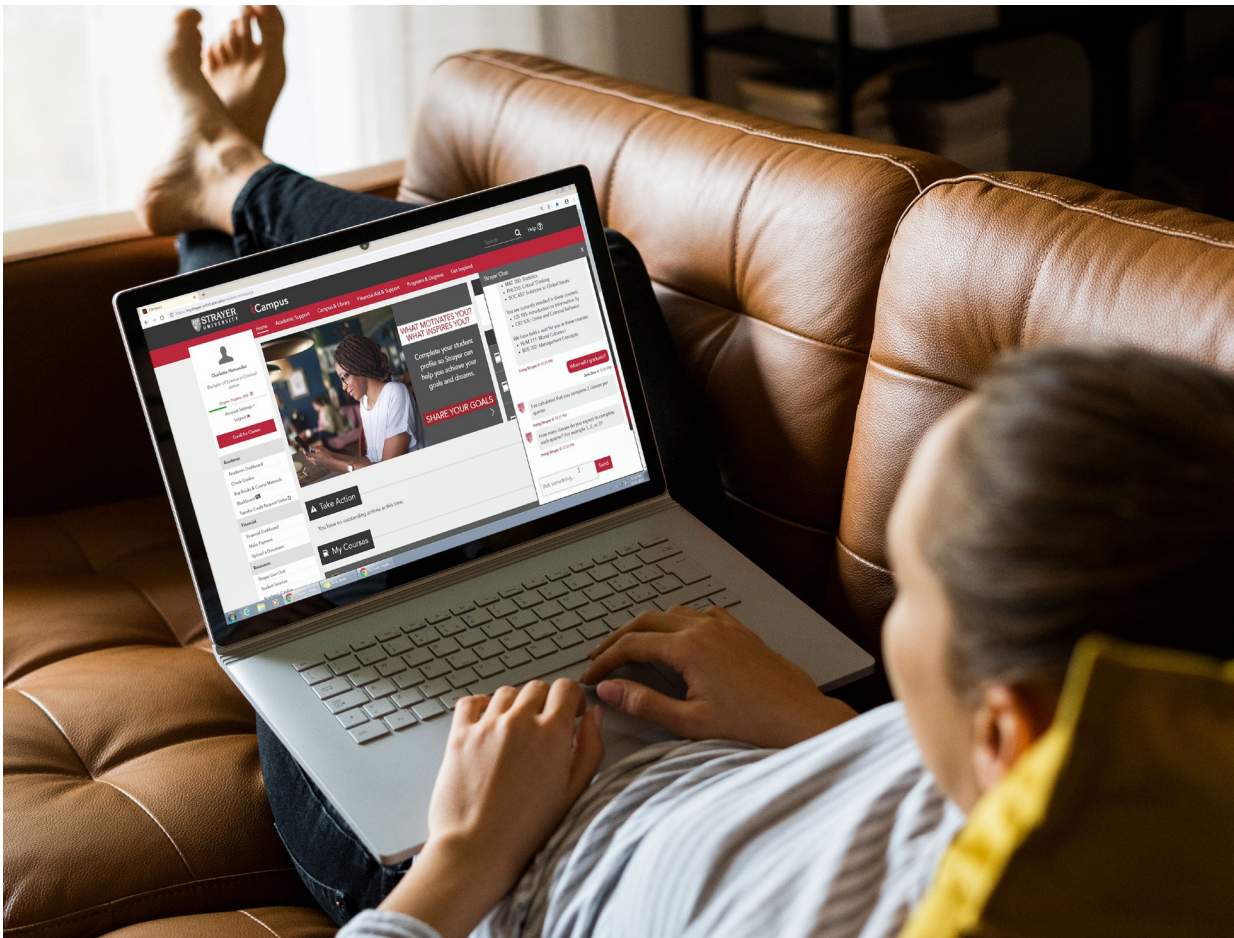


OUTCOMES REPORT

Irving: a virtual assistant for students

Powering student success through artificial intelligence



Overview

Strayer University students are often working while they attend school. For them, time is a precious resource. To help, we've developed a virtual assistant named Irving to respond to students' routine academic and administrative needs—both accurately and efficiently.

Irving uses artificial intelligence to find answers to students' questions – everything from registering for classes to locating tutoring resources – whenever and wherever they need help. As an additional benefit, Irving frees University staff to focus on helping students with more complex needs along their educational journey.

Results

Irving handles 94% of student questions asked, with more than 1 million conversations and more than 100,000 unique students.

