



# Accelerating Innovation for Higher Education:

The Power of the Microsoft and Anthology Partnership



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## Introduction

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Surpassing 150 million users across 80 countries and growing, Anthology remains steadfast in its focus on innovating and improving the higher education learner experience and empowering instructors and administrators to improve operational efficiency and student success.

To achieve this rapid innovation and growth, Anthology's leadership team realized several years back they needed one critical thing—a partner. To serve higher education best, they wanted to build their vast range of higher education solutions on an interface that is familiar, scalable, highly innovative, and trusted to be secure. That partner is Microsoft.

## A Partnership Forged to Move Mountains

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This pivotal partnership with Microsoft allows Anthology to focus on designing and developing higher education-specific applications on top of Microsoft technology. Anthology leverages [Microsoft Azure](#) for cloud services and the [Microsoft Power Platform](#) for business intelligence solutions. [Microsoft Dynamics 365](#) is the foundation of its customer relationship management (CRM), [Anthology® Reach](#), and [finance and human capital management \(HCM\)](#) solutions. Anthology also harnesses the power of [Microsoft 365's](#) collaboration and productivity tools within many products, including its learning management system (LMS), [Anthology® Blackboard](#).

“ At Anthology, we believe in creating value-driven solutions for higher education with every line of code we write. Microsoft gives us a platform that we can build on to deliver the capabilities and value that our joint education customers need in the areas of admissions, marketing, recruitment, enrollment, financial aid, student success, alumni relations, and other critical applications. ”

—Eric Wellnitz, Vice President and Chief Architect, Anthology

## Innovative Solutions for Higher Education

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With the Microsoft partnership formalized about eight years ago, Anthology's leaders immediately set their sights on reimagining their 30-year-old, on-premises student information system (SIS) solution in favor of a next-generation, SaaS-based SIS. Using [Microsoft Azure's Platform as a Service \(PaaS\)](#) framework, an in-the-cloud development and deployment environment, Anthology developed and customized its new cloud-based SIS, [Anthology® Student](#).

The SIS, though, was just the beginning. In response to higher education's voiced interest in wanting a complete enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, Anthology expanded its Azure-delivered SIS solution by building out additional ERP modules, including the higher education-specific finance and HCM modules, built on Dynamics 365 and which also incorporate [Microsoft Power BI's](#) business intelligence tools. This development continued to extend across the majority of Anthology products.

## Optimized for Business Intelligence

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Completely deployed on Azure, the Anthology enterprise operations and engagement platforms—including Anthology Student (SIS), Anthology Reach (CRM), and Anthology® Finance & HCM (ERP) modules—leverage PaaS to offer administrators new ways of interacting with data and predicting outcomes with Microsoft Power BI. Additionally, the use of machine learning empowers them to take action in ways that boost enrollment, retention, and student placement results.

Validating Anthology's efforts, a recent Forrester study found that university staff and faculty users are up to 40% more efficient and effective when leveraging the combined Anthology and Microsoft Dynamics 365 CRM solution.<sup>1</sup>

### Customer Highlight: The University of Arkansas Grantham

The University of Arkansas (UA) Grantham recently implemented Anthology Student. The successful rollout of Anthology Student has enabled this fully online University of Arkansas System university to meet strategic objectives, reduce manual processes like using spreadsheets to track data, improve the student experience, and promote growth and scalability.



Anthology, with its recent acquisition of Blackboard and its long-standing partnership with Microsoft, provides the ideal mix of strong technology and flexibility to meet a rapidly changing and evolving institution like UA Grantham.



—Dr. Michael Moore, Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Arkansas Grantham

UA Grantham selected Anthology Student based on the product's flexibility, ability to support multiple academic models, reporting and analytics capabilities, and its underlying Microsoft cloud-based architecture. UA Grantham is now better positioned to grow the number of high-quality, affordable, professionally relevant programs it offers to learners in Arkansas, across the country, and worldwide.

## Expanding Our Footprint to Match Higher Education's Needs

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Today, [student life extends well beyond courses](#), which makes it even more difficult for colleges and universities to creatively and efficiently engage and support students throughout their academic journey. Seeing this need, Anthology stepped up to help higher education institutions with innovative solutions—all designed and developed solely on Azure PaaS. Anthology expanded its product portfolio to include Anthology Reach, the CRM that supports lifecycle engagement from recruitment to graduation to alumni engagement. The company also introduced disruptive technologies, such as an AI-enabled workforce analytics solution, [Anthology® Occupation Insight](#).

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<sup>1</sup> A Forrester New Technology: Projected Total Economic Impact™ Study, Commissioned by Microsoft, July 2020.

