contacted the office to inquire about scheduling, they were directed to the new online calendar.
Faster, More Convenient, & Cost Effective

The scheduling process for booking advising appointments in the Information Systems Program is now far more efficient and convenient with the addition of AppointmentPlus online scheduling software. The office reports saving an average of three to five hours weekly since students have been able to set their own appointments online.

The ease of use was immediately evident, even during implementation. The advisor states that launching the scheduler was easy, and that it was ready to use “within a day.”
And that senior academic advisor? She’s been able to focus more on her primary responsibilities. The office happily reports that she’s been able to “make better use of her time.”

These significant time savings also equate to monetary savings. Students “love” it, as they can book their appointments 24 hours a day, and are no longer restricted to standard office hours.

The office utilizes the system’s automated email reminders, as well as its recurring appointment feature for students requiring regular advisement sessions. The senior academic advisor says “the flexibility of the system is perfect,” and that it easily handles the restriction of same-day appointments.