90% of students surveyed agree that Irving easily helped solve their issues.*

88% of students surveyed say they are likely to use Irving again.*

87% of students surveyed agree that Irving is about as or more effective than live support.*

*Data as of January 2021



The situation

College isn't the only thing on most Strayer students' plates. Typically, adult students have many responsibilities beyond their academic lives. Most juggle coursework with a demanding career, and some have family and other concerns that take up their time and attention.

Time is not a luxury for them.

Strayer wanted a way to simplify their students' hectic schedules, or at least help them focus on the things that matter most in their education: their coursework. Necessary but tedious parts of the college experience – like registering for classes – were eating into students' time that could be better spent studying. Those requests for help were also overloading Strayer's academic advisors, who need to be available to help students navigate more complex requests.

Could Strayer streamline administrative support, cutting down time spent on tasks like registering for courses and checking on financial aid status? And could it help its team of advisors be more responsive to student needs?

“Irving has not only helped students get answers quicker, but it has also freed up university staff to focus on helping students with greater, more complex needs along their journey to complete their degrees.”



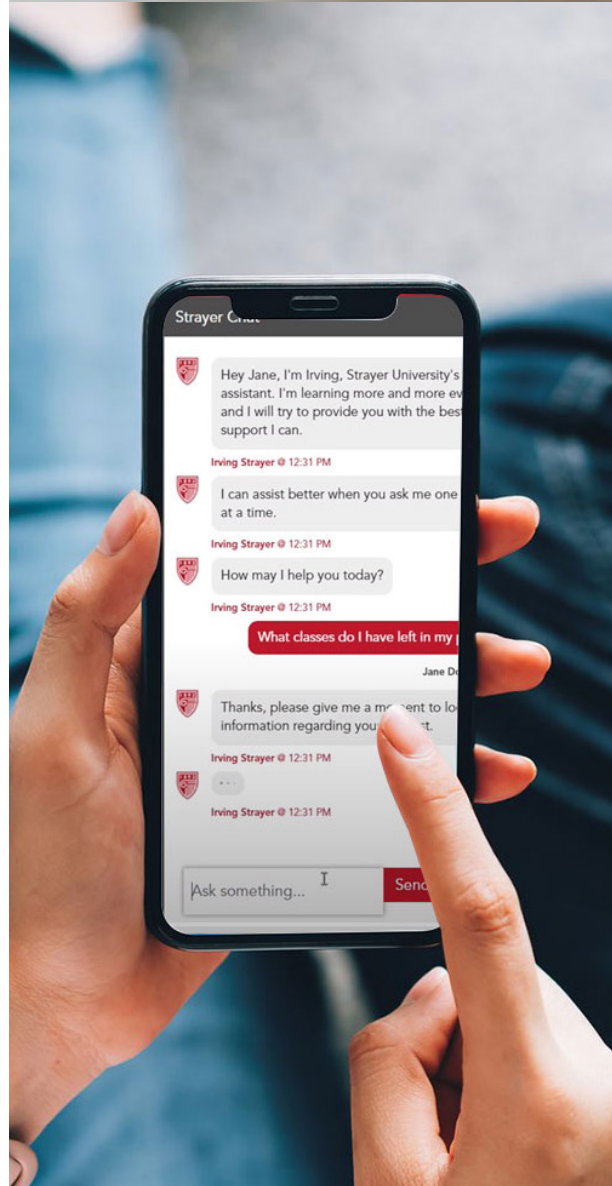
JOE SCHAEFER
Chief Transformation Officer
Strategic Education Inc.

The solution

Strayer assembled a team with expertise in engineering, IT development and behavioral psychology – all with previous experience at student service centers within the university – to develop a virtual agent that could learn by conversing with students and provide real-time support.

This collaboration resulted in a virtual assistant called Irving. Named after the university's founder, Dr. Irving Strayer, Irving is powered by DialogFlow, a platform that combines artificial intelligence technologies based on machine learning and natural language processing (NLP). With these built into its programming, Irving can handle student requests in a conversational style.

Students access Irving through the main page of iCampus, the university's student portal. They can connect with Irving for help with academic and administrative services; tutoring, library and research resources; and IT Help Desk issues. Irving is constantly learning through its interactions, which means the virtual assistant consistently delivers accurate information. Irving's margin for error is low and it is only getting smarter.



