From Pencils to Phones: A Journey into the Digital Age

June 8th, 2021

PennState
Smeal College
of Business

Introductions

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Syndney Asencio
Sapphire Overall

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Sapphire Overall

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Smeal at a glance

Enrollment:

- Frank P. 42' and Mary Jean Smeal College of Business

- 210,000 sqft LEED certified building

- ~5,500 UG Students

- Top 25 Ranked Business School

- 10 UG majors + Graduate and Ph.D. Programs

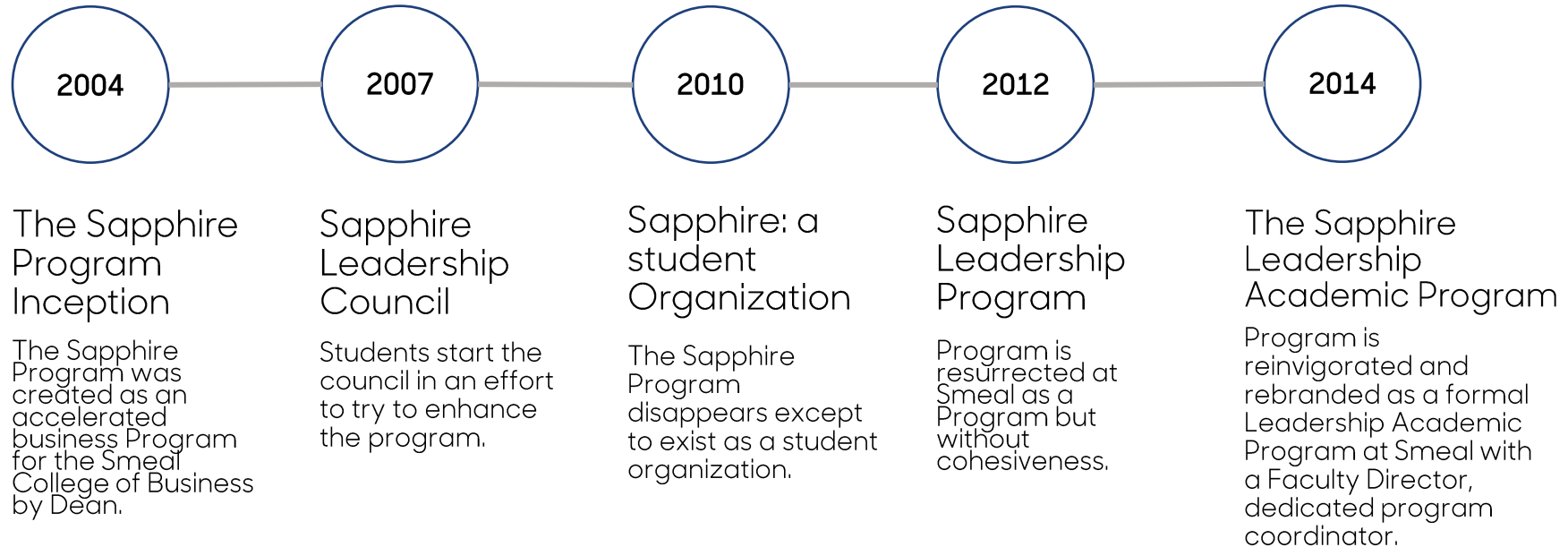Location:

- State College, PA

- Home of the Nittany Lions

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Sapphire Timeline: The Evolution

The Sapphire Leadership Academic Program has had a varied history on the fringes of Smeal Culture until 2014 when it became a dedicated Leadership Academic Program.

SAPPHIRE
LEADERSHIP ACADEMIC PROGRAM

| 2004 | 2007 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 |

The Sapphire Program Inception

The Sapphire Program was created as an accelerated business Program for the Smeal College of Business by Dean.

Sapphire Leadership Council

Students start the council in an effort to try to enhance the program.

Sapphire: a student Organization

The Sapphire Program disappears except to exist as a student organization.

Sapphire Leadership Program

Program is resurrected at Smeal as a Program but without cohesiveness.

The Sapphire Leadership Academic Program

Program is reinvigorated and rebranded as a formal Leadership Academic Program at Smeal with a Faculty Director, dedicated program coordinator.

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Sapphire Today: 2021

Today the Sapphire Leadership Academic Program is designed for high achieving students who have been accepted into the Smeal College of Business at PSU University Park and would like to enhance their business school experience. By providing exclusive academic content, tailored leadership development, and sought-after professional events, the Sapphire Program aims to empower the business leaders of tomorrow.

