airSlate

How Claremont Graduate University uses airSlate workflows to automate its contracting process

airSlate workflows helped Claremont Graduate University accelerate the adjunct contract process. By leveraging eSignature, the institution managed to reduce document turnaround times from one and a half months to a few days. airSlate allowed Claremont Graduate University to eliminate redundant paper-based processes and multiple digital backups, thus improving the institution's rate of record retention. Finally, going paperless allowed the university to reduce office supply budgets and minimize their impact on the environment.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Claremont Graduate University (CGU) is a private, graduate-only research university in Claremont, California, with about 1,200 students currently enrolled. CGU is part of a college consortium that includes Pomona College, Scripps College, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont McKenna College, Pitzer College, and The Keck Graduate Institute.

INTERVIEWEE'S NAME

Eric Werner
Academic Affairs Analyst

LOCATION

Claremont, CA

THE CUSTOMER

Claremont Graduate University (CGU) is a research-based university known for limited enrollment, renowned faculty, and small class sizes devoted to graduate study. It is focused on providing practice-based collaborative learning across disciplines while offering students personalized programs to ensure a tailor-made learning experience. At CGU, students get access to superior resources and services, as well as other affiliated organizations, programs, and institutes.

THE PROBLEM

Claremont Graduate University was facing recurring issues within their analog contracting processes, these issues specifically affected adjunct faculty employment. Sending paper-based contracts and forms back and forth would often result in multiple errors and misplaced signatures, not to mention the additional time and costs demanded to resolve the errors. On average, it would take anywhere from three weeks to one and a half months to get a signed employment contract back.

The biggest challenge for CGU was finding a flexible digital solution capable of collecting signed contracts faster with eSignature.

> "I just need[ed] something that would let me put digital signatures on contracts, because if I can cut off those three weeks that it takes us to go from putting a contract in the mail to getting it executed, that would just make my job so much easier."
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> **Eric Werner**

Another pressing issue came from the ever-expanding physical storage space that the actual paperwork was demanding. The persistent buildup of paper documents resulted in poor file maintenance, duplication, and outdated records. In one example, the provost office sent a contract request to an adjunct professor bearing their old residential address. Upon receiving it, the professor noted that the information was out of date. The provost office then contacted the school asking them to update their records. However, the next semester the new contract request still had the old address on it.

THE ANSWER

Before switching to airSlate, Claremont Graduate University was using a basic contract management solution which helped to somewhat accelerate the process of going from a request to a contract. CGU's relationship with airSlate began when the team realized just how tremendous their institutional inertia was. Adopting airSlate allowed for flexible no code workflow automation, making the signature process easier and faster.

Within the institution, airSlate is used to build workflows across multiple departments, including the registrar's office, the provost office, HR, and others. One of the university's most common use cases for airSlate is building a Flow for requesting access to various Claremont Graduate University applications. When a new staff member is hired, the supervisor can request access for that staff member. Once they complete the request, it's sent as an attachment right into Zendesk, CGU's ticketing system.
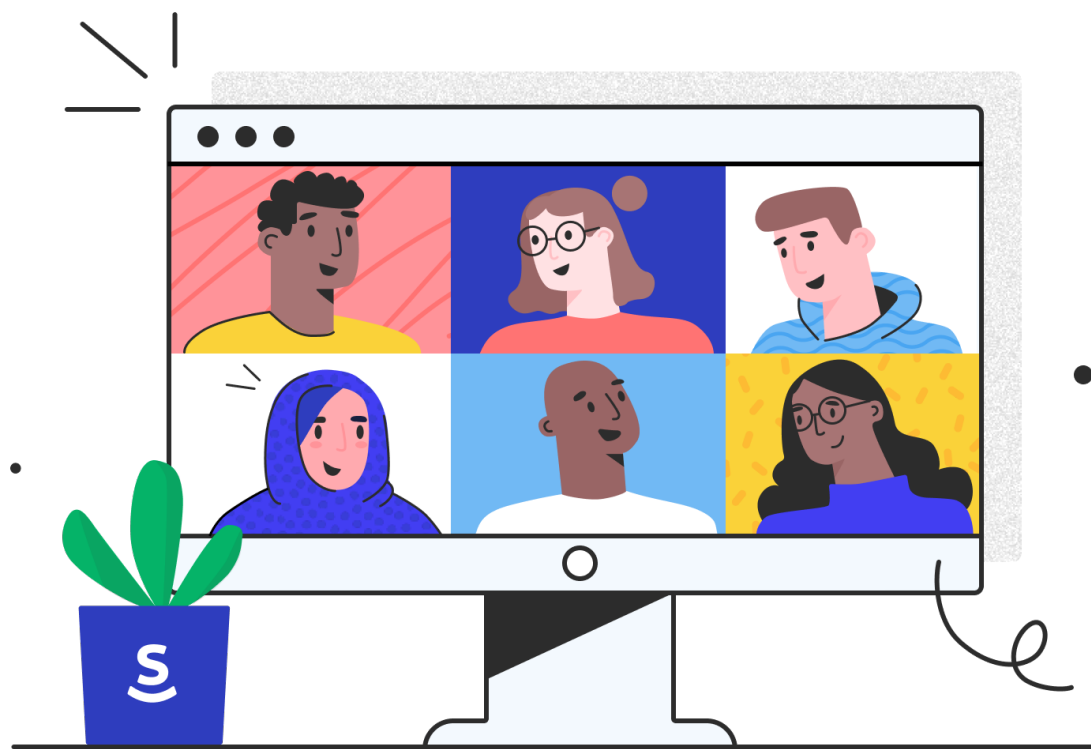
> 66
> "The flexibility and customization that you can do with airSlate – that's something that I didn't really see with a lot of the other products that we were looking at", Werner says. "I will say in my experience since we adopted [airSlate], it's just reinforced how flexible a product it is and how adaptable it is. And for me, that's just been a huge, huge boon."
>
> **Eric Werner**