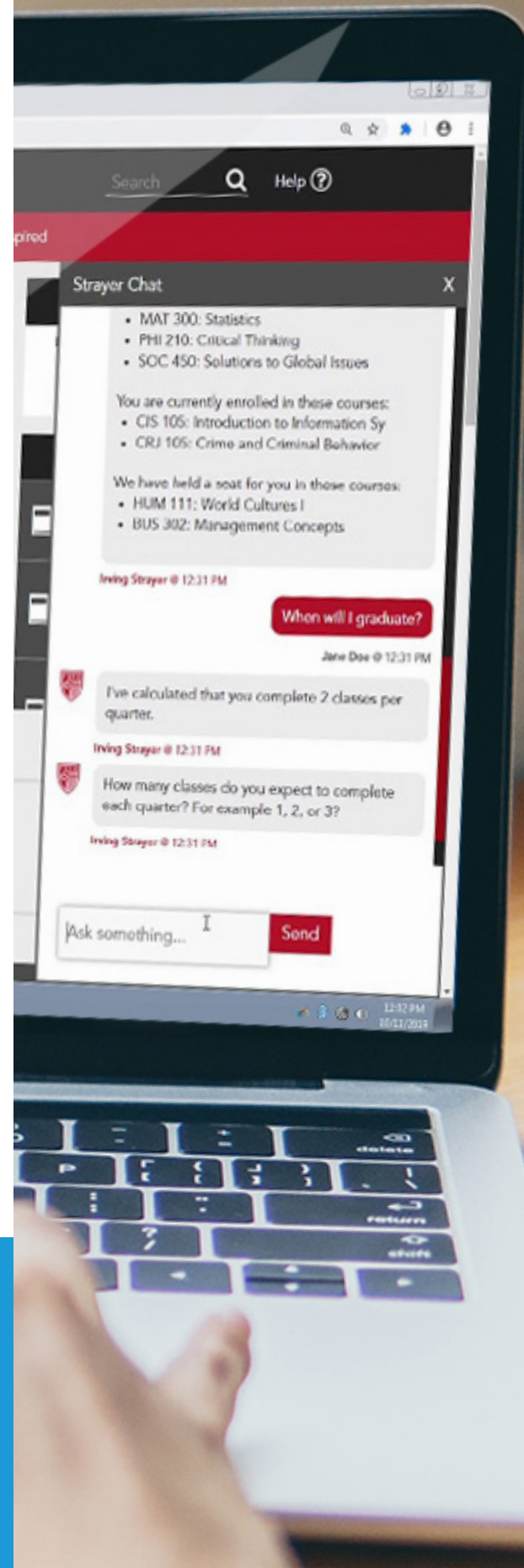
Irving fulfills a student's particular needs by confirming relevant information during the text interaction through a simple chat interface. This gives Irving the ability to provide personalized information, such as directions for accessing a tutor, degree program requirements or timelines for tuition reimbursements – the details that can make a difference in a student's experience at Strayer. Irving also understands when a conversation goes off-topic and redirects the student to a live human agent for further assistance.

Irving was designed to achieve three levels of engagement with students:

1. Understand the support each student is seeking
2. Provide tailored support to the student
3. Ensure that the support satisfies that student's needs

“Having Irving available 24/7 – even at two o'clock in the morning when I'm working on a research paper and see Irving down the bottom right-hand corner – is a strong benefit.”

