



Blackbaud and Student First Propel AI-Powered Connected Campus Vision for Higher Education Through Strategic Innovation Partnership

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Expanded Collaboration Helps Colleges and Universities Improve Visibility, Streamline Operations and Support Student Success

CHARLESTON, S.C., July 27, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Blackbaud (NASDAQ: BLKB), the world's leading provider of AI-powered solutions for social impact, today announced an Innovation Partnership with [Student First](#), the provider of the most modern, AI-powered higher education student information system (SIS) designed to simplify administrative workflows and enhance the student experience.



Building on [Blackbaud's strategic investment in Student First](#) earlier this year and the companies' ongoing collaboration through the Blackbaud Partner Network, this new Strategic Innovation Partnership deepens the relationship between the two companies and advances a shared vision for a Connected Campus in higher education.

"Our Innovation Partnership with Student First reflects a shared commitment to helping colleges and universities connect the systems and data that matter most," said Mark Davis, vice president and general manager of education products, Blackbaud. "As institutions face growing pressure to do more with less, they need technology that helps teams work from a shared view. By bringing together the systems that shape both the student experience and institutional performance, Blackbaud and Student First are helping colleges and universities build a stronger foundation for student success and long-term sustainability through our commitment to execution of a shared roadmap across both companies."

Rising costs, enrollment pressures and evolving student expectations are forcing colleges and universities to rethink how they operate. Yet for many institutions, the systems that support critical infrastructure remain disconnected, creating barriers to collaboration, limiting visibility and making it harder to align resources with student success goals.

By bringing together best-in-class solutions for student information, enrollment, financial aid, scholarships, advancement, finance and tuition payments, Blackbaud and Student First are working together to create a Connected Campus operating model that helps colleges and universities unite data, people and processes across the institution to provide greater visibility, reduce complexity and empower institutions to make more informed decisions. With this enhanced level of information flow and collaboration, institutions can align resources to strategic priorities, strengthen financial stewardship and drive student success at scale.

"This strategic partnership represents the first collaboration of its kind between two education technology innovators," said David Meek, CEO of Student First. "Earlier this year we said the most advanced SIS in higher education belongs alongside the best financial and advancement platform in the market. This expanded partnership proves that at scale. Extending our work with Blackbaud into product, sales, and marketing means institutions across their ecosystem get direct access to a connected campus experience, not just the promise of one."

With this new, expanded partnership, Blackbaud and Student First will work together across product, sales and marketing teams to advance a shared Connected Campus strategy for higher education.

The strategic partnership also reflects a shared commitment to AI for a purpose in higher education: practical, human-centered innovation that helps administrators, faculty and staff reduce manual work, surface meaningful insights and spend more time supporting students. This approach aligns with Student First's view that AI should optimize, analyze, and automate, while human expertise remains central to decisions that shape the student experience.

By pairing Student First's cloud-native, AI-powered SIS and automation-first approach with Blackbaud's AI-powered solutions for social impact, the companies are advancing innovation designed to fit into institutional workflows, reduce administrative time and workload, and support better decisions across the connected campus.

Institutions are already seeing the potential value of a more connected approach.

"With Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT and Student First, we'll have the capacity to automate many of our processes—such as degree audits, billing and applying financial aid—which historically were manual and time-intensive," said Mark Hanshaw, associate provost and general counsel for Cumberland University.

Recent enhancements include AI-driven workflow automation that reduces manual administrative effort across core campus operations, along with predictive intelligence capabilities that identify patterns, trends, and potential risks earlier, enabling institutional leaders to make more proactive, data-informed decisions. Together, these capabilities help colleges and universities improve efficiency, streamline operations, and focus more resources on supporting student success.

The collaboration brings together complementary capabilities designed specifically for higher education. Student First provides a modern, cloud-native Student Information System (SIS) and financial aid platform that supports the full student lifecycle. Blackbaud delivers industry-leading solutions including Blackbaud Financial Edge NXT®, Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT®, Blackbaud Award Management™ and Blackbaud Integrated Payments™, helping institutions connect advancement, finance, scholarship management and tuition payment operations within a broader campus ecosystem.

The combined approach is designed to help institutions:

- Bridge the gap between advancement and finance by connecting student, financial aid, scholarship, advancement, finance and tuition payment data
- Reduce manual processes and operational complexity
- Improve visibility across traditionally disconnected departments
- Support more informed planning, decision-making and resource allocation
- Strengthen alignment between institutional resources and student success goals

Learn more about Blackbaud's Connected Campus plans in upcoming Product Update Briefings and at [bbcon 2026](#), taking place Sept. 21-Oct. 1 in Columbus, Ohio.

About Blackbaud

[Blackbaud](#) (NASDAQ: BLKB) is the world's leading provider of AI-powered solutions for social impact. Serving nonprofits, educational institutions, companies committed to corporate social responsibility, and individual change makers, Blackbaud propels impact at scale with the sector's most intelligent solutions for fundraising and engagement, education solutions, financial management and CSR and grantmaking. With the deepest expertise powered by the world's largest philanthropic data set, the most connected workflows, and the most powerful impact network, Blackbaud's solutions are building a future where resources are unleashed at the speed of need. Blackbaud has been recognized by Fast Company, Newsweek, Quartz, Forbes and more for AI innovation, responsible leadership and workplace excellence. Blackbaud has operations in the United States, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, India and the United Kingdom, supporting users in 100+ countries. Learn more at www.blackbaud.com or follow us on [X/Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

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Forward-looking Statements

Except for historical information, all of the statements, expectations and assumptions contained in this news release are forward-looking statements that involve a number of risks and uncertainties, including statements regarding expected benefits of products and product features. Although Blackbaud attempts to be accurate in making these forward-looking statements, it is possible that future circumstances might differ from the assumptions on which such statements are based. In addition, other important factors that could cause results to differ materially include the following: general economic risks; uncertainty regarding increased business and renewals from existing customers; continued success in sales growth; management of integration of acquired companies and other risks associated with acquisitions; risks associated with successful implementation of multiple integrated software products; the ability to attract and retain key personnel; risks associated with management of growth; lengthy sales and implementation cycles; technological changes that make our products and services less competitive; and the other risk factors set forth from time to time in the SEC filings for Blackbaud, copies of which are available free of charge at the SEC's website at www.sec.gov or upon request from Blackbaud's investor relations department. All Blackbaud product names appearing herein are trademarks or registered trademarks of Blackbaud, Inc.

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