Academics

Sapphire students have a 5-course sequence that they will take over their four years at Smeal in addition to maintaining a 3.5 or higher, cumulative grade point average (CGPA) each semester.

Leadership

Sapphire students receive Leadership assessment testing as first year students to help tailor the leadership development programming that their cohort will receive during their academic career. Additional testing is provided in the Junior year to further gage their development.

Community

Community is both the inter-cohort bonding of the students as well as what they give back too the college and area where they reside.

Life before Suitable

- Course work tracked, but data was not easily accessible in a 4-year snapshot

- Semester points tracked by individual submission, then entered by hand into an excel file; could have a semester snapshot for completion but not a comprehensive 4-5-year completion, i.e.,

  - Bi-weekly & General Business Meetings

  - Internships & Co-ops tracked per semester

- While categories needed to be completed for points, tracking was messy and incomplete

- Students were provided updates on progress monthly

- "Super" point earners for activities – by semester only not across college career

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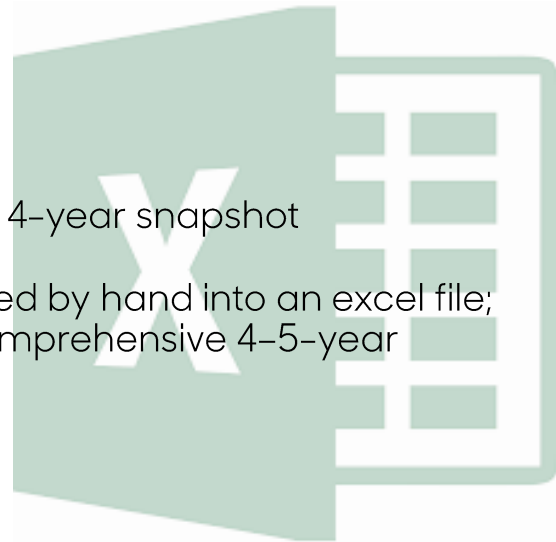
How does Suitable support Sapphire?

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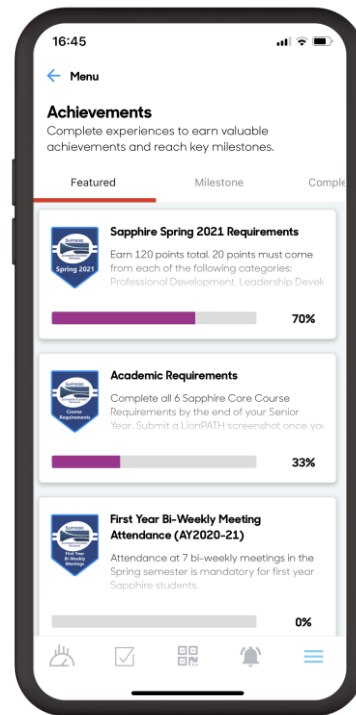
An intuitive rubric for the assessment of learning

This institutes an intentional, consistent, framework for assessing experiences and Learning Outcome Achievement across the student body:

Level 1 – Exposure

Level 2 – Interaction

Level 3 – Participation

Level 4 – Expertise

Level 5 – Mastery
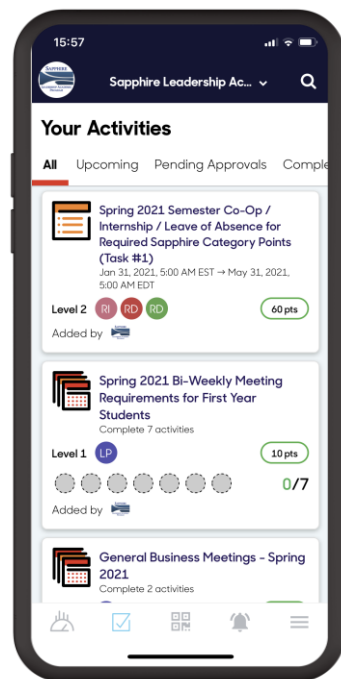
How Students Complete Sapphire

