

# Case Study

## Fresno State Builds a Dynamic, Responsive Course Catalog using OU Campus™

### Key Takeaways:

- Save on printing costs by offering your course catalog exclusively online
- Work with OmniUpdate to customize your institution's course catalog for your targeted audience
- Enable an automated workflow between OU Campus™ and your course information system

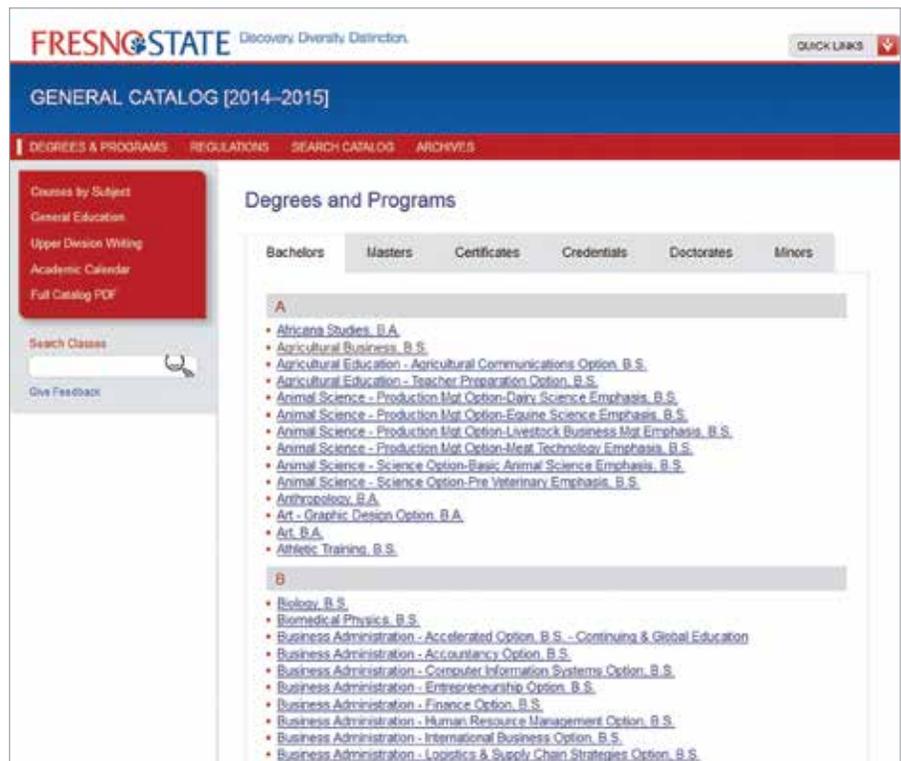
California State University, Fresno was founded as Fresno State Normal School in 1911, became a teacher's college in 1921, and has offered advanced degrees since 1949. The university, nicknamed "Fresno State," enrolls more than 23,000 students across its nine schools and colleges. Fresno State offers bachelor's degrees in 62 areas of study and has 45 master's degree programs, an Educational Specialist degree, 3 doctorates, and 10 certificates of advanced

study. The university has established a reputation for serving the changing needs of California's diverse San Joaquin Valley and training students to be successful in careers across a broad spectrum of demonstrated needs.

### Hello Centralization, Goodbye Print

Before using OmniUpdate's OU Campus™ web content management system (CMS) for their website, Fresno State had a decentralized web approach. Each department site was independently managed using Adobe Dreamweaver or Contribute, and although they were given the same CSS page structure, different styles would always materialize. That changed in the fall of 2012, when approximately 20,000 of Fresno State's web pages were brought under management in OU Campus to create one central university brand. The university also decided at that time to incorporate analytics throughout their site.

Around the same time, the university decided to take its course catalog off the print market. With the number of changes and edits taking place after the finalized catalog copy was sent to the printer, plus steadily decreasing catalog sales, it made sense to offer Fresno State's course catalog exclusively online.



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### *Data Integrity = University Integrity*

Taking the course catalog online not only saved around \$18,000 on recurring printing costs, but also saved students from dishing out money each semester for a resource that was out of date the day it went to print. Furthermore, it freed up time for university staff, who had to format the information for print each time.

