collegevine

Closing the gap to on-time graduation with a unified data layer

How Widener University partnered with CollegeVine to turn disconnected systems into a summer catch-up plan for its students

Widener University

The answers were already in the data

Widener's faculty had spent 3 years on AI in the classroom. Its board asked a different question: how can we push AI into operations? The partnership with CollegeVine started with 2 agents — Todd for graduate recruitment, Taylor for the campus one stop — and then moved to the data underneath them.

> *"We have 100 plus systems at our campus, resulting in a highly decentralized organization. Our data fragmentation and data hygiene issues are real and pervasive."*

Joseph Howard, Ed.D.
VP for Enrollment and Technology, Widener University

WHERE THE PARTNERSHIP STARTED

Todd

Graduate recruitment agent, live since last fall

Taylor

Campus one stop agent, answering for every office

A common language for a decentralized campus

CollegeVine ingested Widener's discrete sources, normalized and structured them, and applied Widener's own business rules on top — the exact course sequence each major requires, prerequisites and corequisites included. Everything resolves into 4 things the system can reason about: a program, a person, a course, or a requirement.

Ingest

Transcripts, degree audits, transfer credit, sections, holds, plans

Normalize

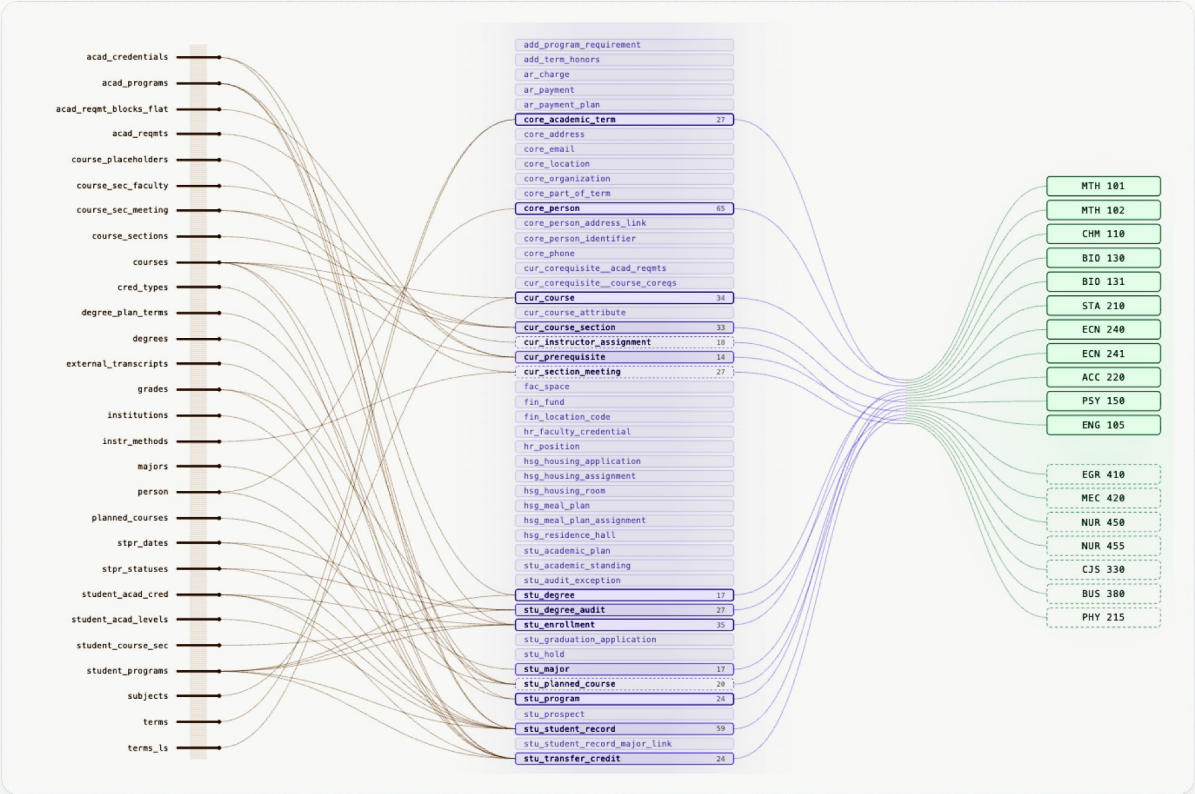
One structure and vocabulary, shared across the system