Remote & Contactless Check-in
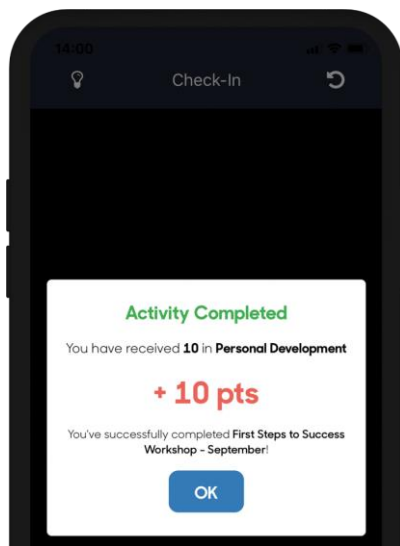
Self-guided Reflections
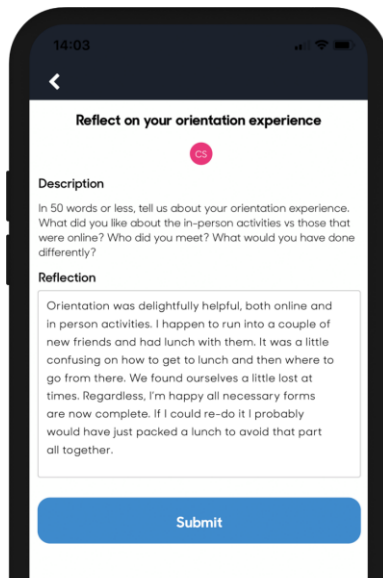
ePortfolio Submissions
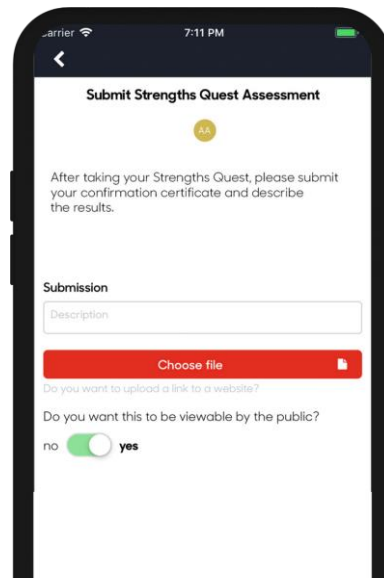
Structured Reflections, Assessments, & Surveys
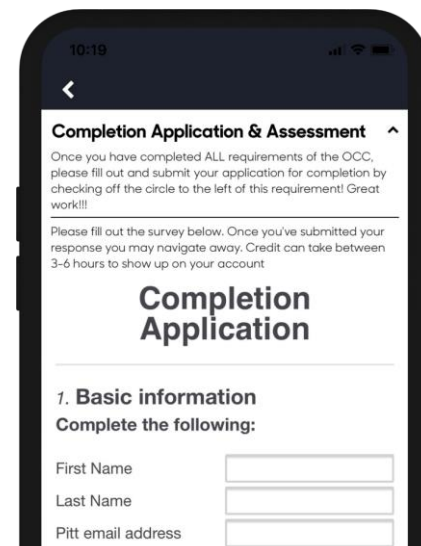
With intuitive mobile dashboards for tracking progress
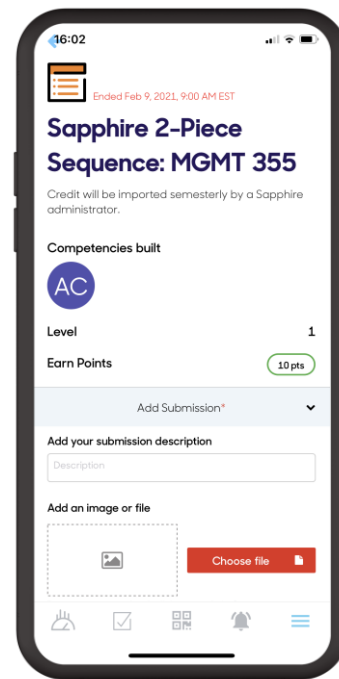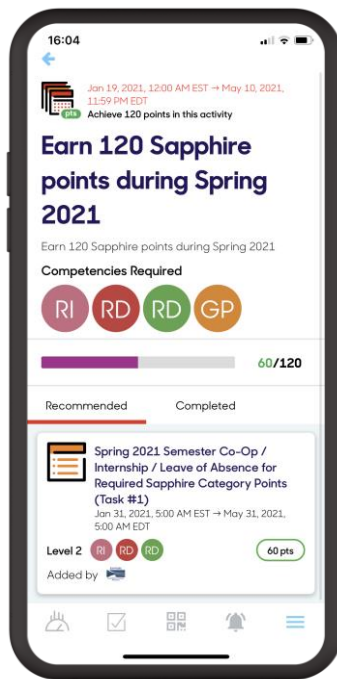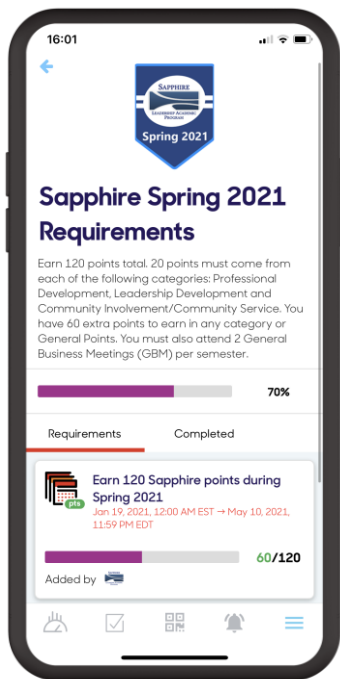
Streamlined admin experience approval/verification workflows built to scale