Anthology has equally invested in its professional services teams, ensuring that the implementation of joint Microsoft and Anthology solutions are aligned with industry best practices in order to meet higher education-specific needs. Anthology built a Center of Excellence (COE) to provide our mutual customers with the best practices, governance support, training, and technical development expertise designed to maximize the overall solution's value. Anthology's COE team of professionals has extensive Dynamics 365 expertise in customer engagement, finance and operations, and business intelligence and analytics, specifically related to higher education institutions. Together with Microsoft, Anthology ensures that our joint customers have the best-in-class higher education-specific technology solutions and the implementation expertise to achieve maximum value and optimal performance.

### **Customer Highlight: Coppin State University**

Coppin State University needed a solution to tackle the challenges of boosting recruitment and enrollment while helping improve student retention. Anthology Reach was the ideal fit for assisting Coppin in improving both student communications and the overall student experience. Because Anthology Reach is built on Dynamics 365, it did not require a custom integration or patching to make it work in Coppin's environment. As such, the Coppin IT team could rely on its existing personnel resources' skill sets. "As people use the system more and more, they will come up with different ideas for further leveraging our Microsoft investment," stated Dr. El-Haggan, vice president of IT, CIO, and professor of Computer Science at Coppin State University. "I expect this will only grow over time."

Today, Coppin has implemented Anthology Reach, including the Anthology® Apply and Anthology® Succeed modules for empowering student success from enrollment to graduation, as well as Anthology Occupation Insight. With the improved digital student experiences these products afford the university, Coppin State is delivering on its vision for student engagement and realized a significant uptick in both enrollment and retention numbers.

### **Customer Highlight: Touro University**

Touro University recently launched its Anthology Reach implementation, which is known as TouroOne Connect, to transform how it does business and provide an all-in-one solution for admissions and recruitment needs. Touro can quickly adapt to the institutions' changing requirements with the customization possible with Anthology Reach. Touro's decision to implement this solution shifted the institution's trajectory and positively impacted over 200 admissions/recruitment staff across four countries, 36 schools, and multiple unique brands within the Touro University System.

## **Delivering Speed, Security, Scale, and Flexibility**

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With Microsoft, Anthology products offer colleges and universities speed of iteration, security, dynamic scale, flexibility, and futureproofing. Furthermore, the Microsoft and Anthology partnership offers institutions expanded possibilities with out-of-box integrations. One example is the Microsoft Teams integration with Anthology's LMS, Blackboard. With data automatically synchronized between the two, institutions can easily manage and transfer users, courses, and enrollment data without additional effort on the part of instructors.

To strengthen learning and teaching content delivery, Anthology and Microsoft created a deep integration between Blackboard and [Microsoft OneDrive](#), providing the ability for direct linking of documents into the LMS as well as opportunities for class-based collaboration. The plan is to extend this integration to support the ability for students to submit cloud-based assessments from Microsoft OneDrive through the native Blackboard assessment

submission workflow. To boost the accessibility of the technology, Anthology includes Microsoft's Immersive Reader as one of the alternative formats offered in **Anthology® Ally**, Anthology's product that makes digital course content more accessible.

## Helping Higher Education Harness the Power of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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As Microsoft introduces new AI capabilities across Dynamics 365, Power BI, and Microsoft 365, Anthology customers will benefit from these innovations. Anthology and Microsoft will continue to expand the partnership to include the native Microsoft AI solution capabilities across the entire Anthology portfolio—integrated in a way that's tailored specifically for higher education.

By unleashing the power of generative AI tools, Anthology will empower its customer institutions to explore the possibilities offered by AI to advance higher education solutions mindfully.

## Power of Partnership

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Throughout our partnership, Anthology and Microsoft have responded to the evolving needs of higher education and remain committed to the future expansion of this partnership. Together, the two companies offer a seamless EdTech ecosystem proven to not only support but improve student success. With Microsoft and Anthology joint solutions, higher education institutions get the technology they need to transform their organization, systems, and processes to boost student outcomes, increase retention rates, and optimize institutional operations. By leveraging this education-centric partnership, colleges and universities can take comfort in knowing that they have selected a technology powerhouse committed to delivering integrated solutions that help every student, instructor, and faculty member reach their highest potential.

## About Anthology

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Anthology delivers education and technology solutions so that students can reach their full potential and learning institutions thrive. Millions of students around the world are supported throughout their education journey via Anthology's ecosystem of flagship SaaS solutions and supporting services, including the award-winning Blackboard® (LMS), Anthology® Student (SIS/ERP), and Anthology® Reach (CRM). Through the Power of Together™, we are uniquely inspiring educators and institutions with innovation that is meaningful, simple, and intelligent to help customers redefine what's possible and create life-changing opportunities for people everywhere. [anthology.com](https://anthology.com)

Learn more about the Anthology and Microsoft partnership at [anthology.com/strategic-partners/microsoft](https://anthology.com/strategic-partners/microsoft)

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