

How Aurora University Strengthened Affordability, Transparency and Enrollment Confidence



Aurora University, a private midsize institution serving students across Aurora, Illinois, and Williams Bay, Wisconsin, is deeply committed to accessibility, student success, and transformative learning. As federal financial aid changes reshaped the enrollment landscape, the university recognized an urgent need to provide students and families with greater clarity around college affordability — while also equipping leadership with stronger enrollment insights.

The Challenge

Aurora University faced a pivotal moment during the rollout of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Simplification Act and the transition from Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to the new Student Aid Index (SAI). For many prospective students and families, the changes created confusion and uncertainty around what college would actually cost.

At the same time, Aurora lacked intuitive, student-friendly tools that could clearly communicate affordability early in the enrollment journey. Without accessible cost transparency, students often entered the decision process unsure of whether Aurora was financially attainable.

Internally, institutional reporting limitations created additional challenges. Leadership teams struggled to access timely, consistent insights into enrollment trends, lead quality, and yield projections — making it difficult to respond proactively during a rapidly shifting regulatory environment.

Aurora needed:

- A clearer, more transparent affordability experience for prospective students
- More actionable enrollment visibility for institutional leadership
- Tools that could adapt quickly during a major federal aid transition

The Solution

Aurora University decided to implement a modern, interactive net price calculator (NPC) paired with an integrated scholarship estimator (SE).

Together, these tools gave prospective students earlier access to personalized, reliable cost estimates — helping families better understand affordability before applying.

Critically, the platform launched during the early stages of the SAI transition, allowing Aurora to provide SAI-aligned estimates while many institutions were still adapting their systems. This helped reduce uncertainty at a time when students needed clarity most.



Beyond improving the student experience, the implementation also strengthened Aurora's enrollment operations through:

- Structured weekly lead consumption reporting
- Admissions modeling and forecasting
- Improved visibility into pipeline health and enrollment trends

The result was a more proactive, data-informed enrollment strategy grounded in real-time insights.

The Results

Within weeks of launch, Aurora transformed affordability from a source of uncertainty into a transparent and navigable experience for students and families.

The timing proved especially important as national modeling from State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) found that approximately 76% of FAFSA filers would see a lower SAI compared to the previous EFC formula — highlighting the need for clearer, more accessible affordability communication. Source: [SHEEO](#).

Key Outcomes

- ▶ **70% net price calculator completion rate.** Demonstrating strong student engagement and trust in the estimates provided.
- ▶ **20% of all leads generated came from NPC/SE.** Driven by improved affordability transparency and increased confidence early in the funnel.
- ▶ **Highly accurate cost estimates.** Empowering families to plan with confidence instead of relying on broad assumptions.

The impact extended beyond recruitment.

Aurora's leadership team gained a clearer, more reliable understanding of enrollment pipeline performance through consistent reporting and forecasting. What had previously been a reactive process evolved into a more strategic, forward-looking approach to enrollment management.

Institutional Perspective

“The platform has driven real admissions growth and helped uncover opportunities we didn’t previously see. What began as a technology implementation has become an increasingly valuable strategic asset, informed by data and insights that support confident decision making.”

— Matthew Crisman, Associate Vice President for Enrollment, Aurora University

Impact at a Glance



70%

net price calculator completion rate.



20,000+

leads generated to date.



Improved affordability clarity

during a major federal aid transition.



Stronger enrollment visibility

through structured reporting and modeling.

Why You Should Partner with Ascendium

Attigo® by Ascendium® transforms the net price calculator from a basic compliance requirement into a strategic enrollment driver. By delivering clearer, earlier, and more personalized cost estimates, Attigo helps institutions reduce price confusion, improve prospective student engagement, and increase conversion from inquiry to enrollment—turning transparency into measurable gains in yield and net tuition revenue.

Backed by Ascendium’s deep expertise in student success and financial aid, Attigo is designed to align with how students actually make decisions and how institutions need to perform. The result is a customizable, student-centered experience that not only supports compliance but directly addresses institutional priorities—reducing melt, strengthening trust, and helping schools compete more effectively in an increasingly transparency-driven market.

Help Students Make More Confident Enrollment Decisions

Learn how Attigo by Ascendium can modernize your affordability experience.

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