Shareable Experiential Learning Records for students

Modern, mobile, and more effective communication

Get your message through to more students:

- Custom interventions and nudges to students

- Endless segmenting capabilities

- Automated scheduling

- Activity recommendations

- Forms, surveys, assessments, applications, etc.
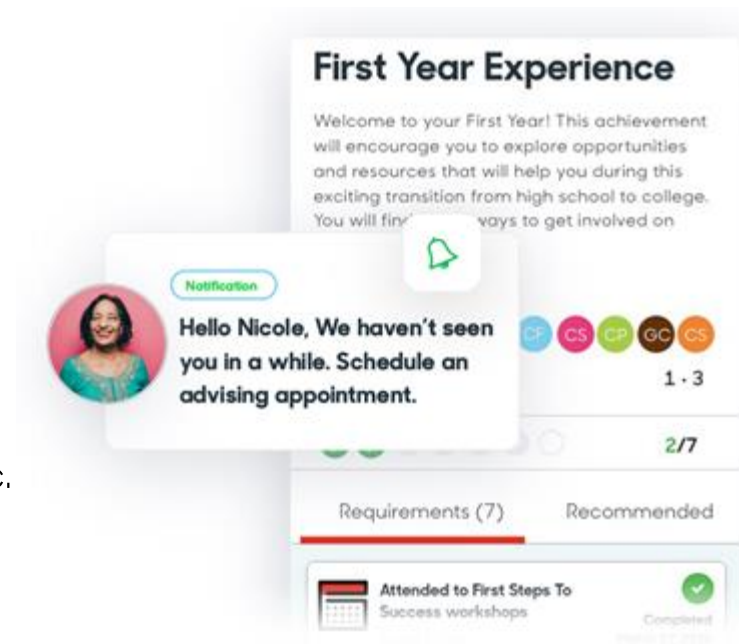
Moving to Suitable

- Easily migrated all student data

- Ease of attendance with QR codes

- Students can see points totals in real time

- Can track data more easily over 4 years

- Able to see patterns to better refine programming

  - ex. Do actuaries all get points in the beginning of semester and marketing all get theirs at the end?

Student adoption and feedback

- By students and admins

- Initial transition had some rough patches – getting students to understand set-up of how we translated current system to electronic system

- Overall feedback very positive

- Students like portable nature of it and the real time points tracking

99%
of student utilized Suitable

93%
of students retained

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Outcomes so far

- Able to see patterns of behavior from the data
    - Seniors and Sophomores earned more points in General
    - Juniors earned the most points in Leadership and General
    - Freshman earned the most points in Professional development
- Almost 45% of students completed more points than the requirement for the semester (average of 43% more points earned)
- Able to track the low performers in real time and provide encouragement and feedback
- More "proof" if we are removing a student for not completing their requirements

Plans for the future

Short term

- Use push notifications for events
- Fully migrate coursework progress
- Continue tracking meetings and requirements
- Integrate Qualtrics surveys – senior survey & cohort end–of–semester feedback

Long term

- Evaluate program activities and where students are choosing to get their points
- Evaluate when activities are offered
- Is there a better time for certain activities to promote attendance and engagement?
- Leverage the available data for better tracking of trends and engagement by cohort
- Offer "rewards" for high achievers over course of college career

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Thank you! Questions?

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