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Nevertheless, the online version had its own set of problems. Both the PDF and HTML were static—basically print in web form—and hard to navigate with no way to effectively search for a particular degree or class without excessive scrolling. Also, course information had to be updated in PeopleSoft and then manually updated on the website, and

changes didn't always find their way to both places. So when students went to register for classes, they were more often than not given unreliable course information. This reflected poorly on the university as a whole.

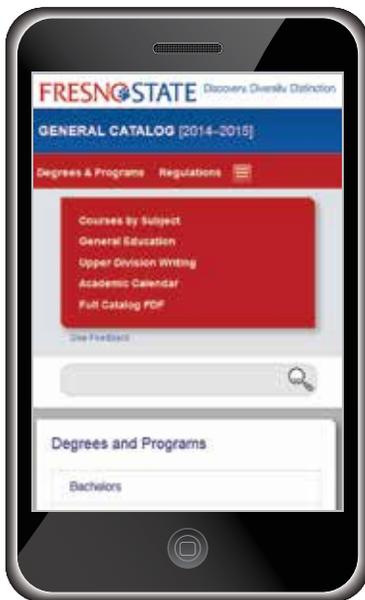
### *Out with the Old, In with the Analytics*

Newly web-unified, Fresno State's focus turned to crafting a more student-oriented website in content as well as navigation. Site analytics showed that students were on their mobile devices more than ever around campus, so the university's web team knew a mobile-first approach was the way to go. And as part of the Fresno State 5-year IT strategic plan, they needed to utilize responsive design.

After seeing a presentation at OmniUpdate's 2010 User Training Conference where Stony Brook University overcame similar course catalog issues using OU Campus and PeopleSoft, Fresno State knew that OU Campus was the solution they needed, not only for their website, but for their online course catalog. This was solidified after OmniUpdate put the web team in touch with Stony Brook. Any concerns were put to rest. The Fresno State web team took this opportunity to redesign the course catalog using a mobile-first approach with responsive templates to test the waters before making their whole site responsive.

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Fresno State's project began with building a course catalog prototype, which heavily utilized analytics collected from the old online catalog. From the data, the team knew exactly what information its students were looking for, especially around registration time. So they organized the catalog by degrees and programs, since that was what students were most interested in. That way, even prospective students could effortlessly shop for a degree.



### *Student Focused, Mobile Ready*

Next came implementation of the catalog. The university's web team worked closely with OmniUpdate's implementation team, who was very receptive to ideas and excited to be a part of creating a responsive course catalog. Requests for changes throughout the process weren't pushed aside, but rather carefully deliberated. Both the university and OmniUpdate were able to work together to create the dynamic product Fresno State wanted and needed. In the end, Dawn Truelsen, Associate Director of Web Communications at Fresno State, confessed, "The technology was the easiest part!"

With the new responsive catalog, each degree or program now has its own searchable page with clickable tabs—including Department, Courses, Requirements, Faculty, Roadmap, and Careers—to parse out information. When viewed from a mobile device, it transforms into a stacked list that unfolds the information like an accordion when clicked. Each academic year is still available as a full PDF version in the archived catalog section. And the individual degree pages are also available as an organized PDF that students can bookmark or print; whereas before, the PDF equivalent had chunked up information that students would have to comb through.

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Information is easily pulled from PeopleSoft into OU Campus to populate the Department, Courses, and Faculty tabs. OU Campus also pulls information from 25Live, an academic calendaring system, in addition to static content found within Fresno State's website, such as career information, to create the ultimate source for students.

### *Routinely Published*

The university did a soft launch of the new online course catalog in June 2013. Without registration traffic looming, the web team was able to clean up and add any missing content to the new catalog. Because information comes from multiple sources on campus, content responsibility is more

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important than ever. Fresno State's teams must work together to provide the most usable information for its students. To reassure contributors that their changes are being made, XML files on the server are published nightly, resulting in an up-to-date, dynamic catalog.

Built-in tools in OU Campus continue to transform Fresno State's online course catalog inside and out. Data from analytics still dictate student-oriented changes with the help of OU Campus reports, which show the web team who is updating and maintaining, and who is due for content edits. Plus, workflow keeps curriculum accurately reviewed by the appropriate personnel.

In the future, after a major update to their Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS), Fresno State will be able to dynamically pull degree and program requirements into their course catalog too, making it easier and easier to seamlessly update information.

The university now has the experience and confidence needed to transform their main website using responsive design. But most importantly, Fresno State students are able to easily search and plan for a personalized higher education experience using the dynamic, responsive online catalog.