Apply Widener's rules

The idiosyncrasies and exceptions faculty apply when they certify a degree by hand

Multiple tables resolved into 4 categories

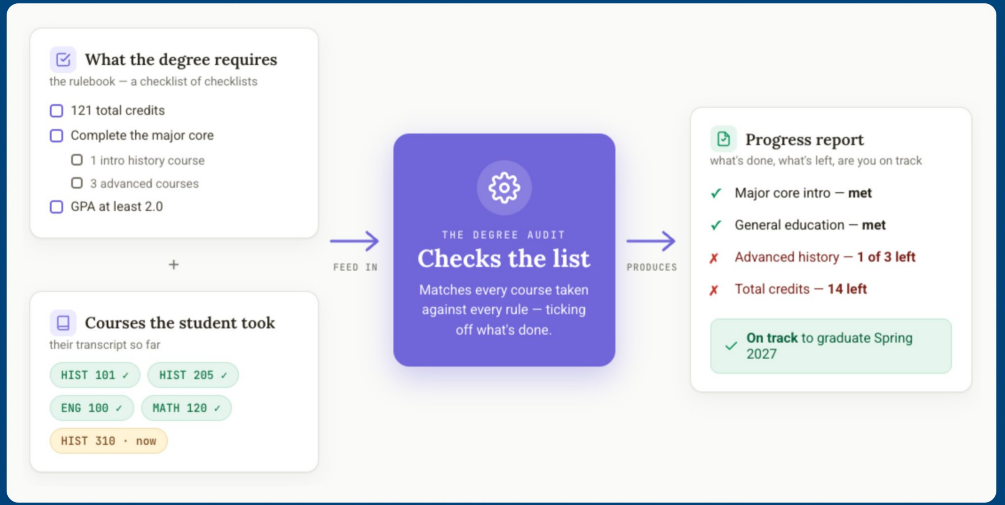
Widener's source tables (left column) collapse into shared entities of a person, course, requirement, program (middle column) and produce a short, recommendable list of courses (right column).



Exactly who is behind, and what puts them back on track

With the data in a common language, 2 pictures can finally be held against each other for every student: everything the degree requires, and everything the student has already done. What comes out is a progress report. What initially took months of work can now be completed in a matter of minutes with AI.

WHAT THE AUDIT RECONCILES



Identifying the course that unlocks the most progress

A complicated lab section is not going up in 6 weeks. So the question inverts: of everything students need, which few courses can Widener actually stand up over the summer, and which of those clear the most requirements for the most students?

01 Does the student still need this course?

02 Can they actually take it — prerequisites, standing, and transfer credit accounted for?

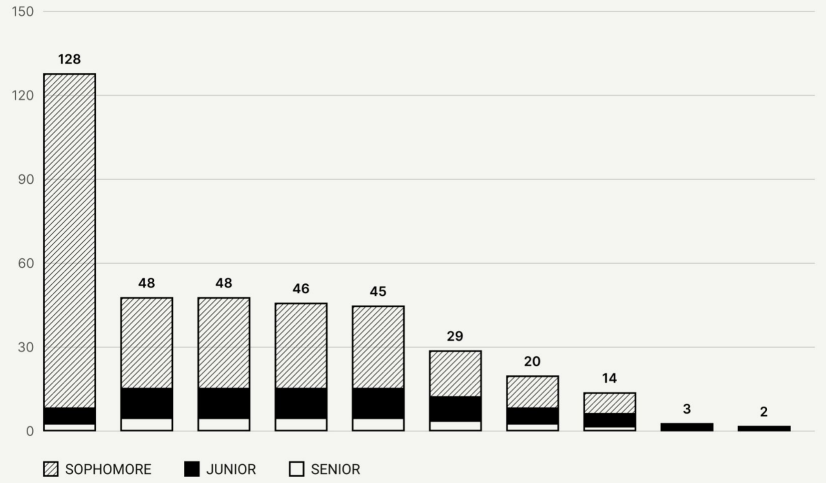
03 Can they register for it right now?