airSlate allowed Claremont Graduate University to go paperless, thus eliminating the need for storing physical copies and digital backups. Since March 2020, the institution has not added a single piece of paper to their document workflows. previously created physical copies. On top of that, their office supply expenditures have almost completely disappeared. **"We can have a smaller environmental impact. We don't need to have a paper copy of everything anymore,"** Werner notes.

IMPLEMENTING AIRSLATE

The Flow that has been in use the longest and had the most impact on the CGU community was the Request to Visit Campus Flow. It was the first Flow the University launched and as a result of using airSlate workflow automation, over 500 requests to visit the campus are received and processed weekly from students, faculty, or staff members. airSlate's auto-population feature made the process of filling out and submitting a request extremely intuitive and fast.

> 66
> "Essentially, it's a multi-step process where our students, faculty, and staff, if they need to come on campus, go to that Flow [and] fill it out," Eric says. "As you would imagine, it's keyed to automatically populate the approval steps to that individual's direct supervisor, the area VP that's associated with their area."
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> **Eric Werner**

At the moment, Claremont Graduate University is using airSlate to streamline their adjunct contracting process. Previously, the support staff had to spend a fair amount of time preparing a contract request. After that, about the same amount of time was spent drafting the adjunct contract. Automating the contracting process with airSlate eliminated this type of redundant work, allowing staff to focus on more high-priority tasks.

> 66
> "Essentially, [with airSlate] you're not duplicating efforts. It's one person filling out one form that lets the system build all of that out. When I realized the power of the system [...], I sent 35 contracts for signature in one day. [...] By next morning, we had half of them back signed. By the end of the week, we had 34 or 35 back signed."
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> **Eric Werner**

WHERE WORK REALLY HAPPENS

Claremont Graduate University is currently working to deploy airSlate across campus to ensure better collaboration and communication. By breaking the bonds of the analog processes used in the past, airSlate is helping CGU dramatically accelerate and streamline their adjunct contracting process.

Going forward, CGU has the ambitious goal of streamlining the adjunct contract Flow per the needs of the different types of adjuncts already employed or hired by CGU. While the institution and the instructors are already in the system, integrating human resources and payroll remains a critical objective.

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> "Programming [...] distinct roles and different documents based on what role they fall into — that's easy. What I'm also trying to work out is working with the various departments to get their buy-in," Eric says. "I'd love to have the HR department actually do their I-9 verification through airSlate rather than printing it out and writing in the details that they need on that form."
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> **Eric Werner**

CONCLUSION

airSlate workflow automation helped Claremont Graduate University reduce the amount of physical paperwork and cut operational costs. Leveraging airSlate across the institution is a work in progress, as some processes are still handled manually. Despite that, CGU has seen a surge in productivity across multiple departments.

More and more staff are feeling empowered to build their own Flows or reach out to the support team for help with workflow automation. Using airSlate has helped Claremont Graduate University to enhance the student, faculty, and staff experience through integrative technology.

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> "That's the power of a tool like airSlate. You can have your staff focusing their creativity on bigger problems. Without having them caught up in process and procedure and the way you've always done things because once that ball gets rolling, it's an invaluable tool. I can't say enough about that."
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> **Eric Werner**