Strayer University online student

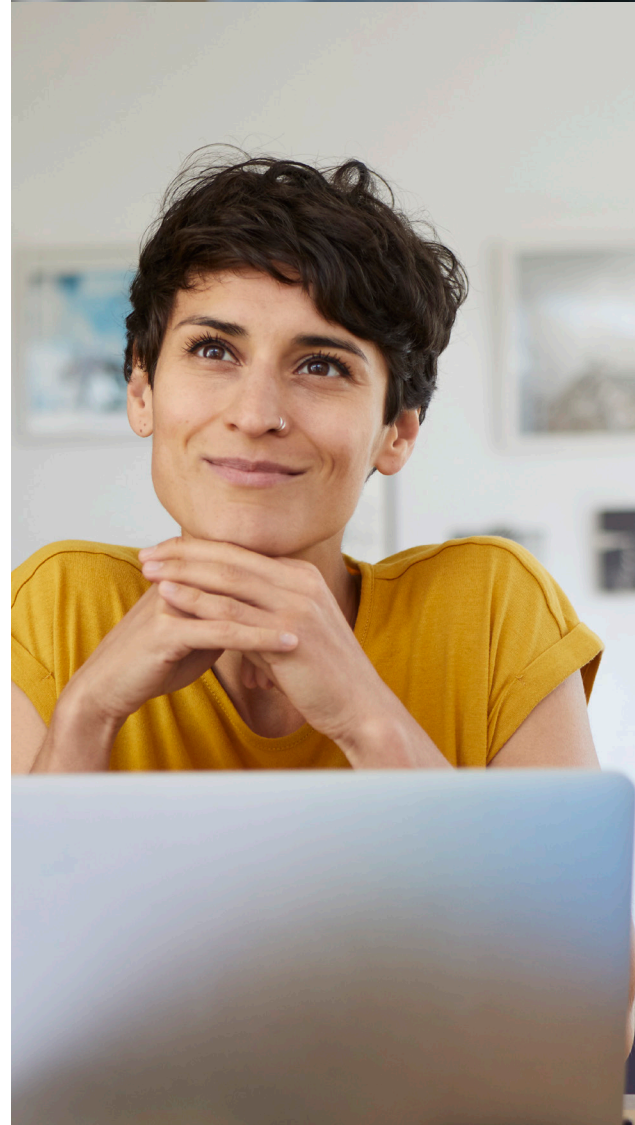


Irving is always learning

The Irving team is constantly monitoring the assistant's performance through its conversational interactions with students. With this information, the team can methodically update the knowledge base, adding NLP technologies, adjusting the machine learning settings and recalibrating Irving to ensure that its responses are as accurate and efficient as possible.

Every contact with Irving is logged and measured for the number of positive interactions, false positives and the level of "intent matching" – in other words, the rate at which Irving interpreted the student's need successfully.

By observing the way students interact with Irving and identifying the questions students ask most frequently, the team can ensure that the response systems remain robust and prepared to consider a multitude of questions for each issue area.



For instance, after following a year of Irving's engagement with students, Strayer has learned that students often ask questions about their financial aid. The team took this information and made sure that Irving could help students understand the progress of their financial aid requests.

Course registration is another area students ask about: they want to understand what classes they need to take to fulfill their graduation requirements, along with where they can get academic support such as tutoring, research or writing help.

Results

Interactions

Irving handles 94% of student questions asked, with more than one million conversations and more than 100,000 unique students.

Effectiveness

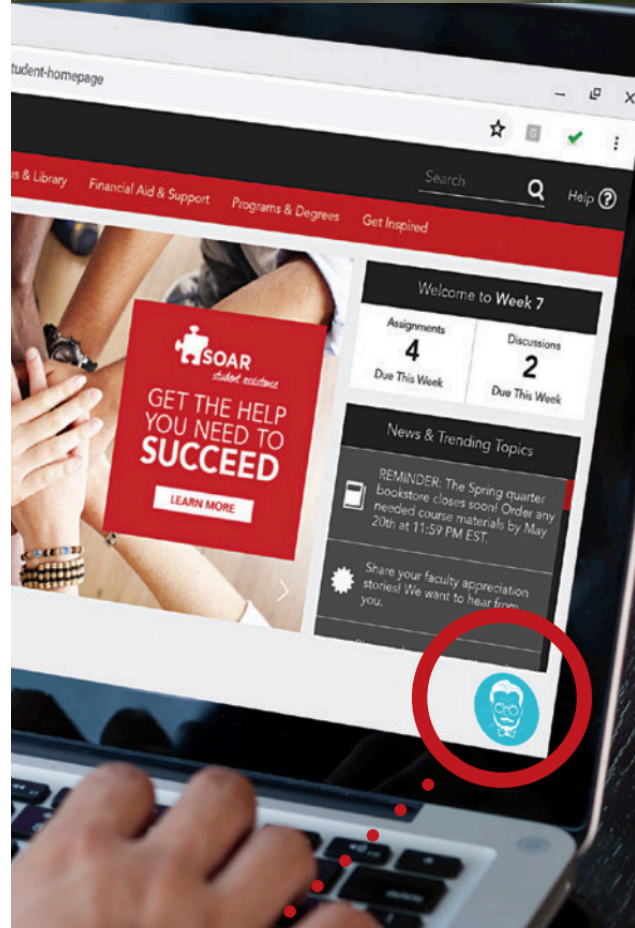
Nearly 90% of students surveyed agree that Irving easily helped solve their issues and 87% agree that Irving is about as or more effective than live agent support.

Satisfaction

88% of students surveyed say they are likely to use Irving again.

Knowledge

With a library of over 2,800 topics, Irving is constantly building its knowledge base through conversations with students.





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**Advancing the future of
education while supporting
today's workforce**

Guided by innovation, relevancy and results, we help adult students obtain in-demand skills that lead to a positive return on investment and long-term success.



About Strayer University

Founded in 1892, Strayer University is an institution of higher learning for working adult students. It offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business administration, accounting, information technology, education, health services administration, public administration and criminal justice.

John Harris
Strayer BBA student

Actual Strayer student who agreed to appear in Strayer promotional materials.



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