Only students who clear all 3 get a recommendation. Without those guardrails a student could pay for a course that never counts.

383
recommendations generated

10
courses carried all of them

128
students served by the top course



Leading with a plan, not a nudge

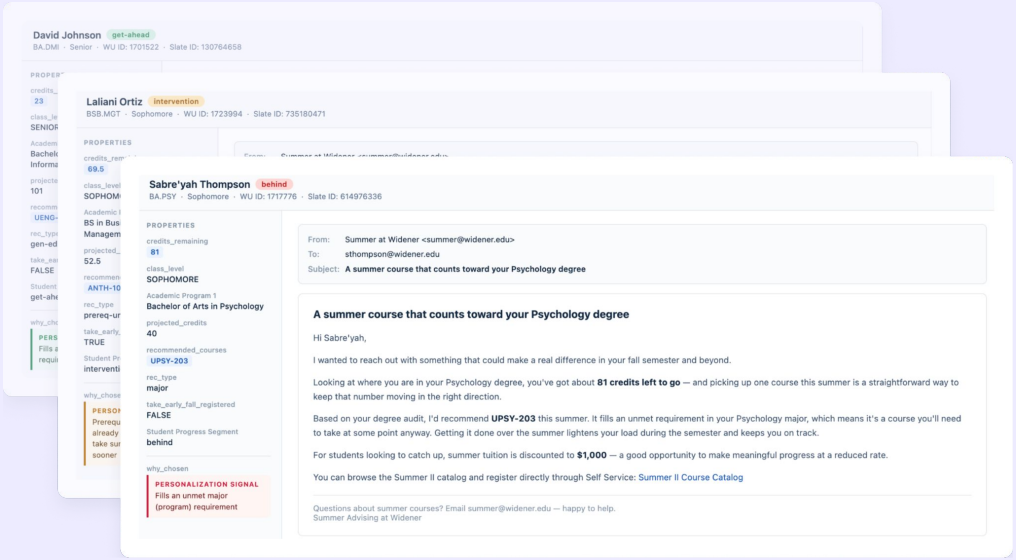
Telling a student they are 6 credits behind is not helpful. Naming the course Widener is running this summer, what it clears, and what it frees up in the fall is. Every student landed in 1 of 3 buckets: 1) Get ahead, 2) Intervention, and 3) Behind. The agent set its own tone and urgency for each.

71.8%

opened the message

25–35%

industry average for the same kind of outreach



WHAT'S NEXT

Scaling data optimization enterprise-wide

The ingestion work only needs to be done once. Next summer, the same agent runs across the whole undergraduate population, and the same data layer supports the retention conversation Widener actually wants to have.

Summer focus	Run the same agent across every undergraduate next summer
Curricular complexity scoring	Score every program on completion difficulty, and standardize the credit caps that stretch degrees past 4 years
Toxic course combinations	Flag the course pairings students struggle with in the same term, so advisors can sequence them apart
Increased access to insights	Let deans query the data themselves — where first-generation students struggle, down to the section

> *"Aside from practices that simply identify at-risk students, we've started to think more systematically and structurally. Where are the institutional roadblocks that hamper student progress? We're excited to see how AI might help illuminate such challenges."*

Joseph Howard, Ed.D.
VP for Enrollment and Technology, Widener University