CASE STUDY

Transforming Student Payments at Azusa Pacific University with PayMyTuition

The Challenge: Fragmented Systems and Manual Processes

Before PayMyTuition, APU's student payment environment struggled to keep pace with the university's operational complexity and expectations around student experience. Key challenges included:

- **Limited payment plan flexibility:** Only certain student populations were eligible for payment plans, and the existing system could not support different due dates or plan structures across populations.

- **Outdated, confusing student interface:** The legacy platform presented transactions in long, unsorted lists, making it difficult for students and parents to understand charges, aid, and balances.

- **Lack of real-time account visibility:** Balances were recalculated only monthly, leading to discrepancies between systems and confusion when new charges or refunds occurred.

- **Heavy manual workload for staff:** Teams spent hours manually recalculating accounts, reconciling balances across systems, and managing refunds—especially when handling a mix of direct deposit refunds and paper checks.

> "We can finally focus conversations on what matters, not on explaining line-by-line confusion."
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> **Michael Jackson**
> Director of Student Accounts & Data Systems
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> AZUSA PACIFIC
> UNIVERSITY

Michael Jackson, Director of Student Accounts & Data Systems
Azusa Pacific University (APU) is a private Christian university serving a diverse student population with multiple academic programs and student types. Managing student financial operations at APU requires balancing flexibility, accuracy, and clarity—while supporting students and families through complex financial decisions.

Institution Overview

1899 Founded	**Azusa, California** Location
7,000+ Student Population	**PeopleSoft** SIS Integration

The Goal: A Clearer, More Real-Time Financial Experience

As APU began evaluating alternatives, the focus shifted from simply replacing a vendor to re-imagining how student finances should work. Top priorities included:

- Real-time account balances and transactions

- Flexible, population-specific payment plans

- Automated, efficient refund processing

- A clean, modern interface for students and families

- Strong vendor partnership and responsiveness

A non-negotiable requirement was the ability to integrate deeply with PeopleSoft Campus Solutions while reducing manual intervention across teams.

"We knew there was a better way out there. We just hadn't come across it yet."

— **Michael Jackson,** Director of Student Accounts & Data Systems

Why PayMyTuition

APU selected PayMyTuition based on both product capability and partnership approach.

What stood out immediately:

- Live, real-time account lookups instead of static monthly
- Modern, intuitive interface that simplified complex account
- Configurable payment plans with support for auto-pay and eligibility rules
- Automation-first refund workflows
- High-touch engagement throughout evaluation, not just

Michael noted that the engagement level played a major role:

"You engaged us at every point and answered the tough questions. That gave us peace of mind—not just in the product, but in the partnership."

Implementation & Go-Live

Implementation was led by APU's Student Accounts and Data Systems team, working closely with PayMyTuition across several months.

Highlights included:

- Regular working sessions to fully understand system behavior
- Scenario-based testing to avoid surprises post-launch
- Flexibility to adapt workflows based on real student behavior

After go-live, APU identified opportunities to refine how students enrolled in payment plans. PayMyTuition incorporated this feedback and later delivered enhancements that expanded administrative flexibility.

"You took feedback and turned it into product improvement. That's a very different experience from what we had before."

IT perspective on deployment:

"The implementation was well-structured, and the responsiveness made a big difference. We felt confident going live."

Conclusion

By partnering with PayMyTuition, Azusa Pacific University transformed its student payment ecosystem—from fragmented systems and manual effort to a streamlined, real-time, student-centric experience.

What began as a payments initiative evolved into a broader digital transformation—one that supports students, empowers staff, and positions APU for long-term success.

The Impact: Measurable Efficiency and Clarity

- **Dramatic Time Savings**
  Refund processing alone was transformed:
  • Before: ~4 hours per refund day
  • After: ~30 minutes or less
  This shift freed staff to focus on higher-value work instead of repetitive manual tasks.

- **Improved Student Payment Behavior**
  By requiring structured installment plans with auto-pay:
  • Students gained clarity on expectations
  • Receivables became more predictable
  • Fewer last-minute payment issues arose

- **Fewer Paper Checks, Fewer Exceptions**
  With easier direct deposit enrollment:
  • Uncashed refund checks dropped significantly
  • Refunds could be processed more frequently
  • Manual intervention decreased across the board

- **A Single Source of Truth**
  Staff now confidently direct students and families to PayMyTuition as the authoritative view of their account:
  • Charges, payments, aid, and future terms are clearly organized
  • Authorized users can easily access accounts
  • Conversations with students are faster and more productive
  Michael summarized the change clearly:
  "We can finally focus conversations on what matters, not on explaining line-by-line confusion."

- **Student Financial Services perspective**
  "Students understand their accounts much more easily now, and that's reduced confusion and frustration across the board."

> "Don't ask what the system can do. Ask what you want your process to be—and then see how the system supports that."

Michael Jackson
Director of Student Accounts & Data Systems

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